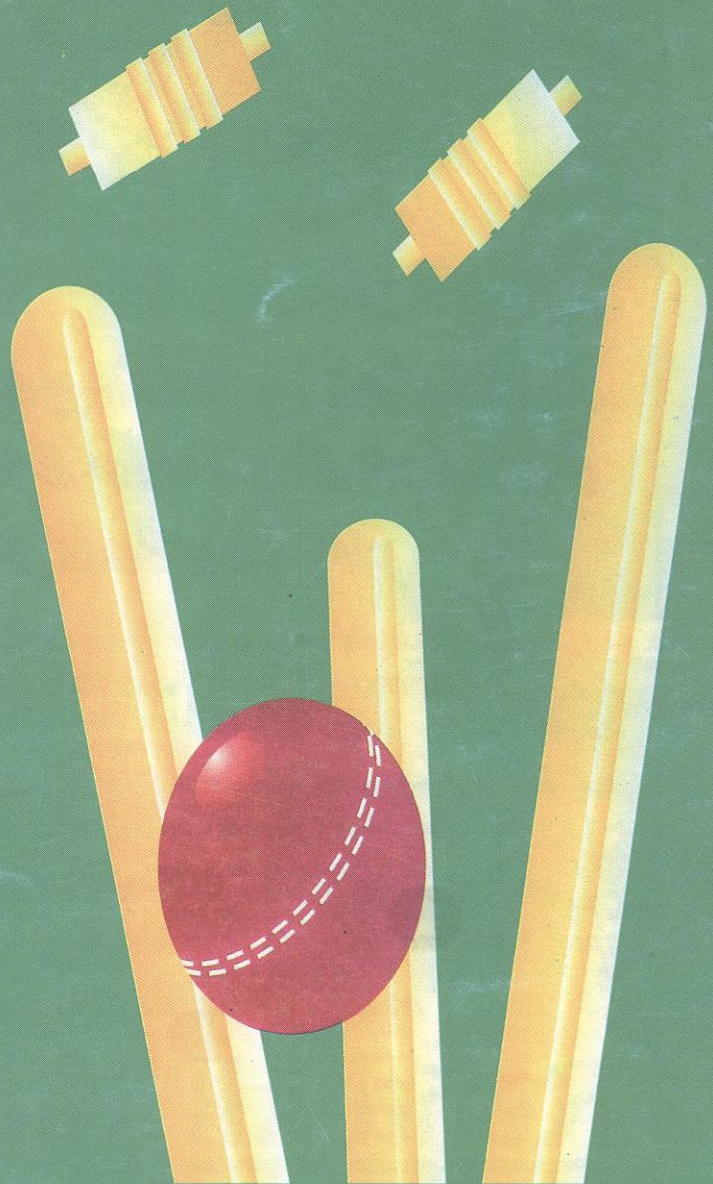


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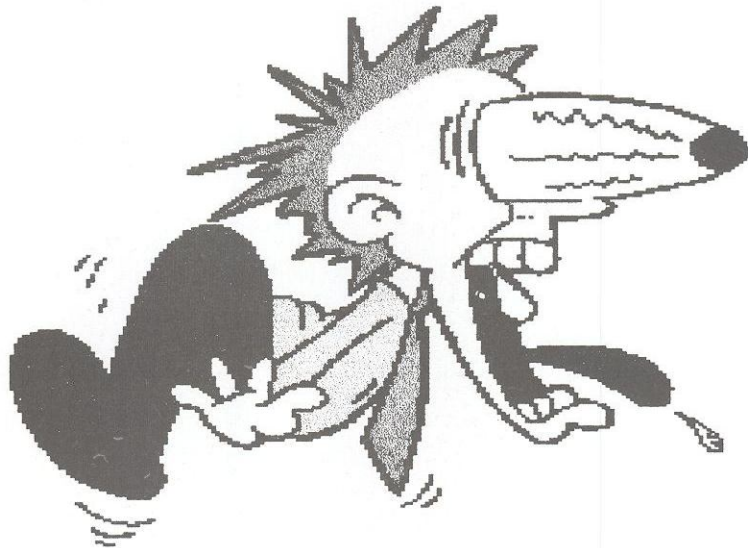
Federation Samachar

Sports Council tournament was a knock-out



African Federation
launches its web site

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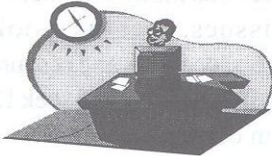
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Gulam Sajan, Toronto
Sadiq Alloo, Los Angeles
Gulamabbas Dhalla, Los Angeles

COVER PICTURE

- * Chief Guest Hassan Hirji presenting an appreciation plaque to Allama Sayyid Akhtar Rizvi.
- * Supreme Council Chairman, Mohamed Dhirani receiving a token of appreciation from the Team Manager of Karachi's Huseini Sports Club, Hassan Abdulhusein.
- * The victorious Dar volleyball team

From the Editor's Desk

The WF and AF stand-off - if wisdom is any guide

The river was full, and flowing vigorously. The scorpion had to get urgently across as his family was stranded on the land beyond, needing food and care. The scorpion entreated with the frog to take him across the river. The frog being scared of the scorpion's poisonous fangs, hesitated. But the creature had the gift of persuasion, and reason on his side. "How can I hurt you?" he asked the frog "If I bite you, you will die and I shall drown too." "You speak wisely scorpion," said the frog. "Fear, foul and irrational, overwhelms me. But I must overcome it."

Thereupon, the frog embarked on the journey carrying the lucky scorpion on his back. As they reached mid-stream, the scorpion plunged his pincers into the back and underside of the frog. "Ouch!", he yelled "stop biting me as you will drown if I die." "I know", said the scorpion. "But I can't help it. It is my nature." The moral of the story: Instinct often compels behaviour that is counter to reason. When it does, instinct should be suppressed --unfortunately a retrospective glance at last year's Extra Ordinary Conference in Stanmore unfurls the fact that instincts were all but suppressed thereby leading to the existing rift in relations between the World Federation (WF) and Africa Federation (AF).

The *Federation Samachar* has expended much ink on this subject explaining the Africa stand and the issue now is no longer about constitutional niceties or about the rights and wrongs of Clause 20.1. Rather it has degenerated into a situation where the *indifference* of the WF to the existing apathetic relations is leading to perpetual *differences*.

Harsh this indictment may be but inaccurate it is not. Ever since the Stanmore meeting, there has been no direct approach by the World Federation to discuss the issue with the AF. True, the AF has been approached but by third parties and in response it has officially communicated to the WF advising them that that the issues involved are too sensitive to be delegated to or initiated and deliberated with third party individuals. The existing dissension can only be resolved at Federation level because it directly involves the leaders of the two Federations.

Under the present circumstances, it is the WF as a parent body to show more discretion and greater wisdom by seeking direct dialogue with its aggrieved member, the AF, to defuse the crisis. For the WF to perceive this as a defeat would be self-defeating because in any effort to solve religious altercations there are only winners and no losers. By initiating direct dialogue with the AF, the WF would actually lay ground for a very possible reconciliation.

During the discourses that ensue, the AF can candidly elucidate its grievances and probably can also come up with resolutions to call for changes in the WF constitution where deemed necessary. The issues that the AF may like to discuss would include: the need for secret ballots, the rights of an individual to interrupt a speaker on a point of order, eligibility of voters, need for an impartial Chairman during elections, the necessity for respectful verbosity, neutrality and non-influence of voters through awards or accolades etc.

Confrontations are harmful but then this may well be the temporary price we have to pay to ensure that the Stanmore showdown is not repeated. Ultimately if the right lessons are drawn from this event, great good will have come out of a bad situation. And could one then call the Stanmore showdown a *blessing in disguise*?

Munir Daya

Chairman calls on community to "learn to set priorities on financial disbursements"



The following is the Idd Message of the Africa Federation Chairman, Mohamed Dhirani, to members of Jamaats of Africa on the occasion of Idd-el-Fitr 1418 A.H. (January, 1998):

"On this auspicious day of Idd-ul-Fitr, let us all thank Allah (s.w.t.) for all His bounties bestowed upon us and favouring us once again to celebrate this Idd amongst our family and friends. Let us beseech Him that He in His Mercy accepts our prayers, fasting and *Istigfar* during the month of Ramadhan. Amen.

Our Community has been and insha'allah will continue giving donations to worthy causes and projects. There is no doubt that these acts carry a lot of *thawabs* and Allah (s.w.t.) will definitely reward for all such acts.

Our needs are growing and our resources both financial and otherwise are limited and a time has come to list our projects with priorities. Thursday nights carry more importance than other nights of the week, the charity and prayers of Mahe Ramadhan are more rewarding than the other months and even amongst the nights, those special nights of *Qadr* surpass the other

nights. Similarly in giving donations there are certain causes which are more important.

One has to make a crucial decision whether for example to feed 100 people who are not really hungry, for a day, or to feed a single starving person for 100 days? The choice if properly thought about is not difficult to make.

As members of the Community, we make contributions for various causes such as building of schools, madressas, mosques, imambaras, hospitals, dispensaries, musafar-khanas and in construction wells or bore holes. All these are highly commendable efforts worthy of recognition which would no doubt merit Divine blessings.

Time has come when we should analyse our needs and decide on priorities. Today the most serious problem affecting members of the Community is the question of increasing cost of living. Housing problem is a very serious one. Those who do not own houses of their own are facing a very serious problem as rents rocket to prohibitive levels. The cost of education is going up and the cost of medical treatment, hospitalisation and surgery are often shocking. We need to address to these problems more urgently and disperse our energies and resources in this direction with right priorities.

Whilst we express our gratitude and appreciation to the philanthropic members of our society for all their charitable contributions, the Community members should

give serious thought to these burning issues. Let us pool our thoughts, energies and resources in the right direction and seek Divine help in our endeavours.

As a result of the recent devastation caused by heavy rains and floods, there are disturbing reports of landslides, disruption of communication networks, loss of crops and related effects on the health of the people. There is already a forecast of a drought this year. We need to be conscious and concerned about these developments and while performing our duties and obligations towards the affected humanity, let us all join hands in praying to the Almighty Allah (s.w.t.) for Divine mercy and Divine help to ease the overall situation.

On this auspicious occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr, I extend to you all, on behalf of my colleagues and myself a very happy Idd Mubarak.

Let us pray for the safety and well being of all our Marja'e Taqleed, the Ulema and all the brothers and sisters throughout the world.

We must not also forget on this auspicious occasion all the departed souls who are not here to observe this Eid with us and pray for their *maghferat*. Let us offer Sura-e-Fateha for all Marhumeen.

Wa Salamun Alaykum Wa Rahmutullahi wa Barakatu."

Mohamed Gulamhussein Dhirani
Chairman
Africa Federation.

YOUR LETTERS

Views, opinions or articles should be addressed to:

The Editor

Federation Samachar

P.O. Box 6710, Dar es salaam.

Dear brother,

Lessons from a heart attack

Last week, a neighbour suddenly had a heart attack. He had slept late that morning and while he was shaving, he felt a sudden tightness around his chest. The previous night he had a slight fever and his first reaction on feeling the chest pain was to swallow a paracetamol tablet and try to carry on as usual. His wife, however, insisted that they rush to a nearby nursing home and that probably saved his life. He is on his way to recovery but his experience has lessons for all of us.

The first thing is that this gentleman is just in his early 40s, and he is by no means the youngest in the country to have suffered a heart attack. Doctors say they have seen men in their early 30s with advanced coronary artery disease, which leads to a heart attack. Thus very few of us are completely safe. The danger is greater now than a generation ago because the pain of a mild attack is not very different from that of acidity and even from muscular strain that many of us develop every now and then.

Actually a good number of patients just die without any pain or discomfort (known in medical parlance as silent infarction). But studies have shown that death in such cases comes at the end of a long series of tiny attacks that nobody notices but which damage a little part of the heart muscle each time. And a stage comes when the pump just gives way.

Secondly, at least two months before my friend was taken to hospital in an emergency, he experienced breathing difficulties which under certain circumstances, also point to heart disease. He consulted a doctor who advised him to take a full month of rest at home but he returned to work after taking leave for just two days. When you add the rigours of travelling to work from the distant suburbs, the strain is bound to be considerable. Clearly my friend invited trouble.

We all need to take care of our hearts with recommended physical activity, nutritious food, stable thinking and a modest lifestyle. Lets not forget that it doesn't take much for the heart to give way and the result is death!

N. Noori

India

Dear brother,

AF stand...we have instances to draw lessons from

I was pleased that the Africa Federation did not attend the London Meeting of the World Federation. This stand was the best, intelligent, civilised and effective way of registering our misgivings and reservation. No member can ever blame us to have been responsible for causing disunity. The move and stand was meant to convey a broad message. As a matter of fact the Africa Federation could have taken other measures which were more harsh.

We, as followers of Ahlul Bait, have instances to draw lessons from Imam Ali (A.S.) keeping away from Medina township during the regimes of the three Khalifas and Imam Husein (A.S.) leaving first Medina and later Mecca to avoid confrontation. All these had desirable results.

With salaams and duas

Senior citizen

Arusha.

Federation Samachar

Dear brother,

Correction to obituary

The obituary in the September 1997 issue of the *Federation Samachar* misrepresents the name of the Late Mulla H.M. Nasser. The name should have read as Mulla Hussein Mohamedali Nasser.

Perhaps you could incorporate a correction in your periodical's next issue.

Asaf M. Gulamhusein

Mombasa

Dear brother,

Walkouts are uncalled for

I refer to a letter from the Analyst, North America - 'Postmortem of an Extra-ordinary conference' (*Federation Samachar* vol.30 no.5), where he suggests weakness that the Chairman of Africa Jamaats did not walk out at various times during the proceedings.

Walk-outs are theatrics, better suited to the stage for bit-part actors. It is a matter of dignity and statemanship that a leader can sit through the trauma, and still reason quietly and patiently. We should feel proud that we still have such leaders in the community.

Shaukat Manji

London

Dear brother,

Unity at what cost?

Strangely, some quarters look upon the Africa Federation, which is the aggrieved party to recant and amend the relation with the WF "for the sake of unity" without wanting to discuss who had disrupted unity.

This reminds one of the crucial moment in the history of Islam when some followers of Hazrat Amirul Mu'umeen (A.S.) who was about to win the battle of Siffin against Muawiya, forced him to halt the battle "for the sake of unity" among Muslims. What followed is open in the sad history.

What lesson do we derive from Nahjul Balaagah?

Bashir Punja,

Dar es Salaam.

Dear brother,

Misrepresentation in September issue

Let me first take this opportunity of congratulating you and your staff on the very impressive work that you are doing by publishing the *Federation Samachar*. I have noticed that the issues are getting more and more interesting and the presentation has also improved.

However there is a slight misrepresentation in your September issue in the composition of the newly elected committee for the Ithna sheri Union. The correct composition is as follows:

Chairman	Abdulrasool Shamji
Vice Chairman	Jabir Chatoo
Hon.Gen Secretary	Nazmul Jaffer
Asst Secretary	Fayaz Alloo
Hon Treasurer	Shabbir Hameer
Sectional Secretaries:	
Literary	Mustfa Dinani
Volunteers	Khalil Khakoo
Scouts	Bashir Dewji
Ladies	Asgar Dhanji
Sports	Mohamed Nathoo

On behalf of my committee we wish you and your staff the very best in your efforts serve the community.

Nazmul Jaffer
Hon Gen Secretary, Union Sports,
Dar es Salaam.

Dear brother,

From cover to cover.....

Congratulations on making the *Samachar* a world standard bearer in terms of variety and calibre of contents and the quality of the publication.

Once I picked it up, I could not put it down until I read it cover to cover. Keep up the good work and may Allah (SWT) reward you for educating and informing us all. May He also continue to increase your wisdom and stamina to continue to make a remarkable contribution to the community.

Sadik,
Los Angeles.

Federation Samachar

Dear brother,

AF --where are we heading?

A Circular has been issued by the Secretariat of the Supreme Council for the nomination of Chairman to serve for the next three year term: 1998 – 2000. Deadline for the nomination is 23rd January, 1998. Completion of the next term will lead on to the next millenium.

We have recently celebrated the 50th anniversary since the formation of our Federation. The question we now need to ask is how we view the next 50 years.

As usual, we will go through a period of apathetic indifference. As the deadline approaches, few concerned individuals will make last minute frantic efforts to look for an apparently charismatic personality. Finally, several Jamaats having belatedly elected a new Chairman (generally in poorly attended Jamaat meetings), the Community will then quietly sit back and expect of the poor soul to perform miracles in his quest to lead us to Utopia.

Is this how we propose to bequeath a better future for our progeny?

Before we finally go through the exercise, let us try to ponder over the following questions:

What is our vision for the type of society we wish to evolve for our progeny?

What is the state of our Community today? What are the current trends and what issues/problems we have to confront with? What are our priorities?

Is the Supreme Council structure in its present form adequate enough to meet the challenges and successfully lead us to the next millenium? What restructuring changes, if any, are needed?

Let us find some time to reflect on these issues. Input from prospective candidates would be appreciated. Let us have some lively debates concerning our future as a Community.

Hassan Ali M. Jaffer,
P.O. Box 80265,
Mombasa

Dear brother,

Samachar is frank and fearless

I am a non-Muslim and had the opportunity to read your community magazine *Federation Samachar* with the initial impression that it would be in Gujarati.

May I congratulate your editorial team for fearlessly and frankly airing your views for a noble cause. In your own way you are contributing a lot towards spreading the message of truthful behaviour and code of conduct as prescribed by religious scriptures.

When going through your magazine I could not make up much about the issues involved but what I could see was that a fair opportunity was being given to correspondents to air their positive or negative views. This is a healthy way of fostering communal relations which is not common in most other communities where people holding positions cannot be questioned for their misdeeds.

Well done and keep it up.

Non-Muslim Reader
Dar es Salaam

Dear brother,

Surprised on removal of Clause 20.1 of the World Federation Constitution

I am very much surprised at the various Jamaat's decision to favour the removal of Clause 20.1 of the World Federation Constitution at the Extra-Ordinary Meeting held at Hujjat Imambada, Stanmore on 7 June 1997. In the interest of a healthy democratic constitution, I strongly favour and endorse the retention of Clause 20.1 which restricts the President's tenure in Office to a maximum of two consecutive terms. Furthermore, it is hardly fair or equitable on the hundreds of members of various Jamats throughout the UK that the Executive Committees of their respective Jamats have made decisions regarding the retention or removal of Clause 20.1 on behalf of their members without their prior consultation and approval. By doing so, the Executive Committees of the various Jamats have completely ignored the voices and opinions of their electorate.

Moreover, at the domineering insistence of the Chairman of the proceedings, the voting for or against the retention/removal of Clause 20.1 at the World Federation Extra-Ordinary Conference was effected most unfairly by a "Show of hands". The last time that I can remember indulging in this folly was when I was a toddler at school. This method of voting is most unjust as it can be erroneously influenced by either duress or intimidating motivation. A voting of this significance would have been much more fairly executed by secret ballot which is a far more democratic method under the circumstances.

It is a matter of indifference to me whether or not Mulla Asgharali M.M. Jaffer remains the head of the World Federation. However, the removal of Clause 20.1 has guaranteed his tenure for life. If we are going to be realistic and factual as opposed to impressionistic and quaint, I would very strongly stress that this is grossly unfair as there

should always be provision in any constitution for changes for the betterment of society. We should not feel overshadowed by extremism nor dread the arrival of a new candidate. And we should also be able to exercise a legitimate and sensible democratic option and be able to choose between two alternatives without risk to our freedom or future. As an example, take a simple glance at recent events in British politics - following eighteen years of Governmental administration by the Conservative Party, the British electorate comprehensively welcomed the Labour Party as a brand new change with creative, energetic and vigorously fresh ideas for implementation.

Likewise, we should also have the privilege in the future for the election of a new President to administer and regulate the affairs of the World Federation. The Khoja Shia Ithna-Asheri Community throughout the world is by no means a small one and with the amount of talent prevalent in our community, I am positive that there are several competent professionals amidst us who are more than capable of becoming President. By removing Clause 20.1 we have effectively prevented the advent and convergence of possible young, highly motivated, and energetic professionals from being given this coveted opportunity.

What is unbelievable preposterous is the fact that over ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND US DOLLARS (\$ 100,000) have been unnecessarily expended into inviting various dignitaries from throughout the world to attend the Extra Ordinary Conference at Stanmore just to decide whether Clause 20.1 of the Constitution should be removed or retained. Surely, a HUNDRED THOUSAND US DOLLARS can be much more productively dissipated by expending it on those who have a far greater need for it (such as for example, the Iraq

Refugee Fund).

Whilst we can all sit here and listen to the arguments presented by the various heads of Jamats with regard to their support in favour of the deletion of Clause 20.1, what we don't seem to realise is that this subject matter will inevitably and ultimately create an irreparable fracture within our community. It will feud a division where the wounds inherently created will take a long time to heal.

Indeed I was surprised on the removal of Clause 20.1 of the WF Constitution

**Astounded,
London.**

Dear brother,

Samachar is....

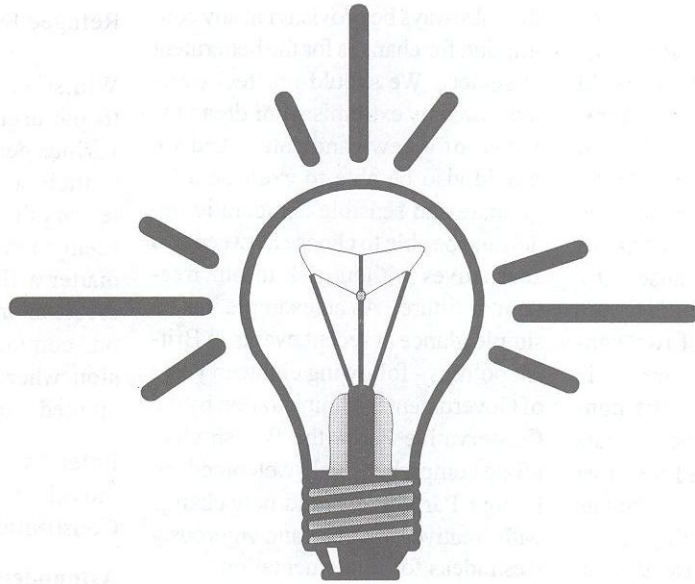
I have only just received the latest copy of the *Federation Samachar* and would like to say how pleased I was to read this. I am a Tanzanian who lives in the UK and it is nice to know what is happening back home.

The last issue had some very interesting articles to read, latest news from the community and letters from fellow readers who talked various subjects. It is also pleasing that we can now access the latest news from *Federation Samachar* on the Africa Federation and World Federation websites

Thank you to the whole team team that produces the magazine. Their hard work is very much appreciated and may Allah SWT reward them for all the hard work and give them strength to produce many more publications.

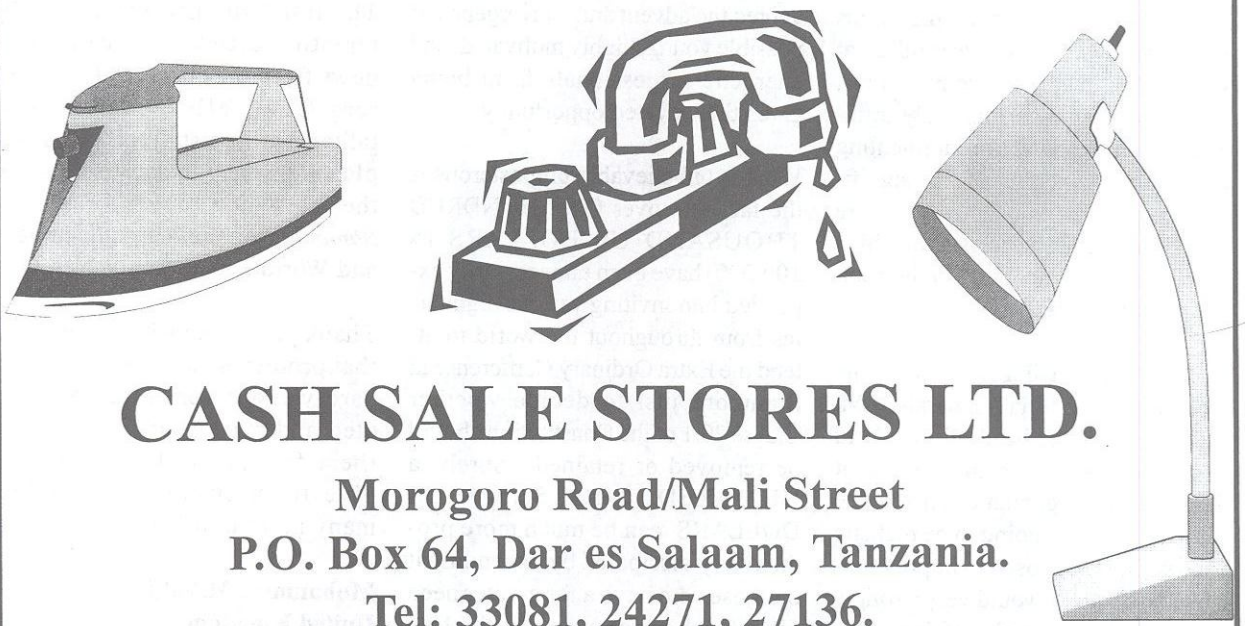
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Dear brother,

Sachedina's majlis....

I attended Dr. Aziz Sachedina's majalis at the Ja'ffari Islamic Center in Toronto on 26 September 1997. Not having heard him before, I almost did not attend based on some of the rumors I had heard and the remarks I had read in the *Federation Samachar*. But curiosity got the better of me and I decided to attend anyway.

I have only two observations to share with my skeptic brothers and sisters. Dr. Sachedina is a very intellectual and pragmatic person whose majalis strikes a chord in anyone who listens to him. Those who decide to boycott his majalis and speeches are losing out.

Secondly, I take my hat off to Nazirali Gulamhusein, President of JIC, Toronto for not being intimidated and giving this great scholar an opportunity to share his views with us and also giving us, an opportunity to be enlightened by Dr. Sachedina's delivery.

**Ashraf Mohamad,
Toronto**

Dear brother,

Sachedina's interview was good

I was very happy to go through the interview you conducted with Dr. Aziz Sachedina in the last issue of the *Federation Samachar*. People like you are the ones who make a difference in our community. I am sure everybody has an opinion in the ever existing so called controversy but you have managed to clear some of the issues in a very concise way.

Our congratulations to you and your wonderful team at the *Samachar*. Keep up the good work. It makes it even more interesting to read when articles as such appear in your publication.

**Imran Virani,
Los Angeles, California.**

Dear brother,

Samachar articles good

Those who have read the last issue of the *Samachar* are full of praise for the way it has been produced. All articles are of high grade and make interesting reading.

M. Peera, Toronto

Federation Samachar

Dear brother,

"Stale Odour Re-visited...?"

The little grey matter that exists in the over-sized skull of mine has been experiencing an emotion of amusement for some time now and this feeling has been compounded since I have read the September 1997 issue of the *Federation Samachar*. What caused it? The "Breath of fresh air..." interview and the ongoing correspondence on the subject of Dr. Sachedina's *Islamic Messianism: The idea of Mahdi in twelver Shi'ism*.

Ayatollah Amini feels the Torontonians should not hold the Open Forum and tries to pressurize the "accused" and the "lead prosecutor", the grand old wizard of the Khoja World (!), Mulla Asgharali M.M. Jaffer is found guilty of discrediting and humiliating Dr. Sachedina and in the same breath saying, quote, the mimbar needs you, unquote; Ayatollah Safi Golpaygani is made to enter the fray and attest to the effect that our academician is a true believer in the existence and occultation of Hazrat Hujjat a.s.; and members of the Community continue firing salvo after salvo at Islamic Messianism and in particular its author, hoping (against hope?) to get their pound of flesh and in the process even start up a debate on the status and standing of an ayatollah. The horizons continue to be expanded, energy continues to be expended and an omadhaun (like myself) scratches his head in bewilderment and ultimately utters words echoed two decades earlier - WHITHER MY COMMUNITY?

The Open Forum held in Toronto failed to achieve its objective and the debate rages on unabated. How then can the views of poor ol' me make a difference? Nevertheless, with modern principles of journalism providing the avenue and the Community's penchant to thrive on controversies in full flight, we may at least arrive at the answer to the question raised above - NITHER.

I have, in parting, an observation. Would it not have been more appropriate had the title to Dr. Sachedina's interview read "Stale Odour Re-visited...?" I wonder.

**Asaf M. Gulamhusein
Mombasa**

Dear brother,

Chairman's composure at Extra-Ordinary Conference was praiseworthy

I read the Federation report of 7 June 1997 and felt a sense of pride that we have a leader like Mohamedbhai in Africa. At the Extra-Ordinary Conference he remained steadfast and despite the chaotic environment he did not retort with abuses. That showed the quality of a true leader.

The whole scenario reminded me of *Saqifa* and the Africa Federation turned out to be like the few who at *Saqifa* chose not to be swayed. As always, *Haq* is with the minority. Money, power and position deviates man from the course of Islam. The President of the World Federation to use foul language at those who he is supposed to serve reflected an inherent inferiority complex. Moreover when any Forum refuses to accept a secret ballot, it shows that the leaders are insecure of their position and do not have absolute faith in the voters to elect them into office.

I admire the Chairman and the AF for having stood up to defend the mandate given to them in the Kampala Supreme Council Meeting. No doubt, it required a tremendous amount of courage and faith in the Almighty to do so. This was identical to when H. Fatima (A.S.) stood alone with her family in the court of Abu Baker.

**Brother-in-faith
Nairobi.**

AF to blame for differences with WF

I am writing to congratulate you and your team in producing an informative and creative *Federation Samachar*.

As an observer I also wish to comment on the World Federation Conference held in Stanmore in June 1997. At the Conference, Africa's first speaker did not address the issue at hand and he set the tone of confrontation and accusations. He should have been stopped.

The issue at the Conference was Clause 20.1 but few spoke on this. The few who spoke included Mohamedbhai Dhirani who spoke with very impressive words but with little conviction. At times I wonder why so many members of our community who when attending Conferences, AGMs or Committee Meetings fail to address the issue, discuss the issue, find the facts about the issue during the meeting and then later complain that they were not given the opportunity to discuss freely.

Let me now refer to your Editorial in the September Issue of *Federation Samachar*. I wholeheartedly agree with you. We can't be a dumb and deaf community. You have posed a question "What Now?"

The second paragraph of your editorial states that the Africa Federation sought Fair Deliberation and Voting on Clause 20.1. I believe the Africa Federation did vote and did participate fully in the deliberations. Why did the AF delegates feel insecure? Did any one threaten them with physical violence? I believe not. Were they worried of insults and rude behaviour of other members? If the delegates of AF felt that for other members to express their views is an insult to their intelligence, then they should know better.

Moreover if rowdiness during the meeting frightens them they should know that surely booing and wooing happens in lots of meetings where emotions run high. If that is considered an insult or intimidation, then a proverb comes to mind 'if a person can not bear the heat, he should get *Federation Samachar*

out of the kitchen'.

On the so-called insults from the Chair, did the AF Chairman not interrupt a speaker in the middle of a speech? The obvious followed!

On the issue of secret ballot, the President of the WF gave the ruling that there is no provision in the constitution for a secret ballot. The delegates objected but when refused, they kept quiet and did not challenge the ruling. If the Chair is challenged, the constitution says the Chairman has to vacate the Chair to allow discussing the reason of the challenge. That would have given enough opportunity to delegates of AF to insist on the secret ballot.

Meetings are for discussing issues on the agenda concerning a community at any one time and participants need to then express their opinions or suggestions. If the majority present do not agree with one's view, this should be accepted gracefully. But to call it foul play after full participation is not polite.

May I now dwell on another point. In the 1984 Conference, Shabbir Walji moved a resolution which is on record of the WF Minutes of 1994 Ref: 14/conf/94 which reads as follows: "Resolved that the Executive Council shall by the end of January 1995, appoint a subcommittee of suitably qualified and experienced persons to examine, evaluate and make recommendations on the institutional structure, workings, accountability and effectiveness of the World Federation in order to meet the needs of the community and challenges facing it today and the year 2000 and to this end to recommend necessary changes required in respect thereof including structural and management changes." The above resolution was adopted unanimously.

During the 1997 Conference the fate of this resolution was queried. It was then stated that the Executive Council formed a task force of leaders from different parts of the world. In Europe, the Task force included Ahmed Dungersi, Shabbir Walji, Murtaza Lakha and Jaffer Dharamsi. It was agreed that the AF and NASIMCO

would set up a similar task force but they did nothing. Why has there been no action on such an important issue?

The last paragraph of your editorial says that: What the Africa Federation needs from the World Federation is not an overdose of humility, pampering and praise. What does it need? Lot of respect and a lot of say so that the WF is made to take instructions from the AF? Probably this will make the leaders of AF happy to attend conferences and accept to pass resolutions.

Finally may I answer the question you raised in your Editorial - What Now? Let us sit together, be honest with ourselves, sincere at heart to do something for the community together for the pleasure of Allah (swt) and forget about self praise and glory and be humble enough to forgive individual mistakes. All criticisms and no appreciation are roads to disaster!

Let us sort out our differences. We all have the same goal and we all love our community which is the best in the world in every respect of life. Let us not destroy it by petty differences.

Hassanali G N Lakha.

London

A brief answer to the points raised by you follows.

1] Africa Federation's participation does not make the Extra-Ordinary Conference any more constitutional than if it had not participated. When abnormalities surfaced, it was through decorum that AF temporarily condoned some of the shortcomings because after all, it did not want to disrupt a meeting which had drawn individuals from far and wide at by no means a small cost.

2] Rowdiness is not scary but crude and unIslamic;

3] The AF Chairman interrupted the speaker on a point of order;

4] While the views of the majority cannot be disputed, a question that still perplexes the AF is: Was this majority made up of eligible voters?

5] What does Africa need? It needs due respect in meetings to allow it to exercise its democratic rights in the name of Allah (SWT). Editor.

AF should have participated in London Conference

I have seen the latest copy of the *Samachar* and note your views and other letters and comments on the recently concluded WF meeting. I too have my views and I believe that my position should, in all fairness, be correctly represented. In the circumstances and in view of the importance of the debate to all of us in Africa the following are my views:

Prior to the WF triennial Conference on 17 October, 1997 meeting the Africa Federation's secretariat wrote a letter to the WF that it would not participate. In a nutshell, the reasons given were:

- a. The denial, by the Chairman, of a secret ballot on the vote was in "infringement of members rights"; and
- b. The Conference was chaired by "an apparently interested party" and hence the result of the outcome of the vote by a show of hands "be declared null and void"; and
- c. The "eligibility of certain members who attended and voted is doubtful" in that such alleged members "voted purporting to be members of certain Jamaats and or Federation, were neither residents of such Jamaats nor members of such Jamaats nor had they authority from such members of the World Federation".

"This being the case, such members misrepresented the members of the World Federation, their voting be declared null and void, their presence in the Conference unauthorized and illegal."

As a result of the foregoing concerns, the secretariat of the Africa Federation called for (a) the declaration of the whole result of the vote "null and void"; (b) thereafter put the issue of constitutional amendment to a fresh vote at the next conference. It also threatened, on our behalf, that if remedial action was not taken, "Africa Federation's future participation with World Federation" would not be justifiable.

Whilst there may be several responses

to the foregoing allegations, I would like to address the issue at two levels, namely at the legal & procedural level and the social level.

At the technical level, the response to the issues raised may be responded to as follows:

i. Secret Ballot v. Show of Hands:

This is a moot point in view of the constitutional provisions which are silent on the matter. It is of the essence of a meeting that a Chairman has the obligation to decide upon a contentious matter where the Constitution is silent. All who have chaired meetings have been faced with such difficult decisions. Such decisions are never to the satisfaction of all parties. However, members must always respect such decisions, otherwise we cannot run meetings.

In the case in point, there was a request for a secret ballot. The Chairman decided otherwise. The majority of the members present went with the decision. No division was sought by the proposers for a secret ballot. The vote was put and all members participated. There was no notification of protest, withdrawal, or other manner of dissent to be reckoned with. A decision was taken with the participation of everybody eligible. The matter must rest there. With hindsight, we can fault the decision, but in law the decision stands. And that is the point of meetings and democratic conduct. Let us not cry foul now.

At the social level, it may legitimately be argued that given the tensions and the mood of the meeting, the Chairman should have allowed a secret ballot. He should have sought a substantial majority to support the exercise of discretion in a particularly sensitive matter such as a vote on a contentious matter. This would seem to be particularly important when (a) the incumbent would be the largest potential beneficiary of a vote in favour of the amendment; and (b) because his credentials had been unfairly challenged from the floor. There is no guarantee of which

way a secret ballot would have gone.

Secondly, given the three points raised by the Africa Federation secretariat as set out above, a secret ballot would have only put paid the one issue. There is no guarantee that it would not then have raised other issues to fault the meeting procedurally or otherwise.

Despite this, one may well argue and fault the Chairman's judgement call. What one may not do, and we must not do, is to translate that judgement, the lawful exercise of that discretion into its opposite and taint it with the bad faith. What remains, therefore, is to address the issue with sobriety and seek to advise our leaders on how best to approach the issue. The route sought by the Council's office bearers is patently incorrect and not constructive of our interests.

Finally, on this point, let us never be heard to say that a secret ballot was necessary because people feared "Mulla Saheb" and therefore were so hypocritical as to not vote with their conscience unless it was in secret. Let us not be heard to insult the intelligence of our leaders. Let us not allege that we are a hypocritical people whose fear of Allah (SWT) ends in the presence of individuals. That would be a shameful and sad day for us. Indeed, if our leaders believe that of us, then they must resign for they, in good conscience, cannot be leaders of Munafiqeen.

ii. The Chairing of the Meeting by an interested Party: The Chairman offered to step down when his credibility was challenged. He was persuaded by others to reconsider. If our representatives were truly serious, they should have intervened and sought to replace him with an 'independent' or 'non-partisan' Chairman. This they did not do. By their silence, they endorsed his conduct of the meeting. We cannot now be heard to say that he was "an interested party".

(...continued on page 12)

(.....from page 11)

Secondly, in a society where each member is eligible for positions of authority, each one of the members is an "interested party". That is the nature of the associational arrangement. Each of those present at the meeting could have stood for the office of the Chairman of the World Federation. Hence technically the question of an "uninterested party" does not arise; even if a person chaired the meeting on the basis that he was not interested in the seat of chairman of the World Federation, he could subsequently change his mind and stand for office without penalty. The same applies for meetings of the Africa Federation or the local Jamaat.

Unless of course, the suggestion is that a person from outside the membership be brought in to conduct the meeting. That would not be acceptable and an insult to our intelligence and capacity to conduct our own affairs decently and reasonably.

The one reason that may correctly be used to fault the chairing of the meeting is if the Chairman conducted himself in a manner detrimental to the interests of the World Federation by ensuring that no one save himself were able to be elected at the forthcoming electoral process. This has not been alleged. The Chairman cannot be faulted for chairing a meeting where an amendment could potentially allow him to seek a further term of office since the said term of office was not restricted solely to his person.

And yet again, at the social level, the best course of action would have been for the Chairman, having stepped down, not to agree to re-chair the proceedings. The struggle to ensure consensus building in contentious situations is indeed a difficult skill. To let 'justice to be seen to be done', more is needed than mere resort to technical correctness.

Beyond the lessons to posterity, what else can/should we do to ensure that a major component of the WF, i.e. the Africa Federation does not itself get internally divided in order to protect its perceived rights in 'foreign relations' domain?

iii. Voting by non-Members: This is a serious matter and must be addressed fully. I note from the video transcript that the Chairman called out several times for members to examine the list of members and verify their credentials as participants before the matter was put to vote. I am not aware if our representatives did take up the opportunity and examined the list, sought any clarification of the WF secretariat or otherwise lodged any protest. I am also not aware if our Secretariat, subsequent upon finding out that non-members actually voted, immediately notified the WF Secretary General that the said vote was faulty, by how much and whether it indeed affected the results materially. If we have done this, then the WF must respond fully. However, if we are making bare allegations without proof being submitted for scrutiny, then let us not pursue the matter any further for it serves not our purpose.

At the social level, should we be raising this matter after the election results have been announced? Is it proper to do so now? Also, if the Africa Federation has raised a substantial matter as this with the WF, should not there be an appropriate response and the circulation of the list of participants, voters, non-voting delegates etc. to put to rest this fundamental concern?

Secondly, are the matters raised so fundamental to our continued unity as a global Ummah that they have to be raised at this time for our very survival? I believe not. Let us be honest,

fair and just with ourselves as the real reckoning only lies after we have moved on in this world. Let us be conscious not to sow seeds of discord in the Ummah.

Finally, fear has been expressed that when too much water is allowed to pass under the bridge, then it is taken for granted that this is a permanent river and not just a seasonal stream. Let not the community speak of personal differences if such do not exist. We must therefore advise our leaders to seek each other out and with one voice declare the interest of the community over any other. We should not allow a situation of the proverbial elephants to square off, alas to our eventual detriment.

As a member of Nairobi Jamaat, I wish to express displeasure with the approach of the Africa Federation in straining relations with the World Federation. This I do on the following grounds:

1. The World Federation held its Constitutional Amendment Meeting on 7th June 1997 in London where the Africa Federation was present and, with a prior mandate of the Council in full session, took a position to not support the proposed amendment.

Three important issues arose from this participation. The first one was that the delegates from Africa, headed by our leadership, fully participated in the meeting and when a vote was taken,

(...continued on page 13)

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were subsequently outvoted. This is the democratic process that we subjected ourselves to in accordance with the rules of the Constitution.

The second issue concerns the offensive language of one member of the AF who allegedly spoke with the "mandate" of the Africa Federation. If he spoke for us, it is indeed sad that such offensive language could have been mandated by the Africa Federation.

I do not believe so, and sincerely hope that the Africa Federation will, sooner than later, issue a statement disassociating itself from the expressions of arrogance and disdain of other Jamaats expressed under the cover of our mandate. By "our" I mean the ordinary members of the various Jamaats who make up both the individual Jamaats and the Africa Federation and in whose name its leadership acquires credibility and speaks for.

2. At another instance, it is alleged that the Chairman of the World Federation "insulted" the Chairman of Africa Federation and, by extension, the members of the Africa Federation. If this be the case, then an appropriate apology is due to our Chairman and indeed all of us from the World Federation's executive.

The third issue is that we fully participated in the deliberations and decision of the World Federation. It does not lie in our mouths to now state that the meeting was unconstitutional - either in content, governance, process or decision making.

If we participated and did not raise issues of unconstitutionality in good time, then it obliges us to accept democratic decisions in good faith and with grace. That is the responsibility of leadership, and our duty to point out at all times. Justice is a painful right that cuts both ways.

3. It is beyond the powers of the Council's office bearers to call for a boycott or other form of withdrawal from participation in the World Federation without the mandate of the membership in a full Council meeting. This has not been done. It is therefore improper and unconstitutional for the

Supreme Council to take a decision of this nature because it goes to the root of our basic right, for any independent Jamaat, to participate in any associational life of our choosing without the consent of the Africa Federation. Our right to free association, assembly and speech, to hold office and otherwise participate in extra-Council affairs cannot be muzzled or taken away under the guise of membership of the Africa Federation or any other larger arrangement.

The WF is our foremost world body. The Africa Federation is our foremost continental body. These bulwarks and buffers for the community. They unite us, give us direction, support and create opportunity. They promote a vision that sometimes our own narrowness and parochialism blinds us to. We must support these institutions.

We have elected and vested in our leaders an onerous and indeed honourable burden to lead the rest of us and thus save us the responsibility of managing ourselves. For that we must appreciate the courage of our leaders. And we must also call upon them to ensure that unresolved conflict does not put them in a position whereby the larger interest, indeed their oath of office, is affected negatively.

I pray that Allah (SWT) give them the courage of their conviction to put their differences aside and take the bold step forward to lead this community to greater prosperity and the achievement of Allah's pleasure.

Finally I believe that the World Federation Chairman's offer "to express his regrets and apology for hurt feelings" on the part of the Africa Federation cannot, in principle and good conscience, be predicated upon a reciprocal offer of the Africa Federation to participate in the forthcoming conference. This ought not to be so.

If the WF Chairman does believe that his action, however correct in law and procedure, has occasioned hurt feelings on the part of the Chairman or members of the Africa Federation delegation, then the magnanimity is in the unmitigated rendering of an apology for the hurt. It does not derogate from the correctness or otherwise of any action that occasions the hurt. These

are two separate actions. The response is as a result of exercise of authority.

Its challenge lies at a meeting of the same forum under an appropriate item of the agenda e.g. matters arising from the minutes or a substantive agenda item or as A.O.B. The hurt feelings relate not to procedural action but to the manner in which the said action, by authority, is exercised.

Hence the two are unrelated in terms of subsequent consequences. The action stands in law, the manner of its rendering needs to be compensated by an appropriate apology.

Those who seek the forgiveness of the Almighty cannot afford to stint on the forgiveness to each other. The greater reckoning lies when we shall be powerless to forgive and forget. Let us use the power now, whilst it still lies within us. May Allah (SWT) guide us to correct actions at this trying time in our history.

**Murtaza Jaffer
Nairobi.**

Many of the above issues have been clarified in the past two issues of the Samachar. Africa attended the Extra-Ordinary Conference with a serious intention of discussing Clause 20.1. When abnormalities surfaced, it was through decorum that the AF delegation temporarily condoned some of the shortcomings primarily to ensure that the meeting was not disrupted. At one time when the AF raised a protest, this fell to deaf ears---similarly would there have been anybody to lend ears for any further protests, observations or reservations (legal or not).

You are right on the fact that we need to encourage our institutions towards being united. The WF as a parental organisation needs to initiate dialogue with the AF and surely matters can be resolved. As a matter of fact the AF has even written to the WF advising it to refrain from third-party diplomacy and instead to seek direct dialogue. The editorial in this issue may provide a further insight.

Editor

Dear brother,

In Germany and.....

I am living in Germany and am interested in receiving the *Federation Samachar*. Is it possible to include my e-mail address on the distribution list so that I may receive the news automatically when it is printed.

Alternatively please inform me when new issues are transferred onto the World Wide Web.

Mohsin Jiwa
M.Jiwa@t-online.de
Germany

The AF now has its own Web page. The Samachar can be read on this page or the WF page. Editor

Dear brother,

In India and.....

This is to introduce ourselves--- World Islamic Network. We are an Organization which distributes free Islamic literatures round the globe. We would like to have interesting religious videos for our youths.

We would also like to have regular copies of the *Federation Samachar*. Our postal address is: World Islamic Network 67/69 H.Abbas (a.s.)Street, Dongri , Mumbai 400 009, India. E-mail : win@bom4.vsnl.net.in Fax No: 374 5144.

Imran Rasool
Mumbai, India.

Dear brother,

Distribution of Samachar in the UK

After borrowing a copy of *Federation Samachar* from a friend and noticing that people over here are asking for copies, I am willing to act as your representative for Birmingham or England. You can post all the copies to me and I will make sure to forward them to all the Jamaats in England.

Shaukat Najafi
Birmingham, UK.

Thank you for your honorary gesture. Please advise us by e-mail how many copies you will need.

Editor

Federation Samachar

Dear brother,

Presidency needs to be rotated

I have read with interest the letters in the *Federation Samachar* concerning the meeting of the World Federation.

When the EEC was founded in Europe it was to ensure co-operation between European countries. The EEC now enjoys democracy unknown in Europe or Asia. Their presidency is rotated through member states on yearly basis thereby not allowing any one country to dominate the scene. I feel the WF's constitution should change to ensure that the presidency is not dominated by one group permanently and instead there is another one being groomed to take over the next term.

Africa Federation is just as guilty in choosing their resident. There are the same old faces dominating the scene. The question is what is the Africa Federation going to do about it. The Gujarat Council too has been dominated by the same group since its conception. If our community needs to progress any further than what we are today, new blood needs to be brought into the system with amendments to the constitution.

Mohammadhusein S. Rashid
Milton Keynes, UK.

The point of difference between the WF and AF is that the AF constitution bars any President to take more than two terms while the WF recently removed this very restriction in its constitution.

Editor

Dear brother,

A Constitution of convenience?

I wish to present my personal views after watching the video recording of the World Federation Conference held in London, to remove Clause No. 20.1 from the constitution. All the delegates with the exception of delegates from Africa played to the tune of the World Federation.

The AF delegates speaking against the motion cited the example of Iran, where President Rafsanjani vacated the seat according to the constitution and also stressed on a secret ballot system. The AF Chairman speaking against the motion rightly stressed that changing the constitution which was prepared in 1990, even before implementing it was premature. In response Africa was told that Iranian politics should be left to itself and that "we shall keep on changing the constitution as and when we find it necessary".

Mulla rightly left the seat when an appeal was made for a neutral chairman to conduct the voting but then we had those notorious elements who pampered him back. Then came the ruling that voting would be by show of hands and not by secret ballot. Was there a fear that those delegates who supported Mulla would turn their back in secret? If Mulla had vacated the Presidency by keeping the community at heart, he could still have continued with his many good deeds. Reminds one of what Earl Spencer said during Princess Diana's funeral: "Diana needed no Royal title to carry out her good deeds." Please let our constitution not be one of convenience.

Mustafa F. Rattansi, Dar es Salaam.

Dear brother,

Samachar on the net.....

I recently accessed the *Samachar* on the internet. I must congratulate your team for putting in efforts to go electronic.

Habib Dhalla
Edmonton.

Dear brother,

Revisiting Khums

In one of your back issues an issue with regard to the 100% Ijaza held by the WF Chairman was raised for clarification. To this I am advised that there was no response from the WF.

I believe that the Chairman of the WF claims that his Ijaza allows him 100 per cent utilisation. But this Ijaza mentions utilisation of only part of the collections according to the need and obligations. The Ijaza calls for a portion to be remitted to the Marja and the fact that the Marja continues to receive the balance is the evidence that the authority is not 100 per cent.

Can the WF offer us a clarification on this issue which is important for all Muqallideen? So is it a 100% Ijaza or not?

Conscious Khums payer
Dar es Salaam

Dear brother,

Seeking news...

I am writing on behalf of "Baraza", a mail group of students in foreign countries around the world. We keep in touch with news, views and discuss various topics which are present in our daily life. We receive news about Tanzania in general through the Express news paper.

I was given the web site of our community in Dar es Salaam but unfortunately that page is still under heavy construction. We would be very much obliged if you could spare us a few minutes of your time to mail us news about the Khoja Shia Ithanasheri Community of Tanzania in general. This would at least keep us students aware of changes in the community.

I thank you for your co-operation.

Sameer M. Kermalli
Ankara.

The Africa Federation has now launched a permanent site which also has the Federation Samachar online. We also suggest you visit the World Federation website.

Federation Samachar

Dear brother,

Sachedina's answers were not satisfactory

In your interview with Dr. Sachedina you, in all sincerity, gave him the opportunity to clarify issues. But has he replied sincerely and correctly? I believe he has avoided all the pertinent questions. A brief explanation follows:

Q.1 In his reply he says that in order to correct the writings of Goldziher, Dozy, Darmesteter, Bernard Lewis he has written the book. On the contrary, as a believer, have his writings not done damage because of raising doubts?

Q.2 In his reply he says "majority of these copies were bought by University professors." That is exactly why they are raising doubts in the minds of our youth. One prominent lady joined the University in London and a professor gave her Sachedina's book saying: "this is an authentic book on Shiism written by a Shia."

Q. 3/4 In reply he insists on correctness of what he has written.

Q. 5/6 Did Sachedina's silence at the Forum mean he agreed not to defend the book? He says Mulla was reading out of context and between the paras. If this is true, the natural thing would have been for him to defend himself by pointing out to Mulla where he had erred.

Q. 7: You have asked the question: "do you insist on it's correctness?". He avoided the question and did not answer it.

Q. 8: You raised the question on the possibility of withdrawing or rewriting the book. Again he avoided the question.

The crux of the matter is that he insists on the correctness of his writings and does not unambiguously announce the falsity of his writings.

Fidahusein Abdullah Hameer
Dar es Salaam.

Dear brother,

Samachar is late on the internet

We appreciate the fact that the *Federation Samachar* can be read over the internet. However we have noted that the issue is only readable a number of weeks after its actual release. It would be a pleasure to read it earlier.

M. Manek
Karachi.

Point noted. Beginning from this issue, it is planned to host the internet edition on the same day it is first distributed. The Samachar can be read on <http://www.africafederation.org> or <http://www.worldfederation.org>.

Dear brother,

Mutah and family values

The accusation letter against the Shias by K.Zafar that was responded to by Mulla Asgher in the *Federation Samachar*, vol. 30.no. 5 made interesting reading.

One point mentioned in the letter concerned Mutah. I have seen some maulanas strongly prescribe this in their majlises. There are cases where maulanas leave their families in their native countries and because they stay with us for many years they establish contact with local girls. What happens to the desire of their wives back home?

On leadership, I can see that communal leadership is being shared by only a few leaders with some dedicated individuals being deliberately excluded. Is this not wrong?

Ebrahim Lodhi, Nairobi

Family values are strongly prescribed by Islam and Mutah is governed by various Islamic laws. Leadership is dictated by the constitution and there is nothing to hamper a new candidate from seeking Chairmanship. As a matter of fact the AF has recently distributed two circulars calling for new candidates. Editor.

WF and AF should *bury the hatchet*

I was saddened to read letters to the editor column of the *Federation Samachar* (Vol:30, No.5, dated September 1997) as I got the impression that the writers were taking sides. They were either in favour of the Africa Federation or the World Federation thereby causing a deeper rift and more disunity. I expected your editorial column to be more helpful in redressing the situation but was equally disappointed.

As the writers are Shias and lovers of Ahlul Bayt, I expected them to draw lessons from history and try to unite the leaders of these two great organisations in the belief that 'united we stand and divided we shall fall'.

I know both these great leaders and the fact is that the Shia community ought to thank Allah(SWT) for giving us these magnanimous leaders. I personally have benefited a lot from both of them and I pray to Allah(SWT) to give them long lives so as to keep them serving us (Amin). I can therefore perhaps claim to be unbiased. But first, we all ought to appreciate the fact that what the leader of the World Federation said was in the heat of the moment. We are now trying to analyse the situation in a calm and collected manner when trying to blame the leader of the World Federation.

I am hypothesising that the leader of the Africa Federation felt insulted. From my hypothesis the question that I am raising is not what the leader of the Africa Federation did, but what he ought to do after drawing from the teachings of our Imams (a.s). I am going to mention two incidents only. Once a person went to our Imam (a.s.) and without any reason started abusing him. Without getting angry for the insults but calmly and unperturbed our grand Imam (a.s) told the man that he appeared to be a traveller and therefore he must be tired, hungry and thirsty. Our Imam (a.s.) invited that person to be his guest and allowed him

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to serve him by fulfilling his needs.

In another incident a person approached our Imam (a.s) and without any reason or justification started abusing the pious mother of our pious Imam (a.s). Our Imam (a.s) without getting agitated told that person that if what he was alleging was true, he (our Imam) will ask Allah (SWT) to forgive his mother. But if what he said was untrue he would ask Allah (SWT) to forgive him. By God, if only we were to adopt the numerous teachings of our Imam's (a.s) in our daily lives, I see no reason why there would be any misunderstandings, quarrels and factions being created within the community. Such factions and divisions tend to have a detrimental effect on our community as a whole.

In spite of what I have said, should the leader of the Africa Federation decide not to take any action, then I humbly request the leader of the World Federation to act like Hur (the shahid (martyr) of Kerbala) and do what he did (asked forgiveness from Imam Hussein (a.s). By being first in seeking forgiveness from the leader of the Africa Federation, his action would make him immortal in the memories of all of us. For the sake of unity he should never consider himself becoming 'small' for apologising even if in his belief he has done nothing wrong. I then expect the leader of the Africa federation to heed to my advice of '*to err is human but to forgive is divine*' and extend a hand of friendship.

What has happened is that some writers in the columns of *Federation Samachar*, by putting fuel into the fire, are partly responsible for our inability to resolve the matter ourselves until now. May I also bring to the attention of the public that news of our actions, without an iota of doubt, reaches our twelfth Imam (a.s). Do we think that our Imam (a.s) is pleased with our bickering which has led to the matter being unresolved? I leave it to each

individual to do some soul searching.

Mohammed Baker Hemraj,
(Ex-Madressa Teacher of
Daresalaam and Birmingham
Jamaats)
Birmingham, UK.

The theme of your letter - unity - is illustrious and surely the moment of glory for any community is when wisdom prevails over folly. However uniting without resolving and solving ambiguities can easily backfire by subsequently allowing political shrewdness to cause further damage between the parties concerned.

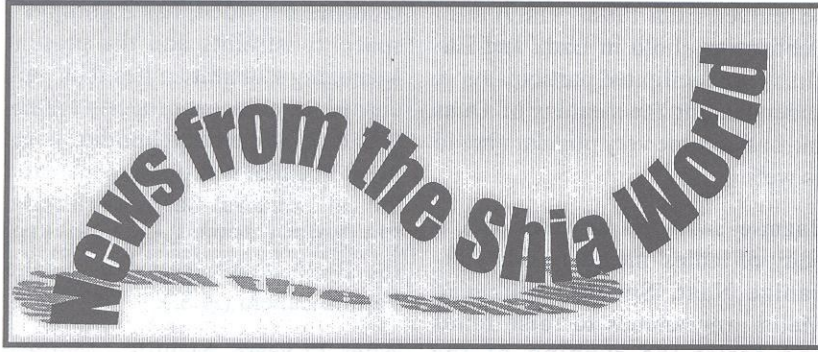
The theme of our last editorial and for that matter, the editorial in the current issue, is to seek unity with constructive dialogue so as to ensure previous anomalies are not repeated. An 'emotional' unity, by allowing bygones to be bygones, would leave many issues uncleared and the community will then always be vulnerable to a repeat of what transpired in the Extra-Ordinary Meeting in Stanmore.

With regard to allowing readers to air their views on the subject, the intention is not to put fuel to the fire but rather to seek constructive viewpoints with regard to where we went wrong. The objective is not to humiliate anyone (*n.b. none of the foul words used by any of the participants has been repeated in our magazine*) but to seek constructive dialogue on the subject.

As a fair communal media we need to hold up a mirror so that we can see our ugly side and change it for the better. To make a difference for the better, journalism has to be sincere rather than being girdled with sycophancy or unctuousness.

And surely, like you say, there are no losers but only winners when parties seek to resolve a crisis.

Editor



Karachi's Mehfil-e-Murtaza marks 25 years

Mehfil-e-Murtaza celebrated the eve of the Wiladat of Hazrat Ali (A.S.) as well as its 25th anniversary of establishment (i.e. Silver Jubilee) on 13th Rajab (13 November, 1997).

Dr. Qalbe Sadiq from Lucknow recited *milad* and Nadeem Sarwar recited *Qasidas*. Founding President, Anverali M. Rajpar and serving President, Hussain I. Haji, also addressed the occasion.

The occasion coincided with Mehfil-e-Murtaza's recent possession of the property adjacent to its current site at a cost of approximately USD 600,000.00. On this plot it is planned to expand the capacity of the present Masjid and to construct a new hall to serve as a ladies *Imambargah* at an estimated cost of USD 230,000. During the occasion an appeal for funds to commence the next stage of the project was made.

In his address, former Mehfil-e-Murtaza President, Anver Rajpar praised the teamwork that accounted for the success of Mehfil-e-Murtaza. He said that from a humble beginning when the Mehfil was established for only religious rites, today the Mehfil-e-Murtaza has successfully branched out into various areas of which the Al-Murtaza school and Zainabia Trust are the most noteworthy. These institutions were floated on the platform of Mehfil-e-Murtaza but are now independent and enjoy wide support from the community.

Rajpar praised the volunteers for their services over the years and commended the current President, Hussain Haji for his zeal towards community work.

History

In the early 1960s, a handful of families came to Pakistan from East Africa, most of whom had well established businesses in East Africa. After the Zanzibar Revolution in 1964, many families migrated to Karachi, and later, after the Union of Zanzibar and Tanganyika (now Tanzania) which was followed by nationalisation of properties, industries and farming, more families migrated to Karachi.

Desirous of maintaining the same tradition of our majalis as in East Africa, these settlers faced difficulties to attend Mehfil-e-Shah-Khorasan and other religious places. Initially there was limited contact with each other in the then new city of Karachi and the 1965 war between India and Pakistan further dampened their morale. Nevertheless the settlers stood to their ground.

Among the few families settled in Karachi, Late Mohammed Sharif Dewji initiated a small gathering at his place every Sunday afternoon to exchange views and share experiences. Slowly this gathering gained momentum and it was converted into religious lectures by Abbas M. Alidina, followed by Maghrib Prayers and dinner. During the month of Holy Ramadhan, nightly Duas used to take place for gents at Mohammed Sharif Dewji's place and for ladies at Mohamed Ali Hansraj's place and at Mehmood M.R. Fazal's place. This continued till the early 1970's. Again the war between India and Pakistan during 1971 was a setback for some families who packed up and returned to East Africa.

In 1972, however, the need was felt to have a proper place to cater for the social and religious needs of these families. Thus, a small group comprising Anver Rajpar, Abdullah Suleman Khaku (Abu), Hussein J. Dhanji, Sherali Manji and others took the initiative and rented premises were acquired off Allama Iqbal Road. Thus, **Mehfil-e-Murtaza was established on 13th Rajab 1393 (1973)**. Within a short period, Mehfil-e-Murtaza gained recognition within the Khoja community and other Shia organisations because of its efficiency, organised system and excellent services.

During the initial short span of three years, the then Managing Committee of Mehfil-e-Murtaza took a bold decision to acquire a plot in Block III, P.E.C.H.S. and build its own Mehfil premises. The foundation laying ceremony was performed on 13 Rajab 1396 (12 July, 1976) by Alhaj Juma Haji. Time was not wasted and construction work commenced very quickly which enabled the opening of the Mehfil's present premises on 23 Zilhaj (25 November, 1978) by Mustafa Gokal.

The expulsion of Asians from Uganda in 1972 saw a further inflow of Khoja families in Karachi. It was during this time that TUKIS Union (Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya Ithna-Asheri Sports Union) was formed with the first ever sports rally being organised at Society Ground. The name of the Club was changed a number of times until 16 years ago when the name was finally changed to Hussaini Sports Club, a name which prevails to this day.

In due course the activities of the Mehfil expanded to the field of religious and social activities. In the field of religious education, the Hussaini Society has produced many outstanding youths in the last 25 years.

Another milestone for the Mehfil was to start a primary school for the community. Rented premises were acquired and Al-Murtaza School came into existence in 1982. The school is now independently run and includes a junior, girls and boys school.

Sensing the need for housing and better living conditions for the less fortunate members of the community, on

(continued on page 18)

(...from page 17)

the 1400th Birth Anniversary of Janabe Zainab Binte Ali (A.S.), Zainabia Trust was formed to eradicate this problem. This organization has done remarkable work for the community and it is hoped that in the near future Zainabia Trust will achieve the goal of providing all deserving members of the community with proper accomodation.

Al-Ghadeer Foundation was formed on the eve of 1400th year of Al-Ghadeer to provide medical assistance to the needy. Unfortunately, due to lack of funds, this project had to be abandoned after five years.

The Zainabia Child Sponsorship Scheme, first established in 1984, was revived in the year 1986. Initially funds were received from the World Federation but after a few years, ZCSS became entirely dependent on local donations. Today over 500 students, both Sadaat and Non-Sadaat, from pre-nursery to professional level, are being sponsored.

In 1991, the community had to face another setback due to the civil war in Somalia. Our Khoja families had to be evacuated by ship to Mombasa with only clothes on their backs. A few of these families opted to settle in Karachi. Mehfil-e-Murtaza, and its subsidiary organizations accepted the challenge and assisted these families by providing accomodation, education and other services. Due to the tough economic climate and civil unrest in Karachi during the mid 1990s, many of these families migrated back to Africa or other places.

The constant instability and violence in Karachi during the 1990s affected every member of the community directly or indirectly. Mehfil-e-Murtaza had to curtail niaz programs during Ashura and Ramadhan in the last few years and adjust timings of its programmes.

During the past 25 years, Mehfil-e-Murtaza took out various monthly and quarterly magazines but due to lack of interest and financial support this has been discontinued. However, it is hoped that a quarterly magazine will

be revived from 1998. The A'maal Publication (both in Urdu and English) has facilitated participants in understanding the meaning of Duas and has become very popular abroad as well.

Bazm-e-Sakina is an independent body of ladies' members. They organize Naat, Speech, Quiz and Mella programmes to raise funds and assist the running of the Madressa and Medical clinic at Orangi. Recently they have taken the task to help generate funds for the construction of the Mosque/Imambargah Madressa at Orangi.

Two years ago in May 1995 a group of concerened mothers found it necessary to start a Madressa which would cater for their children who found it difficult to study in Urdu as a medium. Hence the Al-Murtaza Madressa was started with a mere 10 children on Saturdays on a once a week basis to enable their children to spend some time learning religion.

The first ever programme of Jashn-e-Milad-un-Nabi (S.A.W.) was introduced by Mehfil-e-Murtaza in Karachi where scholars from Islamic schools of thought within Pakistan were invited to participate between 12th and 17th Rabi-ul-Awaal. This is now a regular programme every year.

The 25th February 1995 (24th Mahe Ramadhan, 1415 A.H.) will always be remembered as a day of profound grief and sorrow in the history of Mehfil-e--Murtaza. Fourteen Momineen were martyred on this day. The catastrophe deprived the community of some precious gems including Shaikh Ayub Sabri, our Pesh-Imam, Hameed Ali Bhojani, President of the Khoja (Pirhai) Shia Isna Asheri Jamaat, Mohammed Bashir Mohamed Taki Alibhai a leading social worker and one of the founders of Al-Murtaza school and other social workers and employees of Mehfil-e-Murtaza. (Please recite Sura-e-Fateha).

The recent influx of community members within the vicinity of Mehfil, to avail and benefit from the

facilities provided, has highlighted space constraints and the present Managing Committee has thus purchased the adjacent property for extension of the present building complex. The plot was possessed on the 20th of Jamad-ul-Saani 1418 A.H. (23 October 1997) coinciding with the Birth Anniversary of Janabe Fatima Zahera (A.S.).

After 25 years Mehfil-e- Murtaza has not eased on its drive to grow and the proposed extension s to its present location is a vivid example.

At the time of going to press we could not get the 25th anniversary celebrations speech of current President, Hussain Haji. Editor.

Habib M Habib appointed commissioner in Washington Commission

Habib M. Habib, a prominent member of our community, was recently appointed by Governor Gary Locke as a commissioner to the State of Washington Commission on Asian Pacific Affairs, which is an Advisory Council to the Governor.

Habib is an Accountant/businessman currently residing in Seattle, in the State of Washomhton, USA.. He was born in Zanzibar, Tanzania and moved to London, England in 1965. He served our community there for many years. He was elected President of East African Ithna-asheri Union in 1968 from which evolved the London Jamaat. He co-drafted the constitution of the London Jamaat and went on to become the second President of the Khoja Shia Ithnaashri Jamaat of London in 1973. He was also one of the key members to establish an *attache de World Federation*.

He later moved to the United States, first to Florida and then in 1988 to Seattle. He is currently a Treasurer and Director of Asian Counseling & Referral Service and serves on the Advisory Committee on Affirmative Action for the Everett School District.

Britain agrees to fund Muslim schools

It is a happy new year for Britain's 1.5 million strong Muslim community. Their years of pressure finally paid off when Education Secretary, David Blunkett agreed for the first time to funding of Islamic schools by the State. Blunkett said he had approved two schools, one in London and one in Birmingham, for inclusion in the so-called maintained sector of education.

The decision was quickly welcomed by Muslim organisations. "Such approval has been long overdue," said Iqbal Sacranie, convenor of the UK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs. "It marks an important first step in New Labour's promise to build an equal and inclusive society."

Britain has for years funded schools run by the Church of England, the Roman Catholic Church and the Jewish community but the Conservatives who ran Britain until Labour's election victory last May hesitated to do the same for Muslim schools.

Blunkett said he was satisfied that Birmingham's Al-Furqan school and the Islamia Primary School in the London area of Brent, both for children up to 11 years old, would comply with Britain's National Curriculum which lays down what children are taught. He also expressed hope that the schools would treat boys and girls equally. "I am satisfied that the new schools should provide a good standard of education," he said.

The decision was also welcomed by the Anglican Bishop of Birmingham John Barton. "It is vitally important that no community should be the victim of unjust discrimination," he said. Britain's Muslim population is composed mainly of immigrants from the Indian subcontinent and Africa and their descendants. But it also includes some converts, such as Yusuf Islam — former pop singer Cat Stevens — who founded the Islamia school.

Federation Samachar

From the Desk of the BILAL MUSLIM MISSION OF AMERICAS

report from Ashiq Kermalli

THE FIRST SHIA CENTRE IN THE CARIBBEAN

* Almost all the renovations necessary to apply for the Occupancy Certificate for the First Shia Centre in the Caribbean have been completed. Presently water runs from the taps and lights are all in place. Thus worshippers can make wudhoo comfortably and pray in a very tranquil environment. The Bilal Muslim Mission of Americas (BMMA) however still needs funds to establish the Day Care Centre, The Vocational Centre, The Walk In Library and The Walk In Clinic. BMMA seeks the support of our brethren around the world to donate for this project so that it can be completed before Muharram.

I had the honour to be present for the Jashne Milad on the 15th of Shabaan and it was a very successful and gratifying experience. We gathered for the Maghrib/Isha prayers, then commenced with the amaals of the night of Shabe-Baraat. We concluded the amaal by going to the rooftop (which is now water-proofed) and concluded the prayers under the open sky. It was quite a spectacle. The sky was clear, the weather was perfect and the night reverberated with Allahu Akber and Salawat. We returned to the Second Floor and were served with a scrumptious meal.

Interestingly all the mosques in Trinidad observe this night very solemnly. Almost all Muslims gather in the mosques in their respective areas in the evening and after the Maghrib prayers engross themselves in praying for their dead relatives. Upon inquiry, I was told that this is called "SUBRAAT". They also cook Halwa as "Niyaj" and distribute for the Isaale Thawab of the departed souls. For further explanation I contacted a friend who is an Imam of a mosque in Princes Town near San Fernando. He enlightened me and told me that he heard from his grandfather that this night was actually called "Shabe-Baraat" but was short circuited to "Subraat" in Trinidad. He explained to me that it is a very honourable night and all Muslims pray for their dead ones in one way or another.

When I asked how this tradition had evolved, he explained that in one of the battles where our Prophet Muhammad(s.a.w.) lost his tooth, a sahabi who was not there and heard the news of this tragedy, broke all his teeth and subsequently died. Hence the tradition. We are very fortunate that we celebrate Shabe-Baraat in the most befitting manner. Alhamdulillah.

* In Muharram 1418 the BMMA had sponsored the clearing of more than an acre of land in Trinidad for farming. The exercise is now bearing fruits. The first harvest of hot peppers was made on the eve of Shabe-Baraat. In spite of a broken arm in a car accident and the passing away of his wife, Br. Saifullah managed with his son to prove that farming is THE SOLUTION for the economic upliftment of our brothers in Trinidad. BMMA is now planning to help clear more land and grow more items so that substantial harvests can be realized and sold to generate income for our brothers. A truck is very badly needed for this project as the land is far and transportation in that area is very poor. This project will Inshallah kick off in the near future. Incidentally the cleared land, which belongs to the Government can become the property of the farmer after proper registration. BMMA will make sure that the land cleared will finally belong to our brothers and sisters in Trinidad.

* A few bags of pre owned clothes, shoes and other necessary items including a prayer mat and chador were given to a widow with 6 children who embraced Islam last year. In spite of her economic straits she allowed a small madressah to be held on the verandah of her hut where the children living nearby could receive Islamic education. She lives in a destitute condition, does not have any employment and depends on the part time washing and ironing clothes of the neighbours. There are other families and members who are needy and Inshallah BMMA will present a plan for the same to you all.

London hosts 7th Triennial Conference of the World Federation

The 7th Triennial Conference of the World Federation of K.S.I.M.C. commenced on Friday, the 17th of October 1997 at 8.15 p.m. in London. In his keynote speech, the President of the World Federation Alhaj Mulla Asgharali M.M. Jaffer alluded to the first Conference of the World Federation held in 1976, which had ended on the 17th October. The beginning of this Conference on the same date marks the completion of 21 years, a matter of historical significance.

The Conference was attended by 213 delegates and invitees from 52 cities and 5 continents, with a conspicuous absence from Africa Federation. The observer's gallery was packed to its capacity, under the beautiful and sturdy marquee erected for the Conference.

The Regional heads of the Council of European Jamats, the Khoja Shia Ithnasheri Jamat of Karachi, The Federation of Kutch and Nasimco presented their keynote speeches. The President of the World Federation, in response to Haji Ahmed Bhalloo, President of Nasimco, stated that it was sad to see that Africa Federation had chosen to remain absent. He said, "we are more inclined to conducting a dialogue, rather than confrontation". He assured the house that once the dust has settled and the time is opportune, he would do his best to see that the relation with Africa Federation is normalised.

He further reminded the house that six years had elapsed since the first resolution for eradication of poverty in Gujarat was approved by the Conference. By the Grace of Allah, the World Federation has fulfilled its agenda there by constructing nearly five hundred houses. The next three years, he added, would be focused on the IEB (Islamic Education Board), by activating it all over the world.

The President of the World Federation proceeded to remind the house that the World Federation had not been established by any one individual or

organisation. It was the brainchild of so many like-minded thinkers who had assembled in London in 1975 and 1976, representing many parts of the world. This august body was seen as an umbrella organisation, and not just another "sister Federation". It is now time that our Community, wherever they lived, recognised the World Federation as a parent body, and treated as such.

As a parent body, the World Federation expects to receive full collaboration from its members, enabling it to work and serve without any red tapes and beurocracies. He clearly intimated the house that while the World Federation will endeavour to see that its activities are conducted in unison, and are well received everywhere, no unnecessary red tapes will stop it from working wherever it chooses.

The President made three awards. One was given to Haji Aunalibhai Y. Salehmohamed as World Federation's liaison officer in India. A citation commending his continuous and untiring efforts was read by the President, urging him to continue with the same zeal. Another award, with a glowing tribute, was given to Haji Ahmed Daya, the Hon. Treasurer, whom the President called an "unsung hero". The third was conferred upon Haji Hasnain G. Walji, whose citation ended thus: "This citation is not a farewell message. It is a call to return to the helm and lead the Community."

A comprehensive and brilliantly delivered report of the whole term was presented by Dr. Sibtain Panjwani, the Secretary General. It dealt with the services rendered by the World Federation in all parts of the world, and spoke of our "tryst with destiny", summarised in our slogan: "We exist to serve".

The house noted regretfully that the resolution at the last Conference on the Restructuring of the World Federation had gone in default, as no report had been forthcoming within the given

time frame. It unanimously recommended the Secretariat to endeavour and prepare its own paper on the subject, and submit it to the Executive Council at its second meeting scheduled to meet in February 1998. It was also recommended to take into consideration the paper on Restructuring prepared by the Council of European Jamats.

The following were declared as Elected Office Bearers for the new term (1997 - 2000):

President: Mulla Asgharali M.M. Jaffer
Vice President: Hasnain G. Walji
Hon Treasurer: Ahmed Daya

The President paid warm tribute to Haji Manzooral Kanani, the retiring Vice President. During the past two terms, he said, Manzoor has seen tumultuous as well as placid days. He said that his composure and resilience mark him as one of the best leaders we have. Manzoor retired on health reasons and the President wished him good health and a happy long life and success in his aspirations.

The President as per the power vested in him by the Constitution, appointed Haji Sibtain Panjwani as the Secretary General.

The following were elected by the Conference as Executive Councillors:

- Dr. Ahmed Hassam
- Yasin Rahim
- Dr. Sadiq Rahim
- Shabbir Walji
- Dr. Abbas Moledina

The President, as per the Constitution, appointed the following five Executive Councillors:

- Haider Haji
- Mustafa Jaffer
- Ahmed Dungersi
- Manzoor Kanani
- Masum Somji

A Vote of thanks was passed for London Jamat for its superb hospitality before the Conference ended on Sunday, 19 October 1997 at 3.30 p.m.

CRESCENT VILLAGE elected a new Tenant's Liaison Committee on Sunday November 30, 1997. Out of five candidates Sister Akila Amershi, Pyarali Rustom and Ejaz Merali were elected by about 150 tenants who attended the meeting. The Board of Directors appointed Nazmul Damji and Baqir Alloo to be the Board's representatives in the Tenant's Committee. The new committee has an ambitious program of activities and has taken off with a good start. The Centre has some twelve programs running at present and more are expected to be added.

AL-MUNTAZIR SCHOOL - DAR ES SALAAM was the beneficiary of the International Work, Educational and Cultural Experience Program (IWECE) brain child of Nisar Sheraly and supported by Hassan Hirji of Dar Es Salaam. Sayeda Fayaz Dato, a graduate of University of Toronto and a maths and science teacher of AS-Sadiq spent six weeks with the school staff with students to share her knowledge in Class Management, Lesson Planning, Assessment, The Writing Process and Current Methodology in the teaching of Math and Sciences. She also brought back her experience at the Al-Muntazir Junior School which she intends to use in her teaching career.

The IWECE pilot project continues in its second year and hopefully this year under IWECE there will be nurses, doctors and computer experts besides teachers to take advantage of the program. Students in their fourth year of University or about to embark on post-graduate education are eligible to apply.

Inspirational Quotes

You can't build a reputation on what you are going to do.

You can't create a baby by having 9 women pregnant for one month. (in reference to putting more manpower on a project to get it done more quickly)

DATELINE TORONTO



from Baqir Alloo, Toronto

FINANCIAL SEMINAR: Toronto Jamaat in collaboration with the Bank of Nova Scotia held a seminar on Saturday November 8, 1997. Speaking at the seminar, Nazir Gulamhussein, President of Toronto Jamaat, explained the importance of the financial seminar to our community in wake of ever changing situations in the financial field. He emphasized that by being informed our community members can benefit greatly in trade and in the management of personal finances. He urged community members to be enterprising and seize an opportunity whenever they see one. To do so one has to have the knowledge of how the system works and the seminar was arranged with this aim in mind.

Officials of the Bank of Nova Scotia explained in detail various financial services offered by local banks including generous loans for those who wish to set up their own small business or enterprises. The bank also offers a number of portfolios wherein individual savings can grow and remains ahead of the inflation factor especially when interest rates are at an all time low. Muhsin Khimji raised the question of ethical investment and borrowing in accordance with Islamic Law. He urged the bank to come up with services that Muslims, who form a large section of Canadian demography, are able to join in without going against their religious ethics and values. Bank officials were very responsive to this suggestion. They said that their policy is to be innovative in meeting the demand of all sections of the population but this would have to be worked out with care as it has to be consistent through out the country.

The officials said that there already exist some ethical portfolios that do not include cigarette, alcohol, gambling, armaments etc. They expressed hope to come up with some proposals addressing the need of the Muslim Community in a month's time for assessment. They said they would also look into the possibility of offering interest free loans attached to a programs that would compensate the bank for loss of interest on the borrowed money.

LADIES COMMITTEE staged a hilarious play in Kutchi "Jenamasi Usya Canada" at the Bayview Centre. This was part of the Khushali Season Program and the turn out of ladies was almost 400 which was more than expected. The play depicted the perplexity of an old lady who is forced by circumstances to migrate to Canada and finds herself in an alien culture and environment. Prior to departure she is faced with many "sapetra" to take to Canada and the nagging worry that the house worker Mamadi did not show up for work. In Canada she has to put up with lopsided thinking of the new generation without adherence to the cultural values and conventional wisdom. She ultimately adjusts herself to the new life and also prevails on her married daughter's thinking which in turn brings stability and happiness in her married life.

WILADAT OF OUR IMAMS were celebrated in a grand way during Rajab and Shabaan with very good participation despite winter. Aamal of Nime-Shabaan was conducted by Maulana Syed Muhammad Rizvi and "ariza" were collected and immersed at the harbour front before dawn. Wiladat of Sahebul Asr Al-Hujjat Ajjalahu Farajah was also held at the Crescent Village on Tuesday December 16 when Maulana Rizvi explained to the audience, which comprised of many children, Islamic belief on Mehdi and its development from the early history of Islam in scholarly yet simple way. Rizvi's lecture was well received by the youngsters who urged him to continue deliberations in English for more time when he wanted to switch to Urdu to cater for the older generation.



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OIC Summit in Tehran ...some observations

THE eighth OIC summit in Tehran in December, 1998 which brought together leaders from 55 Islamic countries came at an important juncture in contemporary history. It served to remind the world that the over one billion-strong community of Muslims could emerge as a force to be reckoned with in world affairs. At a time when the pattern of international relations centres round the hegemony of one superpower, it is a significant fact of global politics that the OIC has the potential to balance the preponderance of American power by serving as a countervailing force. A staunch anti-American line was visible in abundance in the Tehran declaration which urged members to defy the American law banning investment in Libya and Iran and condemned Israel for its intransigence vis-a-vis the Palestinians. An organization which has some of the wealthiest nations in the world within its fold and comprises a large segment of humanity, can, if it joins hands and acts effectively, resist American pressure and change the course of history.

The moot point is whether the OIC members have the political will to act concertedly as a united and cohesive body to achieve its goals. But what causes misgivings on this score is that, true to the pattern, the Tehran summit was long on verbal declarations - 142 resolutions full of rhetoric and cliched expressions of approval of this and denunciation of that - but short on implementable plans of action. The five-page document tells us of the stand the conference has taken on key issues such as Kashmir, Palestine, Bosnia, Somalia and Afghanistan. No doubt, it is a principled stand based on morality, justice and international law. But will it make any difference to the ground realities? The fact is that many of these resolutions which have been skilfully drafted gloss over the sharp divisions in the ranks of the OIC members themselves. For instance, on Afghanistan it could not be agreed on who should represent that country in the OIC, to say nothing of mounting an OIC initiative for resolving the conflict there. On other conflicts, too, there is no agreement on how these can

be resolved. Where there is a consensus - on Kashmir, for instance - there is the absence of a well defined course of action to achieve the intended settlement.

It is regrettable that 28 years after its inception, the OIC has remained no more than a talking shop. While it has grown in size and strength, it has failed to enhance its influence in world affairs. This is largely because its members have done nothing to harness their economic and political potential towards that end. They have also not displayed the dynamism and political will needed to translate their ideals into action. They are either torn by their mutual differences and conflicts or are indifferent to the need to devise a collective mechanism to enforce a unified strategy on matters on which they are agreed. The founding fathers of the OIC had always warned against dangers of this sort. Way back in 1974, at the second summit in Lahore, the Algerian President, Houari Boumediene had called for giving material content to the spiritual links between the Muslim countries. This wise counsel has still to be acted upon in devising practical means of cooperation and mutual assistance among the Muslim countries.

Today, the OIC finds itself helpless before the mighty force of world powers which often bully and blackmail one or the other of the Islamic states. In the first place, OIC members have failed to pool their resources to strengthen themselves economically to become self-reliant and independent. Since they are obliged to submit to American economic or political dictate, the OIC states find themselves in too weak a position to play an assertive role.

Being as divided as they are, they can do little to bring pressure to bear upon other powers which are undermining the OIC's position on various issues. The weapon of terrorism adopted by a few marginalized groups in some Islamic countries is a double-edged sword. If sometimes it manages to put the heat on some hostile, non-OIC governments, it also cuts at the roots of the Islamic states. Hence the OIC must categorically condemn vio-

lence as an instrument of policy and devise a conflict-resolution mechanism of its own which can prove effective in sorting out problems and differences straining relations within the fraternity. Such a machinery would help the organization grow into a powerful force by defusing tensions between member states. It would also facilitate the drawing up of an action strategy and implement it to counter external pressures, be they in Bosnia, Kashmir, Palestine or Somalia. One hopes that by the time the ninth Islamic summit is held in Qatar in the year 2000, the framework for giving the OIC such an orientation will have been worked out.

The Tehran Summit's strategic suggestions will lay the foundations for close cooperation between Islamic States, while Iran's Chairmanship of the Conference for the next three years will help ensure such projects and ideas are turned into action. Iran is expected to put the implementation of the summit resolutions at the top of its foreign policy agenda as it now has an unprecedented opportunity to initiate dramatic changes.

Just as Iran was centre-stage during the OIC Summit -and not just because it played host - so Khatami is centre-stage in terms of the new hope that is dawning among ordinary Iranians. Rafsanjani may have described the handover of the government as a transfer of responsibilities rather than one of power, but Khatami is altogether a different leader and the changeover more than merely symbolic. As the country's fifth elected president, his victory was an overwhelming statement in that it secured a political agenda for change and adaptation. Khatami's own language is that of a reformer, not a token liberal. His Summit address was a diplomatic extended hand to the United States as well as a clarion call for genuine unity among Muslim nations based upon realisable goals and realistic considerations.

The fact that there was a record attendance to the Tehran Summit at least indicates that there is a serious intention among Muslim countries to consolidate unity. Time will be the ultimate judge.

Amnesty to prisoners memorizing the Koran

On the eve of Ramadhan, the ruler of Dubai promised to pardon prisoners who memorize Islam's holy book, the holy Quran. Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum said the amnesty would apply to all prisoners jailed for non-violent crimes.

Many Arab Gulf rulers grant amnesties to petty criminals and those accused of minor frauds during Ramadan and on Eid el-Fitr. It was not immediately clear if Sheikh Mohammed's amnesty would continue after the holy month. Dubai is one of the seven emirates that make up the United Arab Emirates. Each Emirate has its own ruler.

JIBA launches on-line directory

Jiba Europe has launched an on-line business directory which enables businesses to submit their details FREE OF CHARGE and make them available to a WORLDWIDE AUDIENCE. All one requires is to have an internet connection to submit one's entry. If you wish to have your business details in the Jiba Europe On-Line Business Directory, follow these four steps:

1. Go to the web page address <http://www.jiba.org/directory.html>.
2. Click on the text which is underlined and says "Business Directory Entry Form".
3. Enter your details, not forgetting to choose the appropriate business category.
4. After entering the details click on the button marked "Submit Entry"

A confirmation message will be displayed showing the details you have entered. Your details will then appear in the corresponding section in a few days time and will be able to be viewed by anyone on the world-wide web.

Saying of the Prophet (SAW) on Suppression of Anger

*He is not strong and powerful,
who throws people down, but he
is strong who withholds himself
from anger.*

Federation Samachar

Iran notches historic soccer victory to qualify for World Cup

For the first time in two decades and the second time in history, Iran qualified for the 1998 World Cup finals in France by beating Australia on away goal points advantage. In Iran the two teams tied 1-1 and in Melbourne, after being two goals down in the 75th minute, the Iranians fought back with two goals in a span of three minutes to equalise the score. With each away goal counting as two, the Iranians emerged victor.

In the first leg, played in Iran, some 110,000 fans in Tehran were stunned when after 19 minutes, 19-year old Leeds striker Herry Kewell gave the Socceroos an early lead. But 4 minutes from halftime, Iran equalised from Khodadad Azizi, sliding the ball past Aston Villa goalkeeper Mark Bosnich from close range. The match ended 1-1 which was a moral victory for the Aussies, who needed only a scoreless draw in the return leg in Melbourne.

Prior to visiting Iran, some officials of the Australian team had launched a disinformation campaign against Iran. On November 18, David Hill, the head of Australia's Football Federation was quoted as saying that "Iran has unsafe drinking water" and that his team would carry its own food and water in Tehran. Some officials or players expressed undue worry that the trip to Iran would be a nightmare and expressed relief that their stay in Tehran would be minimal. The anxiety of the Australians was unfounded and they later confessed to the hospitality of the Iranian people.

During the return tie in Melbourne, booing and whistling was heard and witnessed when Iran's national anthem was played. One fan even tore the net being guarded by the Iranian goalkeeper. The Melbourne match was watched by about 20,000 Iranians residing in Australia and in Iran, life virtually came to a standstill during the match as most Iranians watched the match. Some schools were specially closed earlier to allow students to

watch the game and in many government offices and schools, TV sets were provided to enable enthusiastic fans to follow the game.

Iran's Ambassador to Australia, Mohammad Rouhi-Sefat said that despite the sensitivity of the Iran-Australia World Cup soccer qualifying match, the match was held in the best possible manner. He stressed that there was no tension or quarrel between Iranian and Australian spectators during the match held at Melbourne's Cricket Ground.

He said that at the end of the match, senior Australian officials including the deputy Prime Minister and a number of ministers congratulated him on the victory of the Iranian team. At the end of the game, Iranian nationals residing in Melbourne and other Australian cities took to the streets, like their counterparts back home, to celebrate Iran's successful qualification for the 1998 World Cup in France.

At home, Iranians celebrated on the streets of different cities, townships and villages congratulating each other, waving national flag and strewing flowers, giving away sweets and cakes.

FIFA and Asian Football Confederation officials sent separate felicitations to the Iranian Football Federation for the historic win. The head of the Saudi Arabian Football Federation, Faisal bin Fahd bin Abdul-aziz also congratulated Iran in a telephone call to the Iranian embassy in Riyadh. He also felicitated members of the Iranian diplomatic mission in the Saudi capital.

Fahd Abdulaziz said that Iran deserved the win and that Saudi Arabians also rejoiced on the success. Numerous calls were made to the Iranian embassy world-wide to express congratulations for the victory.

In the World Cup, Iran is drawn into the same group as the United States and for a change, political differences between the two countries will play second fiddle to another issue ---victory on the soccer ground!

Kharrazi confers with diplomats of African states

Tehran, Dec. 31 -- Ambassadors and Charge d'affaires of Nigeria, Sudan, Egypt, Kenya, Morocco, Senegal, Tunisia, Sierra Leone and Guinea called on foreign minister Kamal Kharrazi for a round-table discussion.

The Nigerian ambassador, Ado Sanusi as the representative of the diplomatic Corps from Africa appreciated the success of the summit of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) held in December in Tehran.

He said the Tehran Summit was the only Conference of its kind represented by all the member States. He offered appreciation for Iranian assistance to African nations and called for promotion of the current co-operation between Tehran and African States.

Kharrazi said the Summit was a great event for Iran and the Islamic States because it manifested the solidarity and unity of the muslim world. He said the African states also undertook an important role in this respect.

Kharrazi added that Iran will follow up the approvals of the OIC summit in Tehran and will work jointly with the member states to enhance the level of co-operation between them. He said that Iran and the African States now have a wide-scale co-operation through the OIC, the Non-aligned Movement (NAM) and the United Nations.

Iran cautions Pakistan

Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, cautioned Pakistan's leaders that sectarian violence could spread, thereby further deepening the intra-Muslim conflict in Pakistan. He said, "If justice is not upheld, other religions may consider defending themselves."

He said the killing of Shias "has a great bearing on relations" between Iran and Pakistan. "Those who oppose these relations are behind the assassinations of Shia Muslims," Khamenei added, calling on Pakistan's leaders to pursue those responsible for the attacks.

Dateline Iran

by a correspondent

Iran's progress...on CNN

The Editor of an English environmental magazine *Earth Times*, Pramay Gupte, who visited Iran in November, 1997 after twenty years to investigate social changes in the country told the American TV-network CNN that he was surprised by the changes he saw in the Islamic Republic.

Gupte, who had covered the Islamic revolution for the New York Times some twenty years ago, said he observed changes in the fields of literacy, the role of women in social development and in family planning. He said, "each of these were really a surprise to me. In Iran there is also the other revolution which really has to do with increasing literacy, getting health care widely available and bringing down the population growth rate" Gupte told the CNN on the 30-minute programme *Insight on Iran*.

He said, "educational facilities are more and more available to young people...every child does go to primary school. This is not just what the Iranians are saying but even outside observers like the United Nations and the World Bank. Statistics indicate something quite extra-ordinary, which is nearly a one hundred percent primary school enrolment."

Iran calls on Muslim world to end indifference to Algeria massacres

Tehran -- Iran has condemned the massacre of civilians in Algeria, and called on the Muslim world to end its "indifference" in the face of such "odious crimes." The official Iranian news agency IRNA quoted Iranian foreign minister Mahmoud Mohammadi as saying the "world of Islam, especially in the auspicious month of Ramadan, should not remain indifferent towards such shocking events." He also said that "the continued torture and massacre of innocent women and children in Algeria by whatever side is condemnable and repugnant." The Iranian official added that the agents behind such "suspicious crimes have remained unknown." He also said "the silence of international organizations" in the face of such killing was "unjustifiable." Recent massacres, particularly in the month of Ramadhan have left hundreds dead following brutal attacks in which even children were not spared. Algiers has previously accused Iran of supporting armed Islamic opposition groups in Algeria, which it accuses for the massacres. Algeria broke relations with Iran in 1993.

Indian activist lauds status of Iranian women in society

A leading Indian activist for women affairs lauded the progress made by Iranian women in social, cultural and political areas. Speaking to the English language daily 'Tehran times' on 8 January, 1998, Suguna Pathy said, "I am really very much impressed to see Iranian women working in all branches of society."

Pathy who was in Iran on a cultural visit said that Iranian women command great respect in society which can be noticed after having a look at various offices, universities and even in the streets.

Iran publishes Persian translation of holy Qur'an in Cyrillic alphabets

Iran has published a Persian translation of the holy Qur'an in Cyrillic alphabets for Persian-speaking Muslims in the central Asian states and Tajikistan.

An advisor to the Iranian Minister of Culture and the Islamic Guidance, Ali Asghar She'r-doust said his Ministry has published 10,000 copies of the Persian translation of the holy Qur'an.

CELEBRATIONS IN LONDON

The London (Ontario) Jamaat commemorated 3rd, 4th and 5th Shabaaan birthdays of Hazrat Abbas (A.S.), Imam Husain (A.S.) and Imam Zainul-Abidin (A.S.) on Friday December 5, 1997. The program for the evening started with duas and surahs followed by presentations. The children present were from ages 7 to 12. In three groups they focused on a brief history of the two Imams and Hazrat Abbas (A.S.); and the significant roles each one played in Islam. A description of their invaluable contributions to Islam was shared as well as the many moral and religious values inherent in their lives. All the practising and effort put forth by the children came to fruition in the confidence they demonstrated as they spoke and participated with interest. The events of the evening including the recitation of munajaat were enjoyed by all. The memorable evening ended with a variety of "fatiyas" and the children were complimented with "take home" chocolate treats.

THE LEARNING CENTER....

"An hour spent in the acquisition of knowledge, is better than sixty years of worship" Holy Prophet (S.A.W.)

"Teacher, teacher, stop talking, I want to learn my maths." It becomes apparent by this phrase that the children of the Learning Centre in Toronto or as popularly known as the "Homework Club" are quite enthusiastic about this unique learning experience. This environment is achieved by providing interactive sessions for the children. Games, crafts and group activities enable the children to improve their math and language skills while enjoying themselves. As a matter of fact, some children are so enthusiastic about this program, that they even insist to attend on holidays.

The Learning Centre is successfully in its second term of operation. The organization is in close contact with H.G. Bernard Public School which has a sizeable population of our community students. The teachers have been very accommodating in providing information and tools in accordance to the children's abilities. One-on-one sessions are held on Monday nights and a reading club is held on Wednesday nights where the children also play many games for enhancing their spelling, maths and comprehension skills.

Allentown win Orlando volleyball tournament

The Union Sports Club of Orlando, Florida hosted a Christmas Volleyball tournament on 26 and 27 December, 1997 which was contested by the following teams:

Union Islanders Sports 'A', New York; Union Islanders Sports 'B', New York; Union Allentown United Stars Volleyball Club, Toronto786ers, Montreal Union Sports Club, OrlandoUnion Sports Club 'A', OrlandoUnion Sports Club 'B' and OrlandoUnion Sports Club 'C'.

The games were played with the following regulations: •Best of Two (2) •2-0 victory gets winner three (3) points. •1-1 tie gets each team one (1) point. •Top two (2) teams get bye to semi-finals.

Results:

Toronto beat Orlando 'C'2-0, Orlando 'A' beat Montreal 2-0, Allentown beat Orlando 'B' 2-0, New York 'A' beat Montreal 2-0, Orlando 'A' beat Orlando 'C'2-0, Toronto beat New York 'B'2-0, Orlando 'B'beat Orlando 'C' 2-0, New York 'A' beat New York 'B'2-0, Allentown beat Toronto 2-0, Montreal beat Orlando 'C'2-0, Orlando 'B'beat New York 'B'2-0, Allentown beat Orlando 'C'2-0, Toronto tied with New York 'A'1-1, Allentown beat New York 'A'2-0, Orlando 'A'beat Orlando 'B' 2-0, Allentown beat New York 'B'2-0, Toronto beat Montreal 2-0, Orlando 'A' tied with Allentown 1-1, New York 'A' beat Orlando 'C' 2-0, Montreal beat Orlando 'B' 2-0, Orlando 'A'beat New York 'B' 2-0, Toronto beat Orlando 'B' 2-0, Allentown beat Montreal 2-0, Orlando 'A' tied with Toronto 1-1, Orlando 'C' beat New York 'B' 2-0, Orlando 'A' beat New York 'A' 2-0, New York 'A'beat Orlando 'B'2-0 and Montreal beat New York 'B' 2-0.

In the Quarter – Finals Allentown and Orlando 'A' had a bye to the semi-finals while Toronto beat Orlando 'B' 2-0 and New York 'A' beat Montreal 2-0. In the Semi-finals, Toronto United Stars beat Orlando Union 'A' 2-1 while Allentown Union beat New York Union 'A' 2-1. In the finals Allentown Union beat Toronto United Stars2-0 to become champions.

"Pilgrims' Guide: Selected Supplication"--- a new book on hajj & Umra

The second edition of "Pilgrims' Guide: Selected Supplication" has been recently printed. It contains all the main du'as and a'mals to be performed when performing 'umra and hajj. All the dua's, amals and ziyarat have been translated to English.

Your hajj/umra will be more spiritually meaningful as you will be able to understand the supplications at every stage of your journey. The second edition also contains the du'a of Arafa (in Arabic and English) and the Ziyarat of individual Imams in Medina. It also contains some useful maps of al-Baqi, the Prophet's (SAW) mosque and the Ka'ba. Copies can be obtained from Mihrab publishers, Tayyiba Publishers, Alif International and the World Federation.

TORONTO'S JAFFARI ISLAMIC LIBRARY IS WELL UTILISED

The Jaffary Islamic Centre Library in Toronto which was setup in March 1992 at the Bayview Mosque has been moved to 9000 Bathurst. It operates every Sunday from 10.30 AM to 2.00 PM. The library gives an added advantage to the students and teachers of the Bathurst madressa of having resource materials on its premises. It even caters to the youngest children who enjoy the videos of ADAMS WORLD. The youths also have information and research material at their disposal for their projects.

Besides the main library, there is now a reference and reading room for everybody. This room provides a quiet time for anybody who wishes to do some research and read quietly during the madressa time. Many students and adults utilize this room for their work. This room also has all the current and back issues of popular Community magazines and newsletters and has facilities to serve as a video presentation venue for the madressa students.

COMMUNITY YOUTHS EXCEL IN CANADA'S PYTHAGORAS MATHS CONTEST

Last year when seven Grade 6 students sat for the national Pythagoras Maths Contest they did very well. This year, 22,000 students across Canada participated in the contest. The Canadian average was 22.59. As-Sadiq's (the community's school) average was an outstanding 28.86! Out of seven students, six scored above the Canadian average. They each earned a Certificate of Distinction for scoring above the national average. A very special award was given to Tahir Jaffer who was placed in the top 10% of the nation.

DATELINE LOS ANGELES

from Gulamabbas Dhalla, Los Angeles

SHAB-E-BARAAT IN LOS ANGELES

On the eve of the 15th Shaban, Sunday December 14, 1997 the blessed night of Shab-e-Bara'at and Birth anniversary of our beloved Imam Hujjah, Mahdi Sahib-uz- Zamaan (AS) was celebrated with great enthusiasm and anticipation at the Los Angeles Huseini Imambara.

Not to be outdone by the Christmas and Hanukah celebrations that our children see and often ask about, the Imambara was alive with decorative lights. The Hussaini Madresah distributed take away bags to the children with a special imprint reading "Happy birthday Imam-e- Zamana" and it certainly added to the festive atmosphere.

The anticipation was building as the Shia Ithna-Asheri Islamic Jamaat of Los Angeles (SIIJLA) had invited Dr. Abdulaziz Sachedina to recite the Majalis on this happy occasion. The attendance was very diverse. There were a number of individuals from other Shia organizations, including the President of the Fatima Islamic Center, Abbas Ali Khan and the Dr. Ridha Hajjar, President of Ahlul Bayt Mosque.

The program started with recitation from the Holy Quran and kasidas. The President of SIIJLA, Iqbal Somji, then warmly welcomed the guest speaker and requested Sadik Alloo to introduce Dr. Sachedina to the community.

In the introduction Sadik Alloo said that Dr. Sachedina is perhaps the only Khoja scholar, from East Africa, who can intelligently and effectively discuss, debate and communicate whether it is discussing issues of religion with the Ayatollahs in Qum, or participating and presenting the Islamic stand on Medical Ethics to the policy making committee of the United States Congress. In spite of his great demand and stature, Dr. Sachedina is still very approachable by the young and old alike. He is continuously invited and addresses a very wide variety of audiences through out the world from North America to South Africa, be they Arabs, Khojas, Indians, Pakistanis, Persians etc., and addresses most of them in their own languages.

The theme of the Majalis was: "What Does the Belief in Imam al-Mahdi (AS) Entail?" Dr. Sachedina opened the lecture with a large question about our knowledge of hidden matters. As God has made it clear in the Qur'an, beside the knowledge that is acquired through our senses, the Almighty has also provided us with the knowledge and certainty that are available through our "heart." It is this knowledge through the heart that assures us the presence of our Twelfth Imam (AS) amongst us. He went on to discuss the issue of the birth of Imame Zamana and the modern scientific research in genetics that makes the Imam's long life a Divinely planned certainty. He then challenged the audience to consider the difference between "believing" and "knowing" the presence of our Twelfth Imam and to experience the presence rather than be simply satisfied with the belief in the Imam. Such a differentiation has an impact upon our actions as we respond to the 'presence' rather than mere belief in the Imam.

Sachedina's material and outlook was refreshing. It brought several unsolicited praises. Amongst them was a young man who commented "the Majalis today was too short, I wish it had continued for a little longer." Dr. Sachedina also prepared and circulated detailed information of the a'amal of 15th Shaban, with Du'as in Arabic and with transliteration and translations in English. The A'amal was led by Dr. Sachedina in conjunction with Br. Amin Dhala.

AS-SADIQ SCHOOL STUDENTS PERFORM ABOVE AVERAGE

In the first-ever province-wide assessment of primary students in Ontario held last spring by the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO), As-Sadiq School Grade 3 students performed well above average in reading, writing and math. The assessment was performed over a period of 10 days and was conducted by the independent agency, EQAO.

Based on provincial standards and curriculum the tests were graded on a scale of one to four, with level one the lowest and most students expected to fall within levels two and three. The table below is a comparison of As-Sadiq School students' performance vis-a-vis the performance of students in the surrounding School Boards. The numbers reflect the percentage of students who finished at levels three and four. The School Boards are listed in decreasing order of achievement:

York Region Separate	58%
As-Sadiq School	57%
Peel	56%
York Region Public	55%
Dufferin Peel Separate	49%
North York	49%
Scarborough	49%
York	49%
East York	47%
Metro Separate	47%
Toronto	47%
Etobicoke	46%

The interpretation of the results however must be made in a proper context of full student learning. Comparison with other school Boards results have to be interpreted in light of other variables that may not be very obvious to outsiders.

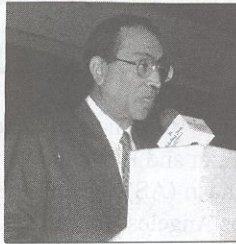
Ramadhan bloodbath in Pakistan

Unidentified gunmen killed 23 Shi'ite Muslims and wounded 35 others on 11 January, 1998 in the Pakistan city of Lahore. The killings have been linked to religiously motivated violence that has claimed hundreds of lives in Pakistan over the past few years.

The gunmen opened fire on participants of a religious gathering at a graveyard in Lahore. Witnesses say three men armed with automatic weapons arrived in a jeep, as members of the minority muslim Shi'ite community were gathered for a religious ceremony. While one kept guard at the gate, the other two went into the graveyard and opened fire at point-blank range on people listening to a sermon. The gunmen escaped after the attack.

Federation Samachar

JIBA re-elects Rajpar as Chairman in Karachi Conference



The 7th JIBA International Conference was held in Karachi on 25 and 26 December 1997. Simultaneously a 4 day Trade Exhibition was also held where 40 JIBA members exhibited their products and services.

A hesitant Anverali Rajpar had to bow in to the unanimous pressure of the delegates to be re-elected as International Chairman but he made it clear that this would be his last term. The next conference will be held in Dubai between July and August 1999.

The Conference decided to have a lean International Secretariat. Besides the Chairman, Mr. Nisar Virani was re-elected as Honorary Secretary and Shaney Haji as Honorary Treasurer. The office bearers were mandated by the conference to appoint not less than three Committee Members. They appointed:- Nisar Nayani, Zulfikar Mooraj and Gulam Abbas Badami.

In order to have effective co-ordination between the International Secretariat and individual Chapters, Nisar Nayani has been assigned the task of liaison officer with the Karachi Chapter whereas Zulfikar Mooraj will liaise with Overseas Chapters. The Chapters are requested to kindly co-operate with them.

JIBA WEB PAGE

JIBA International will very soon go on Internet but the International Secretariat is meanwhile pleased to announce that JIBA Europe already has its own Web Page. This page contains useful information about JIBA.

BUSINESS/EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The International Conference was informed that business and employment opportunities exist in Australia, Dubai, Zaire and Iran. Interested members may contact the Chapters directly.

RELIANCE INSURANCE COMPANY (TANZANIA) LIMITED

JIBA Tanzania reported to the Conference that the issue of Shares in the above Company valued at US \$ 1 million was over subscribed. It is expected this Company will commence its operation during the first quarter of 1998. A five member board of directors has already been appointed by the shareholders with Mr. Anverbhai Rajpar being the Chairman.

massacre was carried out by members of Sipah-e-Sahaba, a militant Sunni Muslim organization. The Sunni group has been previously linked to violence against members of the country's Shi'ite minority. However a spokesman for the Sipah-e-Sahaba denied involvement in Sunday's attack and condemned it.

Shi'ites make up about 15 percent of Pakistan's population, which is mainly Sunni Muslim. Violence between militant groups from both sects last year claimed more than two hundred lives in Pakistan's Punjab province, of which Lahore is the capital.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif cited the religious violence as the rationale for giving police sweeping new powers last year to battle terrorism. However not many arrests have been made in this connection.

Sachedina responds to critics of his Encyclopedia article

Excerpts from the article on ISLAM written by Abdulaziz Sachedina in Encyclopedia of Bioethics Vol 3, [Pages 1289 - 1297], Warren Thomas Relch, Ed. 1995, Simon & Schuster Macmillan NYC, ISBN 0-02-897355-0 were recently circulated by e-mail from UK questioning his status as a Shia Scholar and Zakir.

In his article, Sachedina wrote: The Prophet (SAW) "Left no explicit instructions regarding succession to his religious political authority"

Analysts then asked: So what happened at Ghadir then? Mubahela? Dawate Zul Asheera?

Sachedina also wrote: "The Muslim community has continued to live in the shadow of the idealized history of early Islam, when religious and secular authority was united under the divinely guided Caliph."

The analysts asked: Who are these divinely guided Caliphs and how many? Four or one?? Or more? Muawiya was a Caliph so was Yazid!

Sachedina also wrote in the same article: "Islamic legal theory recognized four judicial decisions: the Quran, the sunna, consensus (Ijma) of early community of Muslims and analogy (qiyas).."

The analysts questioned: Our Shii Ulema do not understand Ijma as the consensus of early Muslims nor do they recognize the concept Qiyas - so whose legal theory is this?

In the same article Sachedina went on to mention: "Al-Shafi (d 820) a rigorous legal thinker, systematically and comprehensively linked all the four sources in order to derive the Sharia to cover all possible contingencies."

The analysts remarked: The work of Aimma (AS) especially from the time of Imam Jafer Sadiq AS and the Ulema is therefore redundant or of no consequence if Al-Shafi covered all the contingencies.

Sachedina also said in the same article: "The legal school that followed the Iraqi tradition was called Hanafi after Abu Hanifa the great Imam in Iraq ... Shiites developed their own legal school, whose leading authority was the imam Jafar Sadiq"

The analysts pondered: Abu Hanifa is the great Imam of the Muslims while imam Jafer Sadiq (AS) is merely the imam (with a small I) and a leading authority of the Shiis?

Sachedina also mentions in the same article: "Segregation of the sexes as required by the sharia has led to untold problems..."

The analysts are not amused. They say: "Oh really?? So now we know why we must have mixed gatherings? Remove all the barriers?? No wonder our youths are so enamoured by such concepts!!!"

Sachedina goes on to say: "The Prophet opposed the custom (of female circumcision) found among pre-Islamic Arabs. However the sharia does not regard it as obligatory. It is merely a recommended act."

The analysts are irked: "So now what the Prophet opposed has become a recommended act!!! What sort of an aqida is this? Whose sharia is this??"

Sachedina also mentions that: "Muslim Jurists are faced with a crisis because by its own standards, Islamic jurisprudence has ceased to progress towards some further stage of development."

The analysts retort: "We now learn that the ijtehad by the great mujtaheedin is fossilized and there is no progress. Has the whole concept of Ijtehad by the Naibs of Imame Zamana (AF) become inconsequential? Indeed, is the very belief in Imame Zamana as the Jujja is inconsequential too??"

The *Samachar* obtained the following response from Abdulaziz Sachedina to the questions and observations made against his article in the Encyclopedia of Bioethics.

"In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Beneficent.

Please note the following response to the comments made on the excerpts from my article in the Encyclopedia of Bioethics (1995) that were circulated by e-mail from UK:

EXPLICIT VERSUS IMPLICIT INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING SUCCESSION:

On the question whether there were no EXPLICIT instructions regarding succession to the Prophet's "religious-political authority" let it be clear that the statement while asserting that there were no EXPLICIT (that is, distinctly expressed, clearly stated, not merely implied) instructions in the matter of succession to the "Prophet's religious-political authority," it asserts by implication that there was an IMPLICIT (that is, necessarily involved though not plainly expressed) direction in the matter. This implicit direction of the Prophet was expressed on several occasions in his life-time, including finally at al-Ghadir.

It was also because of this absence of explicit statement on these occasions that Imam 'Ali never used any of these occasions, including al-Ghadir, to put forward his candidacy as the only rightful successor of the Prophet.

THE "DIVINELY GUIDED CALIPH," THE MAHDI:

On the question of the "divinely guided" Caliph, there is only ONE such "divinely guided (al-mahdi)" Caliph

(continued on page 30)

[.....from page 29]

who is awaited by the entire Muslim community. The translation for "rashidun" is "rightly guided" and NOT "divinely guided." Hence, the religious and secular authority was or is to be united in future only in such a "mahdi" caliph. It is up to the reader to identify that final authority.

THE MUSLIM LEGAL THEORY AND ITS SOURCES:

On the number of sources recognized by the Muslim legal theorists, and not necessarily Ja'fari school of Islamic law, the article simply records the four sources acknowledged by the majority of the schools of law. The article at no point pretends to write about Shi'a law.

AL-SHAFI'I, THE SUNNI LEGAL SCHOLAR:

On the role of al-Shafi'i in the Sunni legal thought, the statement of the article is historically accurate. It is not in the process of evaluating the Shi'i legal system at all. The influence of al-Shafi'i on Shi'a legal scholars is well-documented in history. These scholars in tenth-eleventh centuries were living in a far open and tolerant intellectual climate than can be imagined by the Muslims today.

THE RIGHT SCHOLARLY MANNERS:

On the objection to calling Abu Hanifa the "great Imam (teacher)," the article follows the rules of decency that are part of the scholarly convention as much as the teachings of the Ahlul-Bayt, and nothing more. The Ahlul-Bayt have required their followers not to trespass the boundaries of decent human conduct, even when they deal with their enemies. The article uses "the" with "imam" for Imam Ja'far

al-Sadiq, thereby asserting the theological dimension of the role of the Imam in Shi'a Islam being more than just a 'teacher.'

PROBLEMS OF SEXUAL SEGREGATION IN MEDICINE:

On the question about the "untold problems" generated by segregation of the sexes as required by the shari'a, the article observes this in the context of "the teaching and practice of medicine today." The paragraph then goes on to list the problems faced by the students and practitioners of medicine in the area of "closely examining and touching the reproductive organs...; looking at photographs of naked persons for studying physiology and anatomy;" and so on.

THE PRE-ISLAMIC PRACTICE OF FEMALE CIRCUMCISION:

On the controversial and persistent practice informed more by culture than the shari'a is the question of female circumcision which has been internationally criticized, including by the Shi'a country like Iran. The article questions the validity of pre-Islamic custom which was sanctioned as recommended by the Sunni jurists.

MUSLIM JURISTS TODAY:

On the question of the crisis faced by the Muslim jurists in directing the life of the community today, it remains a highly debated question even in Qumm where several volumes of jurisprudence were authored to examine the role of time and place in the judicial decisions made by the Muslim jurists in history.

It is certainly dishonest to claim the comprehensiveness of the system today when in practice it directs Muslim life only partially. Is the problem with the religion of God, al-Islam, or with the scholars of Islam?"

People find inspiration in many different thoughts and words. Some inspirations follow:

- * "Do it for God and it works for good. Do it for good and it works for God"
- * Never miss an opportunity to keep your mouth shut.
- * "Limitations live only in our minds. But if we use our imaginations, our possibilities become become limitless."
- * You miss 100 % of the shots you never take.
- * If you don't have time to do it right, how will you have time to do it over?
- * Eat to live, don't live to eat!
- * When you are first married, never do anything in the first year that you don't plan to do the rest of your married life.
- * Always tell the truth—because if you always tell the truth, you won't ever have to remember what you said.
- * No one will CARE how much you KNOW, until you SHOW them how much you CARE!
- * There is no limit to what a man can do or how far he can go if he doesn't mind who gets the credit.
- * Vision without action is merely a dream: Action without vision is merely passing time.
- * Management is like the glue that holds together a fine piece of furniture. When properly applied, the structure is strong and the management is not seen.

Khatami explains Iran's stance to the CNN



The following is a full text of the interview by C.N.N.'s Christian Amanpour with Mohammad Khatami, the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, on January 7, 1998.

" Q: Mr. President a month ago you announced you had a historic message to deliver to the people of America. I understand that message will take the form of a short address and then we will discuss the issues.

A: In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. At the outset, I would like to congratulate all free and noble men and women, especially the followers of Jesus Christ (peace be upon him), on the occasion of the New Year. I take as a good omen the concurrence of the Christian New Year with the Islamic month of Ramazan, the month of edification and self-restraint that has been the goal of all divine prophets.

We are at the close of the 20th century, leaving behind a century full of inequality, violence, and conflict. We pray to the Almighty to enable us to begin a new century of humanity, understanding, and durable peace, so that all humanity would enjoy the blessings of life. Once again I would like to present my felicitations to all the followers of Jesus Christ, to all human beings, and particularly to the American people.

I have said earlier that I respect the great American people. In this short span of time, I wish to briefly present my analysis of the American civilization so that my remarks would not be taken as political nicety or a mere play on words.

The American civilization is worthy of respect. When we appreciate the roots of this civilization, its significance becomes even more apparent. As you know, in Plymouth, Massachusetts, there is a rock which is respected and revered by all Americans. The secret of American civilization lies in this rock. In early 17th century, those 125 men, women, and children who left England in search of a virgin land to establish a superior civilization finally landed on this rock. The reason why the American people respect this rock is that it was the place where the Puritan pilgrims first landed. From then on, the Americans celebrate the last Thursday of November as Thanksgiving Day, thanking God for this success bestowed upon them. The American civilization is founded upon the vision, thinking, and manners of the Puritans. Certainly, others such as adventurers, those searching for gold, and even sea pirates, also arrived in the U.S. But the American nation has never celebrated their arrival and never considered it to be the beginning of their civilization. The Puritans constituted a religious sect whose vision and characteristics, in addition to worshipping God, was in harmony with republicanism, democracy, and freedom. They found the European climate too restrictive for the implementation of their ideas and thoughts.

Unfortunately, in the 16th, 17th, and even 18th centuries, there was a serious clash between religion and liberty. In my opinion, one of the biggest tragedies in human history is this confrontation between religion and liberty which is to the detriment of religion, liberty, and the human beings who deserve to have both. The Puritans desired a system which combined the worship of God with human dignity and freedom.

This civilization was founded in New England and gradually spread to the entire America and it even clashed with certain evil trends which had caused slavery in certain states and ultimately succeeded in abolishing sla-

very. There were numerous martyrs who gave their lives for this cause, the most famous of which was Abraham Lincoln, the strong and fair-minded American president.

This civilization is best described by the renowned French sociologist Alexi de Toqueville who spent some two years in the U.S. in the 19th century and wrote the valuable book entitled "Democracy in America", which I am sure most Americans have read. This book reflects the virtuous and human side of this civilization. In his view, the significance of this civilization is in the fact that liberty found religion as a cradle for its growth, and religion found protection of liberty as its divine call. Therefore, liberty and faith never clashed. And as we see, even today Americans are religious peoples. Therefore, the Anglo-American approach to religion relies on the principle that religion and liberty are consistent and compatible. I believe that if humanity is looking for happiness, it should combine religious spirituality with the virtues of liberty.

And it is for this reason that I say I respect the American nation because of their great civilization. This respect is due to two reasons: the essence and pillars of the Anglo-American civilization and the dialogue among the civilizations.

You are cognizant of the great heritage of the Iranian nation with its glorious civilization and culture. Iran's glorious civilization was concurrent with the Greek city states and the Roman Empire. After the advent of Islam, the Iranians ardently embraced it. The blend of Iranian talents and the sublime Islamic teachings was a miracle. Without intending to deny the share of other nations in the formation of the Islamic civilization, I believe the great Iranian civilization had a major role in developing and promoting the Islamic system.

Over the past two centuries, the Iranian nation has striven to establish

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liberty, independence, and a noble way of life. The Constitutional Movement appeared in Iran around a century ago with an incessant struggle with colonialism. Ultimately, the Islamic Revolution had - and should have - two directions: First, an interpretation of religion which couples religiosity with liberty. Of course, now that four centuries have passed since the beginning of the American civilization, human experience has taught us that prosperous life should hinge on three pillars: religiosity, liberty, and justice. These are the assets and aspirations of the Islamic Revolution as it enters the 21st century.

In terms of the dialogue of civilizations, we intend to benefit from the achievements and experiences of all civilizations, Western and non-Western, and to hold dialogue with them. The closer the pillars and essences of these two civilizations are, the easier the dialogue would become. With our revolution, we are experiencing a new phase of reconstruction of civilization. We feel that what we seek is what the founders of the American civilization were also pursuing four centuries ago. This is why we sense an intellectual affinity with the essence of the American civilization.

Second, there is the issue of independence. The American nation was the harbinger of independence struggles, the initiator of efforts to establish independence, for whose cause it has offered many sacrifices, leading ultimately to the Declaration of Independence which is an important document on human dignity and rights.

Finally, I should refer to the struggles of the Iranian people over the last two centuries which culminated in the quest for independence during the Islamic Revolution launched by Imam Khomeini. When Imam Khomeini launched the revolution, Iran was in a terrible condition. In other words, the Iranian nation had been humiliated and its fate was decided by others. You know that a remarkable feature of Imam Khomeini's struggle was his fight against capitulation which the Shah was forced to ratify making the American advisors immune from pros

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ecution in Iran. This was the worst humiliation for our people. They rose up, fought for independence, and emerged victorious. Of course, the war of the revolution was one of words not weapons. We, therefore, endeavored to obtain a novel experience of religion and to gain independence. Both these features are salient in the American civilization and we feel close to them.

But here I have to express pity over a tragedy which has occurred. Unfortunately, policies pursued by the American politicians outside the United States over the past half a century since World War II are incompatible with the American civilization which is founded on democracy, freedom and human dignity. We ardently wished that those who enforced this foreign policy were representatives of the prominent American civilization; a civilization which was achieved at a heavy cost, and not the representatives of those adventurers who were defeated by the American people themselves.

This flawed policy of domination had three setbacks: One was severe damages that it incurred upon the deprived and oppressed nations, including our own. The other setback was that it dashed the hopes of the people of the colonized world, who had placed their trust in the U.S. tradition of struggle for independence. When the policies for domination were implemented in the name of the American people, the nations lost their trust in the Americans. This represents a grave damage done by the U.S. policies on the American nation. The Third and the most important of these setbacks is that what was implemented was done in name of a great people that had risen for freedom. I feel that the American politicians should realize this fact and adjust themselves to the standards of Anglo-American and American civilization and at least apologize to their own people because of the approach they have adopted.

Q: Mr. President, you talked about apologies, you talked about recent history and you talked about great civilizations. You said you wanted to use this interview to deliver a message to the American people, I have lived in America and I know the concerns of

the average American when it comes to Iran and the message that has come out of Iran over the last 20 years, the message, hostage taking, the message "death to America," the message of burning the American flag, the message that almost looks like that Islam has declared a war against America and the west. Let me ask you first about the hostage crisis, which is emblazoned in every American's mind. As in every revolution, in communist revolution of Russia, the French revolution and perhaps even the American revolution, the early years contain many excesses. Would you say that taking the American hostages at the beginning of the Iranian Islamic revolution falls into the category of early revolutionary excesses?

A: Thank you for your question. I believe that first we have to analyse events within their proper context and with circumspection. The Image of Islam which has been presented, and I don't want to accuse anyone here, has been an erroneous one. Islam is a religion which calls all humanity, irrespective of religion or belief, to rationality and logic. Islam invites followers of all divine religions to unite around worshiping God and all Muslims to fraternity. The Islam which we know and practice and founded our revolution on recognizes the right of all human beings to determine their own destiny. It declares that relations among nations must be based on logic and mutual respect. Such Islam is enemy to no nation, enemy to no religion. It seeks dialogue, understanding and peace with all nations. One of the major flaws in the U.S. foreign policy, which I recently construed as being behind times, is that they continue to live with cold war mentality and try to create a perceived enemy. Here I don't wish to insult any one. I know that there are quite a few wise and fair-minded statesmen in the United States, but the outcome of the interplay within the U.S. policy has shaped the U.S. policy in a manner that continues to be a prisoner of cold war mentality. After the collapse of communism, there has been an attempt by certain circles to portray Islam as the new enemy, and regrettably they are target

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ing progressive Islam rather than certain regressive interpretations of Islam. They attack an Islam which seeks democracy, progress and development; an Islam which calls for utilization of achievements of human civilization including that of the west.

With regard to the hostage issue which you raised, I do know that the feelings of the great American people have been hurt, and of course I regret it. Yet, these same feelings were also hurt when bodies of young Americans were brought back from Vietnam, but the American people never blamed the Vietnamese people, but rather blamed their own politicians for dragging their country and its youth into the Vietnam quagmire. The pressure by the American people terminated that senseless and inhuman war. In fact the American people themselves brought that war to an end.

The feelings of our people were seriously hurt by U.S. policies. And as you said, in the heat of the revolutionary fervor, things happen which cannot be fully contained or judged according to usual norms. This was the crying out of the people against humiliations and inequities imposed upon them by the policies of the U.S. and others, particularly in the early days of the revolution. With the grace of God, today our new society has been institutionalized and we have a popularly elected powerful government, and there is no need for unconventional methods of expression of concerns and anxieties. And I believe when there is logic, specially when there are receptive ears, there is no need other than discourse, debate and dialogue.

Q: So you are saying that despite the grievances that you talked about with hindsight if you had to do all this again, would Iran have done it differently at that time. Was it an excess?

A: As I said, everything must be analyzed within its own context. The events of those days must be viewed within the context of revolutionary fervor and the pressures to which the Iranian nation was subjected, causing it to seek a way to express its anxieties and concerns. Today we are in

the period of stability, and fully adhere to all norms of conduct regulating relations between nations and governments.

Q: Just one more question on that issue. You talk about the rule of law, seizing an embassy, seizing hostages for more than a year, violates ancient traditions of diplomatic immunity. No matter the grievances between the countries, diplomatic immunity has always been sacrosanct. Again I ask you, do you think it was one of the early excesses of the early years of the revolution?

A: At times of war many of peace-time regulations are undermined. Revolutions are also a sort of war, and unfortunately U.S. politicians, instead of understanding the realities of our revolution, continued to support the Shah who was the enemy of the Iranian nation and thus confronted the entire population, leading to those incidents in the early days of the revolution. At that time many of the governmental institutions had not been formed. As you know as soon as the first parliament was established, the late Imam Khomeini entrusted the resolution of the issue to the people's representatives, which they did in a speedy manner.

Q: You say that the Americans are looking for an enemy and that a lot of what is said and a lot of their feeling are just sort of imaginary. But the Americans say they have good reason to feel somewhat afraid of Iran because of the things that in the past 20 years, before your election, Iranian officials said and did. As I said, to Americans the perception is that Iran is identified with a kind of extremism that constitutes a war against the west, particularly against the United States. You talk about a new chapter, you talk about pragmatism, reality in today's world, what can you do or say to the average American listening tonight to convince that American that your Iran is a new Iran, a different Iran.

A: Of course, I did not say that the Americans showed hostility toward our people or clashed with them. Our nation has never had a quarrel with the American people. I talked of some American politicians who, over the years, ultimately held sway and

showed true animosity toward us. We have a long list of instances of U.S. interference in the affairs of the Iranian nation before and after the victory of the revolution. Our great nation felt humiliated. And if there were excessive reactions, I believe that they were negligible compared to the injustices done to the Iranian people. Certainly, in any revolution, there are problems that would be resolved as the revolution matures. It is a significant achievement for our nation, that within a year of the victory of the Islamic Revolution, our country ratified its constitution and formed its democratic institutions. With the grace of God, today all the affairs of country are being conducted within the framework of law. And as I have stated, both in domestic and foreign affairs, we shall endeavor to strengthen the rule of law in every respect.

Q: Mr. President, Americans, the average American is familiar with one image from Iran, "death to America", the burning of American flag as talked about the hostages, you talked about a new chapter in relations between the people's of the world, what can you say to the American listening tonight, to show that person that your Iran is a new Iran or a different Iran?

A: I say that these issues should be examined with due consideration to their root causes and various dimensions. There are slogans being chanted in Iran. But, you as a journalist can ask all those chanting the slogans whether they are targeting the American people. And they would all say no. Not only we do not harbor any ill wishes for the American people, but in fact we consider them to be great nation. Our aim is not even to destroy or undermine the American government. These slogans symbolize a desire to terminate a mode of relations which existed between Iran and the United States. This is a response to that grave affront by a former U.S. defense secretary who said the Iranian nation must be rooted out. It is also a response to the downing of the Iranian airliner that killed about 300 innocent people, mostly women and children. Even if we accept that the shooting was

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accidental, the decoration of the commander of the American naval vessel responsible for the tragedy was indeed adding insult to injury. There is also the recent allocation \$20 million by the U.S. Congress to topple the Iranian government. Our people consider U.S. foreign policy to be aimed at undermining and confrontation with itself. And, in fact, they want the death of this relationship. No one has the intention of insulting the American nation and we even consider the U.S. government as the legitimate and lawful representative of its people. Our objection is to the type of relationship where our nation is humiliated and oppressed. For example, I myself do not agree with the burning of the American flag, which represents its nationhood, and which hurts the collective feelings of the nation. As far as I know, the Leader of the Revolution and other authorities are also not happy with this practice. There might be actions taking place that might not meet with our approval. Yet I am sure that those doing such actions do not intend to insult the American people. And we hope that actions which might be interpreted as anti-American people and nation would not take place.

Q: You said you wanted to talk to American people, are you prepared to sit down eventually and talk to the American government about the issues that you just mentioned tonight that separate and divide you?

A: Firstly, nothing should prevent dialogue and understanding between two nations, especially between their scholars and thinkers. Right now, I recommend the exchange of professors, writers, scholars, artists, journalists, and tourists. A large number of educated and noble Iranians now reside in the U.S. as representatives of the Iranian nation. This shows that there is no hostility between the two nations. But the dialogue between civilizations and nations is different from political relations. In regard to political relations, we have to consider the factors which lead to the severance of relations. If some day another situation is to emerge, we must definitely consider the roots and relevant factors

and try to eliminate them.

Firstly, I have to state that U.S. foreign policy behavior toward Iran has inflicted damages upon us. But it also had a positive effect. It caused us to mainly focus on our domestic capabilities and resources to advance our objectives. Now, too, we feel no need for ties with the U.S., especially as the modern world is so diverse and plural that we can reach our objectives without U.S. assistance. I especially feel that many progressive countries - including the Europeans -- are far more advanced in their foreign policies than the U.S.. We are carrying out our own activities and have no need for political ties with the U.S.

But the point is that the political behavior of governments should not deprive nations from enjoying the opportunities provided by each side. There is a bulky wall of mistrust between us and the U.S. Administrations., a mistrust rooted in improper behaviors of the American governments. As an example of this type of U.S. behavior, I should refer to admitted involvement of the U.S. Government in the 1953 coup d'etat which toppled Mosaddeq's national government, immediately followed by a \$45 million loan to strengthen unpopular foreign installed Government. I should also refer to the Capitulation Law imposed by the U.S. on Iran.

The attitude of the U.S. after the victory of the revolution has not been a civilized one. They have adopted a hostile policy against Iran. They have tried to inflict economic damage upon us, a clear example of which is the D'Amato act which represents a continuation of cold war mentality and the lack of appreciation of realities to the point that they even want to impose their will upon other countries such as European countries and Japan or the allocation of the already mentioned \$20 million to topple the Iranian government .

The success of our revolution has come at a great cost to our nation. And the U.S. has a major share in the cost imposed upon the Iranian nation. There is a grave mistrust between us. If negotiations are not based on mutual respect, they will never lead to

positive results. The condition is that American foreign policy should abandon its instrumental rationality and stop considering others as instruments. They should respect the rights of each individual and adopt an approach based on communicative rationality which is inherent in the American civilization.

There must first be a crack in this wall of mistrust to prepare for a change and create an opportunity to study a new situation. Unfortunately, the behavior of American Government in the past up to this date has always exacerbated the climate of mistrust and we do not detect any sign of change of behavior.

We are looking for a world in which misunderstandings can be overcome, nations can understand one another and mutual respect and logic govern relations among states. It is the right of every nation to stand on its principles and values and have the expectation of respect and dignity from others.

Q: In order to get to this kind of confidence that you talk about and to base relations on as you say rational measures, does not one have to sit down and talk about the issues that divide you, certainly the United States government has said that it would like to have a dialogue with an authorized member of the Iranian government on the issues?

A: Any talks in which one side would consider itself as absolutely right and attributes accusations against the other side which has incidentally suffered great inequities can not lead to any positive result. The prerequisite for any negotiation is trust and unfortunately the attitude of the U.S. government thus far has not been conducive for the development of the minimum trust necessary for us. I hope that we would be able to see major changes in the behavior of American foreign policy makers.

Q: Then where does this dialogue, this message to the people of the United States lead?

A: When I speak of dialogue, I intend dialogue between civilizations and

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cultures. Such discourse should be centered around thinkers and intellectuals. I believe that all doors should now be opened for such dialogue and understanding and possibilities for contact even between American and Iranian citizens should become available, so that, through greater understanding between our two nations, a better future for both countries and nations may be forged.

Q: Let me ask you some specific issues that concern the people of the United States. As you know many U.S. experts say that the evidence is overwhelming that elements of Iranian authorities, Iranian officials, provide not only political and moral but also financial support to organizations that commit acts of terrorism and result in the deaths of innocent women and children. If you were presented with proof and evidence that any kind of Iranian was in that kind of financial support or act what would you do about it?

A: You see, this is another example of the sort of problem that exists between us and the United States. They first level unfair and unsubstantiated accusations against you. And when they propose to hold talks, they say that we want to have a dialogue with you about these very unfounded accusations. They are in fact trying to put the other side on trial.

Well, let me tell you this. We believe in the holy Quran that says: "slaying of one innocent person is tantamount to the slaying of all humanity." How could such a religion, and those who claim to be its followers get involved in the assassination of innocent individuals and the slaughtering of innocent human beings. We categorically reject all these allegations.

Secondly, the logic of history has proven that violence is not the way to achieve and desired end. I personally believe that only those who lack logic resort to violence. Terrorism should be condemned in all its forms and manifestations; assassins must be condemned. Terrorism is useless anyway and we condemn it categorically. Those who level these charges against us are best advised to provide accu-

rate and objective evidence, which indeed does not exist.

In any event, the United Nations like us recognizes, and that is a clear distinction between terrorism and killing innocent people on the one hand and legitimate defense against aggression and occupation on the other. The ugliest form of terrorism in our world is state terrorism, and the recent example which we all witnessed was the Israeli terrorist attempt to murder a political figure in Jordan.

If we honestly seek the eradication of terrorism, we must identify the roots of such illogical reactions throughout the world. Roots such as humiliation of nations and occupation of their lands and violation of their rights. All humanity must act in unison and with understanding to combat the ugly phenomenon of terrorism be it state terrorism or any other of its manifestations.

Q: Mr. President, I do not want to compare Iran to other countries and a lot of things happened before your presidency, I am not accusing you or asking you to answer, all I am asking you very simply is, if you are provided with a proof that an Iranian official had used any kind of Iranian funds to reward or finance any group or individual that was involved in an act of terrorism, would you punish that person or that organization?

A: Certainly if I learn of any instance of such assistance to terrorism, I shall deal with it, so will our Leader, and so will our entire system. At the same time, supporting peoples who fight for the liberation of their land is not, in my opinion, supporting terrorism. It is, in fact, supporting those who are engaged in combating state terrorism.

Q: Regardless of the motive, do you believe that killing innocent women and children is terrorism as for instance what happens in Israel

A: It is definitely so. Any form of killing of innocent men and women who are not involved in confrontations is terrorism; it must be condemned, and we, in our term, condemn every form of it in the world.

Q: Therefore, would you issue an order prohibiting the use of Iranian funds

in any form or fashion by any Iranian official or organization to reward and finance any group that commits an act of terrorism? Would you issue an order prohibiting that?

A: There has never been such a case to require me to issue an order, and I do know that the Iranian people and government are against terrorism and have never supported any terrorists.

Q: So, you would not be willing to say that you would just declare that it is wrong for any kind of Iranian funds to be used in that kind of situation?

A: It is exactly for this reason that we condemn the United States' allocation of \$20 million for sabotage and undermining of the Iranian government. This is obviously a terrorist measure. We never resort to such measures.

Q: About the Americans, the Americans say that they have reports that Iranian officials abroad regularly engage in acts of surveillance against Americans, the sort of surveillance that could be interpreted as preceding an attack. Do you think that it is appropriate?

A: I deny this categorically. There has been no such attempt against Americans abroad or any sort of surveillance over the United States; we have frankly responded to such allegations and I think that such accusations are only meant to justify certain possible measures they may have in mind. On our part there has been no new move, no special measures with regard to the United States in external fields; this is another false rumor spread by those who bear a grudge against us.

Q: About the Middle East peace process, Iran has said that it does not agree with the Middle East peace process. Yasser Arafat was elected as the representative of the Palestinian people, he has rejected armed struggle as a means for pursuing his legitimate aims and he has entered into a peace process. Do you think it is appropriate for any foreign power to engage in supporting the groups that are fighting against Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian groups such as Hamas and the others?

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A: First of all, we have declared our opposition to the Middle East peace process because we believe it will not succeed. At the same time, we have clearly said that we don't intend to impose our views on others or to stand in their way. In our view all Palestinians have the right to express their views about their land, including the millions of Palestinians in Diaspora. They too have a right to self determination. Only then can there be a lasting peace. We seek a peace through which Jews, Muslims and Christians and indeed each and every Palestinian, could freely determine their own destiny. And we are prepared to contribute towards the realization of that peace.

But let me elaborate a little for the American people on my views about U.S. Middle East policy. Anti-Semitism is indeed a western phenomenon. It has no precedence in Islam or in the east. Jews and Muslims have lived harmoniously together for centuries. In the east, we have had despotism and dictatorship, but never had fascism or Nazism. These, too, are also western phenomena, and the west has paid dearly to combat them.

What concerns me is that, first, this western anti-Semitism has turned into a tool for the imposition of a whole range of improper policies and practices on the people of the Middle East and Muslims in general. Secondly, I am concerned that this western dilemma may be projected elsewhere, that is as fascism and Nazism are suppressed in the west, they may resurface in another form in western policies elsewhere.

Obviously, Washington is the U.S. capital where policy decisions on U.S. national interests must be made. However, the impression of the people of the Middle East and Muslims in general is that certain foreign policy decisions of the U.S. are in fact made in Tel Aviv and not in Washington. And I regret to say that the improper American policy of unbridled support for the aggressions of a racist terrorist regime does not serve U.S. interests, nor does it even serve that of the Jewish people. Zionists constitute a small portion of the Jewish people and have openly

declared and proven in practice that they are expansionist. The Israeli intransigence in the course of the current peace process, and its failure to honour its own undertakings has enraged even U.S. allies in the region. In my view, peace can come to the Middle East when all Palestinians, Jews and Muslims alike, can determine the future of the land. That should include those living in Palestine as well as those refugees living elsewhere. Only then can a stable and lasting peace be established. Many in the world might share our view, and many may differ with us. We simply present our opinion, and have the greatest respect for all Palestinians who are concerned about the future of Palestine. Meanwhile, we believe that the United States should not risk the substantial prestige and credibility of the American people on supporting a racist regime which does not even have the backing of the Jewish people.

The subject of Middle East peace is one that needs a sober and pragmatic analysis. We believe that it will not succeed, because it is not just and it does not address the rights of all parties in an equitable manner. We are prepared to contribute to an international effort to bring about a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

Q: Mr. President, you know another concern of the West is Iran's nuclear program. Would it be possible do you think in order to assuage the fears of the West to perhaps would you consider entering a special agreement, a special sort of situation with the Atomic Energy Agency for special monitoring, if that would lessen the fears of the people you say you want to have a better dialogue with.

A: We are a party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. The official representatives of the International Atomic Energy Agency have inspected our facilities in Iran several times, and have publicly declared that we are not planning on building nuclear weapons and only aim to employ nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. It is ironic that those who are so concerned about saving humanity from nuclear weapons, fully support Israel which is a nuclear power and is unwilling to join the NPT or accept

IAEA safeguards, while leveling allegations against Iran which has not even been able to complete its first nuclear power plant which began before the revolution. These are all pretexts for imposing certain policies on Iran and the region and to create panic and mistrust. We are not a nuclear power and do not intend to become one. We have accepted IAEA safeguards and our facilities are routinely inspected by that agency.

Q: Do you think the West, the countries that are afraid of Iran would be less afraid, if you were more open, if perhaps like some other countries have done, you develop with Atomic Agency a special monitoring program. Is that something you would consider?

A: This process is in place and the monitoring exists today. There is no basis for apprehension. We are people of logic and discourse, and believe that with our logic and through dialogue with others, we can promote understanding.

Q: Mr. President, let us talk about Iran itself. You are a surprise in every way, your election was a surprise, the things you say, the things you have done since you have been elected have been a new kind of dialogue with the Iranian people. 70 to 80 percent of the people elected you and are looking to you and there seems to be a momentum in the direction of freedom, openness, the rule of law and the things you have talked about. How do you read that momentum?

A: I think just a little less than that voted for me. The election proved that the propaganda campaign against Iran has been misleading. Our people are quite mature, and fortunately the revolution has given them a discerning capability. In any event, different platforms were presented, and the people made their choice. I take pride in being elected by this noble nation, and hope to be able to fulfill the election promises that I made, which represent the collective wish of the Iranian nation.

Q: There still seems to the moment to be a kind of confrontation within society, on the one hand a lot of people want more freedom, more openness, all the things that you have talked about, you are appointing reform-

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minded ministers. On the other hand, there is still, if I could call them thugs, who are on the streets interfering with women who they do not like their appearance, preventing certain professors from going schools, there is a confrontation. Where can you lead this confrontation?

A: I do not consider this a serious conflict. Of course, there are various tendencies, which were present during the elections as well. The people have made their decision. What I have said and continue to insist on is that rule of law should be paramount, and no one should consider himself above the law and try to impose his views on others. Some of these frictions are quite natural in a democratic society. Our objective is to bring everything within the framework of the law. There may be occasional irregularities and actions outside the legal framework. But we will spare no effort to institutionalize the rule of law. Of course, to begin with, we have to create understanding amongst ourselves and learn to tolerate each other. You cannot bring about understanding and tolerance in the society by force. We are determined that there should only be one government in the society and every one must submit to the law. I think that it is universally accepted that law is the basis of social order. Fortunately, our leader fully subscribes to this view. I hope that we can take more and more practical steps for the realization of the rule of law in our society.

Q: Mr. President, you are the President of Iran, you have made certain promises to the people of Iran and now you said certain things about dialogue with other countries, can you implement your promises to the people of Iran? Do you have the authority and the room to maneuver and in foreign policy are you able to implement the foreign policy?

A: Surely, after being elected, one should abide by one's promises and not to retract on them. I am determined to fulfill my promises and I believe the atmosphere is conducive and would improve day by day. Each person will carry out his tasks in his legal capacity. The President shoulders the impor-

tant task of enforcing the Constitution. I have set up a Constitution Monitoring Group for the first time ever and this group is actively working to locate instances of violations or incorrect enforcement of the Constitution. We will be seriously address any shortcoming in the implementation or violation of the Constitution. And we shall succeed. Iran has one government which makes decisions on domestic and foreign policies within the framework of its duties. Of course, there are many issues that should be approved by the Parliament. The overall policies are determined by the eminent Leadership. But it is the government that has to enforce them. I feel there is no barrier along the way of the government authority and the government accepts its own responsibility. We will surely implement any policy that we formulate. It is possible that preliminary steps in certain areas might need time. But when we arrive at a policy, we will definitely carry it out. The government is responsible to carry out duties associated with its sovereign responsibilities in the society.

Q: There is quite a lot of opposition from the conservative faction, how are you able to operate within this climate, are you restricted?

A: When we speak of democratic government, or government of the people, it means that we accept opposition. We can not possibly have a society with no opposition at all. Such differences of opinion are natural and they are to be found in all societies. We should learn not to allow such differences to turn into confrontation, but to direct them into their legal channels. Certainly there are elements who are opposing our government, but so long as their opposition is practiced within the provisions of the Constitution, we certainly respect them. But those wishing to impose their will against the law will naturally be dealt with through the proper legal channels. We accept both internal differences as well as any opposition that accepts the Constitutional framework, even if they openly oppose the government.

Q: Nonetheless there are two factions that seem to have been identified in Iran right now, the more conservative and the one that you lead, the reform-

minded, the more moderate. Where do you think Iran will be one year from now, will there be the freedoms and the openness that you have talked about?

A: Let these divisions find their meanings within their own context. Terms such as conservative, moderate and the like are more often meaningful in the West. Of course we have differences of opinion in Iran too, and one political tendency firmly believes in the prevalence of logic and the rule of law while there might be another tendency that believes it is entitled to go beyond the law. Anyway, such issues need tolerance and we must try to bring about such an understanding as to enable us to stay together while having differences of view but not let things become chaotic. Should we carefully prepare the ground for the implementation of the law in our society, there shall be no problem vis-a-vis such oppositions. I consider them natural and we need not worry about it. Of course reaching an ideal society with all its affairs in proper order needs time. We have the necessary patience, so do our people and we shall all try to move towards an orderly society where logic and law reign supreme.

C.N.N: Mr. President thank you very much for joining us.

President Khatami: I thank you very much and I thank all our viewers for their patience."

The Supreme Leader of Iran, Ayatullah Khameni subsequently made a statement with a different note. He ruled out any talks with the US government. He said: "Talks and relations with America would be detrimental to the Iranian nation and to the world Muslim movement."

"The American regime is the enemy of (Iran's) Islamic government and our revolution...It is the enemy of your revolution, your Islam and your resistance to American bullying."

The Supreme leader vowed not to abandon the revolutionary ideas of Iran. However he supported the stand of the Iranian foreign minister Kharrazai that Iran would not enter any dialogue unless USA ends its hostile policies on Tehran. He also clarified that Iran had no grievances with the American people.

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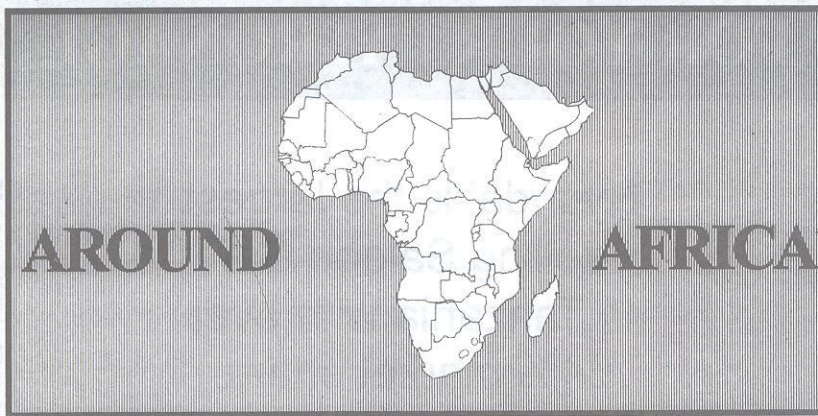
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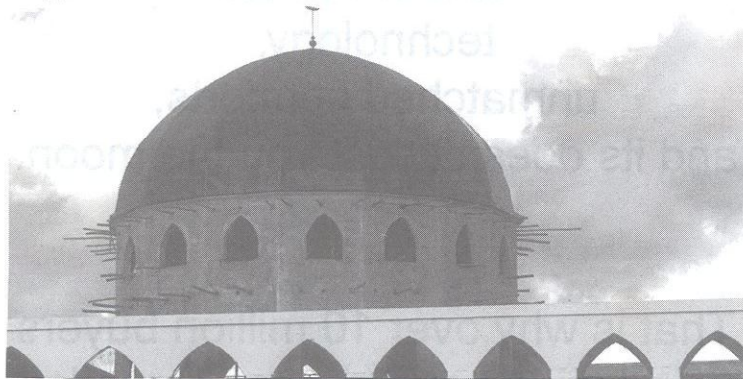
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Singida
Tabora



Antananarivo fire destroys Mosque domeguests evacuated in the nick of time



Dome of the new Mosque at Antananarivo, Madagascar which was shattered due to an outbreak of fire at the adjoining Hoechst Chemical Plant.

On Tuesday, 4 November, 1997 an accidental fire at an industrial unit adjoining the imposing Antananarivo Mosque, Imambara and Madressa Complex spread fast thereby causing extensive damage to the Mosque complex. Cracks developed in the minarets, ceiling panels were dislocated and as a result of the blast in the adjoining Hoechst industrial plant, most glass panels and windows in the mosque were shattered.

A brand new vehicle belonging to Akber Daya, the Vice Chairman of the Madagascar Territorial Council, who had just parked his car in the parking lot was engulfed in fire. At the time of the accident, three overseas guests namely Syed Mohammad Musawi, Roshanali Dawood Haji Nasser of Bombay and Mohib Roshan Dawood, President of the Bombay Jamat were in the guest house. They were hurriedly evacuated by Akber Daya, who had just called in to pick up the guests to escort them to the airport.

The damage to the property has been estimated at around US\$ 150,000. Insurance surveyors were jointly surveying the damage, for safety reasons, until repairs are completed. Madressa Classes and the use of the Mosque Imambara had to be closed and activities were transferred to the old Imambara.

The imposing Mosque and Imambara Complex with its spacious grounds and parking lot is noted for its modern facilities comprising an Aalim Quarter and rest house plus a modern kitchen and a Ghushkhana with related facilities. Jamats in East Africa planning to renovate their kitchen and Ghushkhana would be well advised to study the planning of the Antananarivo Mosque Complex. The entire Complex was donated by Yawar Abdhusein who is well known for his philanthropy.



Our

numbers....

The Africa Federation's
contact numbers are:
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Cellular: 0812 786 710
Fax: (255-51) 150964/112914/112406
E-Mail: Federation@raha.com

Dar to host 20th Triennial Conference

In response to the invitation received from the Shia Ithna-Asheri Jamaat, Dar-es-Salaam, the Chairman of the Africa Federation in terms of power delegated to him, under Article 5(c) of the Constitution, has accepted Dar-es-Salaam to be the venue for the next Triennial Conference to be held from Friday 10th to Monday 13th April, 1998 (= 12th to 15th Zilhajj 1418).

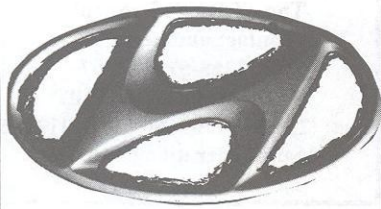
The Conference will be followed by the 56th Session of the Supreme Council during the same period. The Chairman and the Secretariat have expressed gratitude to the Dar-es-Salaam Jamaat for their offer to host the Conference.

Education Board to hold Annual Meeting during the Triennial Conference

The Education Board of the Supreme Council will hold its Annual Meeting during the period of the Triennial Conference from 10th April, 1998. As the present term of the Education Board is due to expire, all constituent Jamaats are requested to nominate their representatives on this Board. Past experience indicates that Jamaats have been slow in making these important appointments. This time they are requested to do the needful at the earliest.

Written reports from the Jamats on matters related to the Education Board had to be submitted to the Board's Secretariat at P.O. Box 66545, Nairobi, Kenya by 31st January, 1998. Jamats which have not made their submissions are requested to immediately do so.

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A retrospective look at Aden Jamat

Aden Jamat has a history going back to over a 100 years. A beautiful mosque, called "Masjid-el-Husseini" stands on the main Aidrus Road in Crater area with 2 minars and 2 tombs. The whole Complex consists of a Mosque with an open *Sehen* and *Hauz* for wudhoo, a gents Imambada on the ground floor and a ladies Imambada on the first floor, a Ghushkhana, 3 toilets, a kitchen and a two- room flat for the resident aalim. Aden Jamat also has a graveyard (*Qabrastan*) in which some graves were interred over 120 years old.

The Aden Jamat has about 125 houses of our Khojas with a total population of about 500. There normally is one resident aalim always present in the Jamat. He performs all religious rites and duties.

The Jamat has a library called 'Husseiny library' wherein there are thousands of books in Arabic, English and Gujrati. This library also has a wide selection of religious video and audio cassettes, both in Arabic and Urdu.

An institution of the Jamat, 'Madres-e-Jaffry' provides religious education to the young who are then required to appear for annual examinations of diniyat and recitation of holy Qur'an. To encourage the young ones, prizes are distributed to boys and girls who perform well.

The Jaffery Sports Club of the Jamat has a hall where they play table tennis and carry out other activities. In the past, sports activities in the Jamat included games like volleyball, football and cricket but due to political reasons the activities were discontinued except for table tennis. The Jamat's table tennis team recently won the Supreme Council Sports Festival in Dar es Salaam.

Aden Jamat regularly marks all religious occasions. During Muharram, Zakirs from outside visit for the first 12 days, majalis in ladies are continued for 2 months and 10 days, sabile-husein is served for 12 days, majalis and matam are performed. During the holy month of Ramadhan, *iftar* and *sehri* are arranged and Qurankhanis are recited separately for gents, ladies, boys and girls.

The present Managing Committee is made up of:- President: Ramzan Mohamed Jaffer; Vice President: Haji Amirali Hasson Rashid; Hon. Secretary: Riaz Safder Yusuf Jaffer; Hon. Asst. Secretary: Husein Pyarali Gulamhusein; Hon. Treasurer: Safderbhai Yusuf Jaffer; Committee Members: Mustafa Anwer Fazel Hashem; Shafiq Husein Suleman Adat; Afzal Ramzan Mohamed Jaffer and Aqeel Ahmed Ali Pyarali. The Hon. Auditor is Ahmedbhai Abdulhusein Aser.



Roshanali Haji Mohamed Karmally served Aden Jamat for 20 years. He was President for 16 years and a Vice President for 4 years. He was honoured, on behalf of the Jamat, by the current President, Ramzanbhai M. Jaffer, in the presence of the whole Jamat on 18th dhil-hajja, 1417. During the ceremony, a shawl was placed on his shoulder and he was presented with a stainless-steel plaque of honour.

Have you nominated your best sportsman?

Election of the best sportsman in the Community is made every year and the successful nominee is selected and declared during the Session or the Conference of the Supreme Council.

All Jamaats are reminded to submit their nominations by completing the prescribed Questionnaire Forms which have been distributed.

Please ensure that your nominations are sent to the Secretariat to reach by 28 February, 1998.

Disaster strikes Kenya Coast province

In the aftermath of the recent torrential rains and freak floods in the Coast province of Kenya, many bridges were destroyed. This made roads impassable and the Coast province was declared a disaster zone by the Government of Kenya.

Some of our Shia centres in the rural areas have become inaccessible because of the damaged roads, resulting in shortage of food and essential items. The Bilal Muslim Mission of Kenya tried to alleviate the suffering by supplying 32 tonnes of food to various Centres. Further damage was caused to a number of our Centres (Mosques, Madrasahs and pre-primary schools) along with houses of our Shia brothers.

The Mission plans to make a detailed survey to assess the damage after the roads become passable. In the meantime nominees are requested to assist Bilal Muslim Mission by sending donations to them.

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Dhirani visits Madagascar again

The Chairman of the Africa Federation, Mohammed Dhirani flew to Madagascar on 27 October, 1997 to participate in the Annual Sports Festival in Tulear and to attend the Opening ceremony of the new madressa, rest house and computer class there. The Chairman's visit to Madagascar came a little over a month after his last visit in September, 1997 when he attended the Madagascar Territorial Council meeting. The Chairman was accompanied by Hassan A.M. Jaffer of Mombasa.



At the opening ceremony of Tulear Madressa and musafarkhana on 1 November, 1997. From left to right: Moajiz Kamis, Chairman Regional Council, Mohamed Dhirani, Chairman Africa Federation, Sayyid Ali, Bilal Muslim Mission, Hassan Jaffer, Mombasa and Hanif Haiderali Jaffer, President Tulear Jamat.

Mohamedbhai was the Guest of honour at the Sports Festival and he also performed the opening ceremony of the ten double-room, self-contained with attached bath, modern musafarkhana. The opening ceremony of the madressa was performed by Raza-Aly Hirdjee.

Raza-Aly Hirdjee donated the Madressa building and the musafarkhana. The modern computer class was equipped with donations from various sources while the land for the madressa and musafarkhana was donated by a previous resident of Tulear now in Reunion, Br. Anver.

At an impressive and highly disciplined function to mark the occasion, the Chairman of the Africa Federation Mohamed Dhirani outlined the following salient points.

* *The need for improving the economic status of the community which is still suffering from the after effects of the 1987 riots.*

* *The need for community members to pool their resources, energies and expertise in participating fully in the economic development of the country.*

* *Utmost importance be given to upgrading and improving the standard of education and encouraging youths to pursue higher education.*

* *The need for maintaining and improving harmonious relationship with other communities and to participate fully in national endeavours. He congratulated Tulear Jamat for organising the Sports Festival and for inviting participants from all*

Federation Samachar

communities.

* *The importance of religious education, good moral behaviour. He stressed that full emphasis be given to improve the quality of academic and religious education and to make teaching methods for Islamic education more relevant with modern teach-*

ing aids.

* *To assist in the economic upliftment of afflicted families. Mohamedbhai donated US\$ 10,000 on behalf of the Supreme Council which gave an impetus to the funds collection drive following which an additional US 20,000 was collected.*

The Bhoor Sports Festival

from Hassan Ali M. Jaffer in Mombasa

In East Africa, the national sport is football but for our community, the craze is cricket. In all French speaking territories, while the national sport is also football, the craze among members of our community is the game of *bool* (bowl).

Bool is virtually unknown in East Africa. It can best be described by comparing it to a game of marbles which children normally play. Unlike marbles played with tiny glass balls, *bool* is played with steel balls weighing 750 gms. Three balls are located at an agreed distance and the fourth ball weighing 900 gms. is used as a striker to dislocate the three marbles. Each team comprises of 3 players.

The precision with which young and old apply themselves assiduously in pursuit of this game is a worthwhile sight. And just like in other games when players and fans get carried away with an ongoing match, so it is in *bool* where players and fans also get involved in excited exchanges during and after the game.

This year's Annual Sports Competition in the game of *Bool* was organised in Tulear with participants coming from all over Madagascar, Mauritius, Reunion and the Comoros. Hosted by Tulear Jamat, participation was open to members of all communities. This gave the tournament a national semblance and proved instrumental in fostering harmonious communal relations. The Chairman of the Supreme Council, Mohamed Dhirani, who travelled specially for the occasion, was the Guest of honour at the memorable Festival.

Footnote: *Several years ago when the East African Sports Festival was held in Mombasa, Mohamed Dhirani tried his hand at playing cricket. In an accidental fall while running between the wickets, he broke his arm and carries a scar to this date. This is probably why no amount of persuasion helped to have him throw the 750gms. steel balls. Did he refrain lest he broke somebody's head or dislocated his own shoulder in the process?*

It would then be a case of: "Bool me bhoor hogaya." Editor

Education Board outlines criteria for higher education loans

Due to lack of prompt repayments from students who have completed their studies coupled with lack of adequate new scholarship donations, the Education Board is facing a serious shortage of funds for further education. In wake of this, the Board has announced a strict criteria that will be adopted when selecting beneficiaries for the 1998/99 fiscal year.

Deserving and eligible applicants need to fill in pre-loan application forms that have to be submitted by **10 March, 1998** under the following conditions:

- Those who wish to undertake their courses at local colleges will be given first priority.
- Those wishing to undertake their courses at Indian Colleges must try to acquire places in local and/or regional Universities. In this respect, Kampala Jamat has agreed to provide free accommodation to both girls and boys if they are willing to join Makerere University. The main contact is Sayed Abidi on Fax: 041-235002/245173/250379 who can advise on the admission possibilities. These students must submit adequate justification for undertaking the course in Indian Universities to be given the 2nd priority.
- Those wishing to undertake their courses at Western Colleges to try for local, regional and Indian Universities. **FULL JUSTIFICATION** must be submitted by these applicants due to high costs at such locations. One can notice here that the contribution from family or friends for undertaking a 3-4 year course in a Western University is more than sufficient to enable the students undertake the

same course elsewhere. Thus such students do not really need any financial assistance from the Community.

Based on the above and depending on the actual budget approved by the Khoja Shia Ithna-asheri Supreme Council (KSISC), loans will be approved on the following priorities:

- Students going to local colleges;
- Students wishing to undertake courses in regional colleges and who have been refused admission in local colleges;
- Students wishing to undertake courses in Indian colleges and who have been refused admission in local or regional colleges;

D Students wishing to undertake courses in Western colleges who have been refused admission elsewhere.

Female recipients need to ensure that they will be staying with relatives or will be stationed in a town where one of our Jamaats is existing. The Education Board needs the name and full address of a guardian who will ensure their adherence to Islamic norms and this may also apply to some of the boys.

Finally the Education Board has appealed to all Jamats and individuals at large to assist in the recovery of the outstanding loans and to solicit additional donations to enable the Board to approve more loans for higher education.

Kenya students win 'Best Student' awards

Nazmina H. Panju of Nairobi and Gulamraza A. Dato of Mombasa have been announced as the 'Best Students' for 1996 by the Education Board of the Supreme Council. Nazmina notched 8A's + 2 B's in her O' level examinations to win the Best Female Student Award while Gulamraza obtained 3A's + 2B's + C + D to win the Best Male Student Award.

Best Students are selected by the Education Board of the Federation of K.S.I. Jamaats of Africa on an annual basis after submissions from all the Jamaats in Africa. Other students who achieved outstanding results included:

Girls

- * Fatemah A. Rhemtulla (obtained: 8A's) of Mombasa
- * Tahera Sunderji (obtained: 7A+B+C) of Mombasa
- * Sukaina E. Jagani (obtained: 5A+3B) of Mombasa
- * Mohaddisa M. Pirmohamed (obtained: 4A+4B+C) of Nairobi
- * Zainab A. Nazarali (obtained: 3A+3B+C+D) of Dar es Salaam
- * Fatemah G. Thawer (obtained: 3A+2B+3C) of Dar es Salaam
- * Fatema E. Peera (obtained: 2A+5B+D) of Dar es Salaam
- * Shaheeda M. Alwani (Obtained: 2A+3B+3C+D) of Arusha

Boys

- * Mohammed A. Suleman of Arusha
- * Suhail M. Ratansi of Dar es Salaam.

Overall the girls achieved better results than the boys and surely we look forward to see the boys tip the scale next year, that is if the girls let them do so. We congratulate the winners and wish them success in their careers and future endeavours.

Tauheed *International* launched

The Muhammadi Education and Publications, London recently launched a quarterly news magazine called *Tauheed International*. The formal launching ceremony was performed by Dr. Kalbe Sadiq on 15 Sha'ban 1418 AH at Mehfil-e-Murtaza and it is planned to have a similar launching in Dar es Salaam in February, 1997.

This new magazine has been established with a view to awaken true awareness about Islam amongst the younger generation and to identify the real problems facing our community and how to overcome them. Furthermore the aim is to clear misconceptions amongst other communities about the Shia faith.

This magazine will focus on the economic, political and social issues and problems facing the community and seek their remedies. It will present comparative studies of other communities and what progress they are making compared to ours. A section for ideological questions and answers is reserved for the benefit of the younger generation.

This is a non-commercial magazine (without any advertisements) and is available solely through a subscription of US\$ 25 per annum or equivalent.

Any new constructive magazine is healthy for the community at large. Welcome Tauheed International and we pray that your objectives will be guided by sincerity at all times. Editor.

Federation Samachar

TULEAR - A checkered history

In historical terms, what Zanzibar has been to East Africa and Merca to Somalia, for our community in Madagascar, Tulear has been as much of a historical significance.

According to Haji Ashik Ali Mohammed Premji, the outgoing Chairman of Tulear Jamat and the elderly veteran Haji Haiderbhai Bardai, in 1856, three dhows set forth from the west coast of India bound for Zanzibar. Owing to high seas or navigational errors, instead of landing in Zanzibar, the three dhows ended up in Nossibe, Fort Dauphin and Saint Gisten, 17 km from the present day Tulear.

These first Indian immigrants introduced ox carts and cultivated rice, wheat, maize and cassava. Some four decades later, in 1895, the French colonised Madagascar. According to records, the first Ithna-Asheri grave at Santo Gesten is recorded in 1889. The first Jamat was established in Tulear in the year 1900 with only five or six families. By 1965 the community in Tulear grew to about 1150-1200 heads. However as more and more people moved towards the capital Antananarivo, by 1975, the number dropped to 900.

In 1987, when the number of families had further dropped to around 800, Tulear suffered the ravage of political upheaval. Arson, looting, wanton killing and destruction became the volcanic legacy of Tulear and many community members suffered in the process. The legacy of this tragic disaster is felt to this day. An interesting aspect worth noting during the 1987 rioting is that our Mosque and Imambara Complexes were saved as a result of the intervention of local Bilal Muslim Mission converts.

As Tulear recovers from the ravages of the 1987 riots, an upward trend in all round development is now witnessed. In the process, community members are also becoming more enterprising. Today there are 120-130 Ithna-Asheri families in Tulear numbering 600-650 heads. All adult males are involved in some form of self employment with many families living from hand to mouth and in need of assistance for economic upliftment.

The first Imambara in Tulear was built in 1920. The present Imambara is the fourth one that was built in 1963. A Mosque was opened in 1985 and a Madressa and musafarkhana constructed in 1997.

In 1960, a primary school was established by the community. In 1975, the school was nationalised in keeping with the socialist policy then in force. The school was returned to the community in 1990. Today the Community School has a reputation of being a progressive national school and only recently a new computer class with 12 computers was inaugurated there. The school is an imposing and progressive educational institution in Tulear catering for infant, primary and secondary education. The total student enrolment is 900 of which 270 are students of Indo-Pakistan origin including 125 Ithna-Asheris. The rest are all indigenous local nationals.



Making history.....the front view of the new musafarkhana and Madressa, the opening of which was performed on 1 November, 1997.

**DEATH
ANNOUNCEMENTS
FROM SEPTEMBER, 1997**

**Inna lillaahi wa inna
ilaihi raajiuun**

Marhuma Kanizbai Muslim Gulamali, Daressalaam, on 17th January 1998; (18th of Ramadhan 1418 A.H.).

Marhum Fazleabbas Mohamedrafik Mussa Virji, Mumbai, on 16th January 1998; (17th of Ramadhan 1418 A.H.).

Marhum Haji Mohamed Raza Abdul-Hussein Khatau, Mombasa, on 12th January 1998; (13th of Ramadhan 1418 A.H.).

Marhum Kassimali Nazerali Panju, Mombasa, on 12th January 1998; (13th of Ramadhan 1418 A.H.).

Marhum John Cooper (Yahya), on 9th January 1998; (10th of Ramadhan 1418 A.H.).

Marhum Gulamhussein Mohamedali Suleman, Kinshasa, on 9th January 1998; (10th of Ramadhan 1418 A.H.).

Marhuma Rubabbai Hassanali Alibhai, Allentown, PA., U.S.A, on 8th January 1998; (9th of Ramadhan 1418 A.H.).

Marhum Murabbi Al Hajj Asgherbhai Janmamod Mulla Karmali, Reunion, on 21st December 1997; (20th of Shabaan 1418 A.H.).

Marhum Haji Manji Pirbhai, Mwanza, on 20th December 1997; (19th of Shabaan 1418 A.H.).

Marhum Hassanali Kassamali Nasser, Bombay, on 18th December 1997; (17th of Shabaan 1418 A.H.).

Rubabai, wife of Marhum Abdulrasul Kermalli Hasham (Bhashuli), Toronto, on 13th December 1997; (12th of Shabaan 1418 A.H.).

Marhuma Zainabbai Hussein Kalyan of Mombasa, on 2nd December 1997; (1st of Shabaan 1418 A.H.).

Marhum Pyarali Sikiladha, Daressalaam, on 28th November 1997; (27th of Rajab 1418 A.H.).

Marhum Gulamabbas Ali Jivraj, Wessex, England, on 20th November 1997; (19th of Rajab 1418 A.H.).

Marhuma Shakilabai Alidina, London, on 19th November 1997; (18th of Rajab 1418 A.H.).

Marhum Hassanali Mohamedali Bhalloo, Mombasa, on 18th November 1997; (17th of Rajab 1418 A.H.).

(Continued on page 50)

The Madagascar Graveyards- a lesson in planning for death!

Many Qabrastan (grave yards) in East Africa are noted for poor planning and haphazard location of graves. As a result, a lot of valuable ground space is wasted. Besides, in East Africa the construction of graves is left to the individual whims of relatives of the deceased and this is why we see variable types and sizes of graves.

In Madagascar, especially in Antananarivo and Tulear, grave yards are noted for their simple but meticulous planning. All graves are planned in straight lines close to each other with no wastage of ground space. Simple 6' x 3' x 1' ft high concrete frames are placed on each grave in neat array along with a simple tombstone with name, birth and death dates of the deceased. Similar organised planning is also noted in Karachi.

East Africa Jamats have something to learn from what was envisaged by the Madagascar Qabrastan trustees.

At the entrance of Tulear Qabrastan, on the side wall is inscribed an urdu couplet written in Gujarati script which reads.

*hum to khamosh hain; Teri zaban hilti hai,
Fathe parh le, are o idharse guzarne waale.*

In Gujarati, this reads:

હમ તો ખામોશ હય, તેરી ઝબા હીલતી હય
ફાતેહા પડલે, અરે ઇધરસે ગુઝરને વાલે

Africa Federation Directory launched

The Community - a magazine of the Haydari Madrasah of Nairobi has landed a big task of compiling and distributing the recently-launched AFRICA FEDERATION DIRECTORY 1998/9.

According to the Chief Editor of the Quarterly Publication, Mohamedarif Suleman who is also leading the maiden project, the idea of having one single directory for the whole of Africa would have multiple benefits, particularly that of improving communication amongst brothers in the region. Following preliminary discussions between the Editor and the Chairman of the Africa Federation, Mohamedbhai Dhirani in May last year, a comprehensive proposal was presented to the Secretariat by the Editorial Board. The report underlined various merits of the project such as creating closer ties between member Jamats and fostering the Council's theme of unity and fraternity. It is expected that a central body conducting such a project would eliminate the need for every Jamat to produce its own directory. An initial planned print run of 10,000 copies would ensure reaching the maximum number of people.

Perhaps, the most outstanding function of the Directory will pertain to population census and characterisation because survey forms will yield valuable information of our numbers and mix. For more details, contact.

The Project Leader,
Africa Federation Directory, C/O. The Community
P.o. Box 10017, Nairobi, Kenya
Fax: 750206, E-Mail Saajnbo@Form-Net.Com
or Thecommunity@Hotmail.com

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RAJIUN

**Alhaj Asgher Mulla
Janmamod Kermali**

The death of Alhaj Asgher Mulla Janmamod Kermali occurred in Re-Union on Sunday 21st December, 1997.

Alhaj Asgherbhai served Majunga Jamaat in Madagascar for many years and eventually was elected the Chairman of the Territorial Council of Madagascar.

His death occurred as a result of his involvement in a car accident on 29 November, 1997 after which he went into a coma and subsequently passed away.

The Chairman of the Africa Federation sent a letter of condolence to Marhum's son, Raza-ali who is the President of our Re-Union Jamaat. The Marhum's other son Amin was in Dar-es-Salaam to participate in the 8th Supreme Council Sports Festival and at the time of the inauguration of the Festival, Mohamedbhai Dhirani paid tribute to the Late Asgherbhai.

Let us all pray for the maghferat of Marhum and offer Sura-e-Fateha.

**Supreme Council appoints
Meghraj Investment Services to
handle communal insurance**

EDUCATION and HEALTH have always been issues of top priority for the Supreme Council. It is a matter of paramount importance to not only ensure that our children are well educated to enable them to face the oncoming challenges of the millennium but also to assure that we do not become unduly vulnerable to health hazards in wake of rising medical costs.

The Supreme Council has noted with concern the inability of parents to educate their children due to astronomical costs and a similar situation is prevalent for Health where the situation becomes particularly alarming when the bread earner is either incapacitated due to health reasons (and cannot afford medical treatment) or dies leaving no substantial savings.

The Council has and will continue to assist whenever possible but the cost of education, welfare and standard of living is spiralling at an alarming rate and the fear is that Community funds are unlikely to suffice for a fair number of cases. To help sustain the burden, a well planned Insurance Policy can be of invaluable help and to this effect it would therefore be prudent for each family to plan wisely and cover themselves with a well planned insurance scheme for their future needs.

The Supreme Council has appointed Messrs Meghraj Investment Services of UK to act as its Brokers for the insurance scheme. The official representative of Meghraj Investment Services in East Africa is Barkat Rajani who is stationed in Nairobi. He would be pleased to meet and visit interested parties and Jamats to explain and suggest suitable schemes and their financial commitments if adopted.

While the Council has recommended the insurance scheme, it cannot be expected to monitor individual schemes and hence it will be the responsibility of individuals, Jamats or Organisations to ensure maximum indemnities from policies undertaken. Each contract will therefore be a matter purely between an individual, a Jamat or an Organisation and the Broker.

The full address of Barkat Rajani is:
Meghraj Investment Services (Kenya) Limited,
P.O. Box 66290, Tel: 02-440148, Fax: 02-447189 - Nairobi

The passing days..

The passing days will never return,
They go flying by;
I would have had them caged,
but their feathers I couldn't tie.

Those summers of childhood bliss,
that life of glee and grace;
Those times often I miss,
in running a losing race.

In dire ecstasy I lie,
as the clock clicks on and on;
When will God bless me to die
Shall I go as though from dusk to dawn.

Life is but like a dream, a journey,
My destination is life without end,
And I realise it in joy,
If I am prepared to meet my Creator.

Dar cricketer excels in Australia

A prominent Dar es Salaam based community cricketer, Murtaza Jivraj who played for the Tanzania national team and was one of the three players selected from Tanzania to play in the East and Central African Cricket team for the ICC Cricket tournament in Malaysia in 1997 is now playing cricket in Australia.

When in Malawi for the ICC tournament he met the Papua New Guinea coach who invited and arranged for him to play in Australia for the Rovers Cricket Club in Queensland. He was subsequently forwarded an official invitation by Rovers Club to play for them as an all-rounder.

He travelled in September last year after representing Tanzania in the Quadrangular Cricket tournament in Zimbabwe. In Australia he has been a regular member of the Rovers Club in local cricket matches and has notched some commendable bowling figures.

Murtaza is also being coached to further improve his cricket and with this international exposure he hopes to become a much more proficient cricketer.

Death Announcements

(...from page 48)

Marhum Akbarali Sajani Dhirani, Karachi, on 17th November 1997; (16th of Rajab 1418 A.H.).

Marhuma Khatija Juma Moledina, Dar es Salaam, on 7th November 1997; (6th of Rajab 1418 A.H.).

Marhum Fidahusseini Alimohammad, London, England on 30th Oct 1997; (28th of Jamadi-ul-Aakher 1418 A.H.).

Marhum Pyarali Fazal Jetha, London, England on 25th Oct 1997; (23rd of Jamadi-ul-Aakher 1418 A.H.).

Marhuma Fatmabai Akber K.J. Alloo, Birmingham, England on 25th Oct 1997; (23rd of Jamadi-ul-Aakher 1418 A.H.).

Marhuma Jenabai Pirbhai Visram, Vancouver on 24th Sept 1997; (21st of Jamadi-ul-Awwal 1418 H.).

Marhuma Khairunnissabai Mohammedali Kanji, Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania on 29th Sept 1997; (26th of Jamadi-ul-Awwal 1418 H.).

Federation Samachar

Essay writers awarded in Mauritius

On 30 October, 1997 the Ahle Bait (A.S.) Propagation Organisation of Port Louis organised a Prize Giving Ceremony at the Yusuf Ali Hall, Khadafi Square, Plaine Verte where awards were presented to participants and winners of Essay Competitions organised on the occasion of Eid Milad Un Nabi (S.A.W.) and the martyrdom of Imam Husain (A.S.).

The ceremony was chaired by the Secretary of the Organisation, Shabbir Husein Rajani and attended by the parents of participants. Also present at the gathering were the President of the Ahle Bait (A.S.) Propagation Organisation, Raza Hussain Kassamally Esmael and other Managing Committee members namely Hasan Abbas Adamjee and Goolam Husein Kassamally Esmael.

In his welcome speech, Shabbir Husein Rajani stressed on the importance of Islamic Education in a Muslim's life. He said that we should give due importance to Islamic Education in the same way and manner we devote our time for the secular education of our children. Before the address of Hasan Abbas Adamjee, Husain Haji Ismail recited a Qasida in praise of our Holy Prophet, Hazrat Mohammed Mustafa (S.A.W.).

Prior to the presentation of awards, Hasan Abbas Adamjee conveyed his appreciation to the interest shown by the participants who took part in two essay competitions based on the two great personalities of Islam, namely our Holy Prophet, Hazrat Mohammad Mustafa (S.A.W) the one who brought Islam and Imam Husain (A.S), the grandson of our Holy Prophet, the one who saved Islam from the hands of Yazid.

The Winners of the competitions were:

1. Miss Marjeena Peerbocus -- Winner of Eid Milad Un Nabi competition.
2. Akhtar Nawaz Rossaye -- Runner Up of Eid Milad Un Nabbi competition.

1. Miss Nasreen Banu Soopun --- Winner of the competition on the Martyrdom of Imam Husain (A.S)
2. Miss Hanna Bickhan --- Runner Up of the competition on the Martyrdom of Imam Husain (A.S)

Prizes were also awarded to the following participants:

1. Miss Shafeenaz Kinoo
2. Sameer Chitbahal
3. Arshad Ali Domah
4. Mohammad Khaleed Solim
5. Shameema Assenjee
6. Miss Naziana Hossenboccus
7. Miss Samina Hossenboccus
8. Miss Rimaa Doomun
9. Miss Kawssar Bassaruth
10. Miss Bibi Sakina Rasmally
11. Miss Bibi Muntazar Khan Kadell
12. Miss Nishat Malleck Ahmed
13. Miss Zahrine Molotoo
14. Mr. Arshad Ozeer
15. Miss Yasminah Boodhoo
16. Mr. Rufeizan Ahmed.



A group of male participants with Husain Haji Ismail.

Constitutional amendment to Clause on Trustees proposed for Triennial Conference

At the forthcoming ordinary Triennial Conference to be held in Dar es Salaam from 10 April, 1998 it is proposed to replace Article 35(a) of the Africa Federation constitution.

Article 35(a) of the present constitution reads:

The properties and other assets of the Federation shall be vested in six trustees of whom the Chairman and the Honorary Treasurer shall be ex-officio Trustees. The other four trustees shall be elected at each Ordinary Conference, of whom two shall be from Tanzania and the other two from Kenya, all four being the citizens of the respective countries. The Supreme Council shall cause a Deed of Trust to be prepared in accordance with the law. The Trustees shall abide by the provisions of such deed and the law.

It is proposed to amend this to:

The properties and other assets of the Federation shall be vested in eight trustees of whom the Chairman and the Honorary Treasurer shall be ex-officio Trustees. The other six trustees shall be elected at each Ordinary Conference, of whom two each shall be from Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda, all six to be citizens of any member country of the Federation of Khoja Shia Ithna-Asheri Jamaats of Africa and/or bonafide resident for five years or more in that country and/or to have immovable property. The Supreme Council shall cause a Deed of Trust to be prepared in accordance with the law. The Trustees shall abide by the provisions of such deed and the law.

Federation Samachar

Note: The words which have been underlined above by the Secretariat does not form part of the said Article 35(a) of the Constitution. The underline indicates the portion being amended and the new amendments respectively.

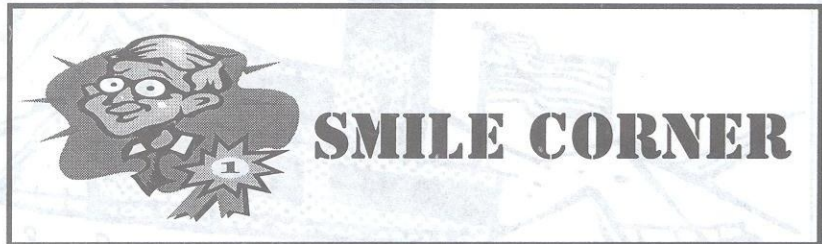
AIMS AND OBJECTS

At present the Constitution provides for 2 trustees each from Tanzania and Kenya. As the Federation's properties in Uganda have now been restored to the Federation, it is necessary under the law to appoint trustees from Uganda. The present constitution does not provide for such an appointment and hence it is proposed

to amend the Constitution to make this possible.

The present Constitution requires that the Trustees so elected should be the citizens of the respective countries. To avoid any difficulty in electing such persons it is proposed to amend the Constitution to meet the following requirements:-

1. To be a citizen of any member country of the Federation of Khoja Shia Ithna-Asheri Jamaats of Africa and/or
2. To be a bonafide resident for five years or more in the country and/or
3. To have immovable property.



Museum curator: That's a 5000-year-old vase you've just smashed.

Visitor: Thank Heaven! I thought it was a new one.

The English teacher asked the boy to give her a sentence with an object.

"You are very pretty," he answered.

"What's the object?" the teacher asked.

"To get an A in English," he replied.

Some Definitions:

Career girl: One who prefers plots and plans to pots and pans.

Neighbour: One who knows more about you than you do.

Etc. (Etcetera): A sign used to make others believe that you know more than what you really do.

Politician: A person who is ready to give your life for his country.

Man (to his wife): Do you know, dear, that the biggest idiot always marries the prettiest woman?

Wife: It's been a long time since you paid me a compliment, but I must say you did it very nicely.

Advertisement put up by an English coaching centre: *Weak in English? We shall improve your weakness.*

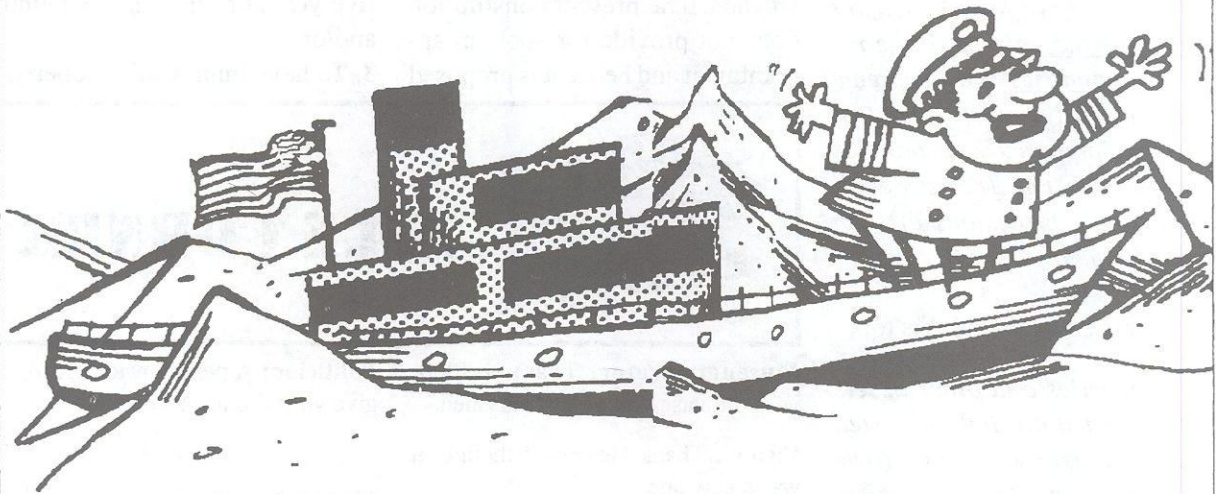
Father: Did your children help your mother today?

First child: Yes Daddy, I washed the dishes.

Second child: I dried them.

Third child: *I picked up the pieces.*

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DAR SPORTS FESTIVAL IS A KNOCK-OUT

The Eighth Supreme Council Sports Festival held in Dar es Salaam from 22 December to 27 December, 1997 was a great sporting success and the Festival has surely come a long way since it was inaugurated in 1984. This year's event, hosted by Union Sports Club, attracted 358 players from 14 Jamats around the world who came with a deep-seated ambition to win glories, create ties and foster brotherhood. Notable among the participants was Aden which came, saw and conquered the table-tennis trophy. The hosts stole the show by winning four titles, Nairobi impressed in cricket and Madagascar excelled in football. Some felt that the hosts *threw caution to the winds* by allowing three teams to participate but the mere fact that all matches took place without protests reflected on the maturity of the participants who let cause supersede ambition.

The Supreme Council Sports Festival involving our youths has come a long way since 1984 when the inaugural event was held in Dar es Salaam with participating teams from Tanzania and Kenya only. The second Sports Festival held at Mombasa in 1985 assumed a regional look with teams from Zaire joining in. The third Festival held in Nairobi in 1986 was the first one to assume an international stature with teams from the UK, Pakistan, Uganda and Madagascar also participating.

Ever since its inauguration, the Festival has been an event looked forward to by our youths and the only reason why it is not held annually is because the event draws exhaustive physical and financial resources from the hosts. The event is now held biennially which also helps to glorify the status of the event.

Such major events almost always have a few dissensions but ultimately whether such dissensions are resolved or not, they take a back seat and are overshadowed by the sporting achievements, bonds of friendship, fellowship and brotherhood that ensue from the Festival.

Did the hosts *throw caution to the*

winds? Probably when they decided to hosts three teams when the By-laws of the tournament prescribe only two teams. Perhaps the better alternative was to have sought the required 75% majority acceptance to justify the change in rules pertaining to the number of teams. In the absence of an elected Sports Council, this probably could have been done a few months before the event by e-mail or fax and bearing in mind the noble objectives of the

Festival it is unlikely anyone would have objected. After all, the Festival is more about fostering friendship and brotherhood than about winning accolades. And if in the unlikely event objections to hosting three teams did ensue, then we would have been duty-bound to honour such objectives. By doing so we would at least have avoided a situation where some of the by-laws were flouted.

The other issue that *stirred up the hornet's nest* was on whether players not playing for the main Jamat



Tahseel Sheriff of Arusha receiving the trophy of 'Sportsman of the Festival' from the Chairman of the Supreme Council, Mohamed Dhirani

team could participate on merit. Whether yes or no, this issue requires adept deliberations by the Sports Council and probably by even the Sports Committees of different Jamats so that we do come up with concise guidelines, the interpretation of which do not allow room for undue manipulation.

Bearing in mind the primary objectives of the Festival, that is to foster unity and to encourage *all* our youths to indulge in sports, a

(continued on page 54)

(.....from page 53)

likely rationale solution would be for each Jamat to be represented by its best players. Bearing in mind the lack of patriotism that would result from hosting combined teams, a possible alternative could be to let each Jamat be represented by its main team and to accommodate another second team (if the other teams number more than one, they should be made to qualify for the event). While accommodating and encouraging players of the other teams, the importance of the Jamat team should never be undermined because after all, it is the Jamat team which is the flag-bearer of the community in national and external tournaments.

The participating Jamats in this year's Festival were hosts Dar es salaam (with three teams), Aden (which participated for the first time with a contingent of three table-tennis players), Nairobi, Arusha, Kigoma, Morogoro, Moshi, Mtwara, Songea, Tanga, Madagascar, Dubai, Stanmore and Karachi. A notable absence was that of the Mombasa and Zaire teams which could not make it because of recent antipathetic political situations. Kampala too could not send a team while North American teams were absent because they had organised a volleyball tournament in Orlando (results elsewhere in this issue).

The Festival was officially opened on 21 December at the Dar es Salaam Imambara with an attendance of over 700 people. The Guest of honour for the opening was the Vice Chairman of the Supreme Council, Mohamed Pirbhai. He along with the President of the Dar es Salaam Jamat, Asgher Bharwani, the Vice Chairman of Ithaanesheri Union, Jabir Chatoo and the Chairman of Union Sports Club, Mohamed Nathoo addressed the gathering. The addresses acc-

Federation Samachar



The Chairman of the Organising Committee, Bashir Tejani presents the squash trophy to the Captain of Dar Union Sports Club.

-entuated on the need for community members to fraternise. It was also noted that the Festival now includes teams from four continents and hopes were expressed that in the next few years, Australia too would be able to participate. There was unanimous praise for the organising committee which worked ardously to ensure that the participants went back home with pleasant memories.

The gathering of so many sportsmen was enough to make the organisers run around in circles but ultimately they *dotted their i's and crossed their t's* well to make the Festival a great success. The organising committee consisted of Bashir Tejani (Convenor), Mahmood Panju (Secretary), Kassamali Bhalloo (Treasurer), Mahmood Rahim (Grounds), Afzal Peera (Accommodation), Shabbir Hameer (Transport) and Najafali Dhala (Magazine).

The games contested were football (7 teams), cricket (7 teams), volleyball (12 teams), lawn tennis (6 teams), table tennis (12 teams), squash (7 teams) and golf (6 teams).

The final results were:

Football [Abdulrasool Lakha Trophy]

Winner: Madagascar
Runner-up: Dar Union Red

The final was won 5-4 on penalties by Madagascar. The best player award went to Abbas Kermali of Dar Union Red while Aziz Fazal of Tanga was awarded the 'best upcoming player' award.

Cricket [Late Ebrahim Sheriff Dewji trophy]

Winner: Nairobi Jafferys
Runner-up: Dar Union Red
Nairobi convincingly won the final by 9 wickets.

The best batsman award went to Saqlain of Karachi while Ahmed Sumar of Dar Union Red was declared the best bowler. Dubai's Imran Lakha was adjudged the best bowler and Kenya's national team captain, Aasif Karim the best all-rounder.

Volleyball [Late Abdul Nasser Virji Trophy]

Winner: Dar Union Red
Runner-up: Songea
Dar Union Red beat Songea 2-1 in an exciting final where the pendulum of fortunes swayed to and fro. Asif Jeraj of Dar Union Red was declared the best player of the tournament while the best upcoming player award went to Dilawar Dhalla of Songea.

Lawn tennis [Abdulhussein Nurmohamed trophy]

Winner: Dar Union Red
Runner-up: Nairobi

(continued on page 55)

The individual event was won by Ally Dewji of Dar Union Red while the runner-up was Ali Khimji also of Dar Union Red. The award for the best upcoming player went to Muhammad Rafiq Khimji of Tanga.

Table tennis [Mohamed Dhirani trophy]

Winner: Aden

Runner-up: Union Red

The individual event was won by Mohamed Abbas of Aden while the runner-up was Nadeem also of Aden. The best upcoming player was Sajjad Sheriff of Dar Union.

Squash [Late Muhammadali Meghji Trophy]

Winner: Dar Union Red

Runner-up: Moshi

In the final the Dar team beat Moshi 2-1. Arusha and Nairobi stole the glories in the individual event which was won by Ali Asgher Hirji of Arusha who beat Shabbir Walji of Nairobi in the final. The best upcoming player was Ahmed Gulamali of Dar Union Red.

Golf [Habib Mulji Trophy]

Winner: Dar Union Red

Runner-up: Moshi

The overall nett winner was Nazmul Jaffer of Dar es Salaam Union while Taki Daya of Moshi was runner-up. The Gross winner was Mahmood Somji of Arusha and the senior upcoming player of the tournament was Mustafa Nasser of Dubai.

Ain Sheriff was declared the Union Sports Club Sportsman of the Year [1996] and was awarded the late Akber H. Panju trophy. Tahseel Sheriff of Arusha was declared Sportsman of the Sports Festival.

A grand reception in honour of the
Federation Samachar

participating sportsmen, officials and guests was held on 27 December, 1997 at the Diamond Jubilee Hall. The occasion was attended by about 1000 people and their was unanimous praise for the hosts for organising the event well.

The Chief Guest for the reception was Hassan Hirji, a well known philanthropist. In his address, Hassan spoke on the importance of Union Sports Club to the community saying that the Club has not only excelled on the sports field but has also been actively involved in other fund-raising activities.

The Chairman of the Africa Federation, Mohamed Dhirani reiterated the importance of the Festival and observed that while the youths were rivals on the sports field where each team fought to win, the spirit of fellowship was quite visible off the field. Talking on the importance of sports, he referred to Iran's recent success in the soccer world cup which he said helped it bring down diplomatic barriers.

Akber Somji from Dubai spoke on behalf of all the team managers. He thanked the Supreme Council, Jamaat and Union Sports Club for the hospitality rendered to participants. On behalf of Jaffery Sports Club of Dubai he expressed willingness for Dubai to host the Festival in 2001. He said it would not be possible for Dubai to host the event in the next three years because the holy month of Ramadhan coincided with the Christmas holidays.

Seyyid Akhtar Rizvi was encouraged to say a few words and in his spontaneous address he spoke on the need for physical fitness and why sports is encouraged by Islam.

The Master of ceremonies, Mushtak Damji handled affairs well. The auctioning of various items fetched US\$ 15,900 of which

US\$ 2500 was donated directly to Union Sports Club.

Some 210 trophies were awarded that night. These included:

1. AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING SUPPORT TO UNION SPORTS CLUB:

HASSAN HIRJI

2. AWARDS FOR SPONSORS OF DIFFERENT AWARDS:

ALLIANCE AIR (CRICKET, FOOTBALL, GOLF)

STAPLE CONNECTION (TABLE TENNIS)

F.K. MOTORS (TENNIS)

MASUMIN PRINTWAYS (SQUASH)

HEARBEAT ONLINE (VOLLEYBALL)

3. TOKEN OF APPRECIATION FROM UNION SPORTS CLUB TO THE FOLLOWING TEAM MANAGERS:

ADEN: MOHAMED ABASS ROSHANALLI

ARUSHA: TAHSEEL SHERIFF

DAR ES SALAAM: RASOOL SHAMJI

DUBAI: AKBER SOMJI

KARACHI: HASSAN

ABDULHUSSEIN

KIGOMA: FAZAL KASSAM

MADAGASCAR: BASSIR

ROSSANALY

MOROGORO: SAJJAD WALLI

MOSHI: AHMED DAYA

MTWARA: SAJJAD RASHID

NAIROBI: MUKHTAR ASSARIA

SONGEA: SHABBIR REMTULLA

STANMORE: SAJJAD TEJANI

TANGA: SHABBIR SACHOO

4. FOOTBALL: AL-HAJ ABDULRASOOL LAKHA TROPHY

WINNER: MADAGASCAR
RUNNERS UP: DSM UNION RED

BEST PLAYER: ABASS KERMALI
(DSM UNION RED)

UPCOMING PLAYER: AZIZ FAZAL
(TANGA)

5. GOLF: AL-HAJ HABIB MULJI TROPHY

WINNER: DSM UNION RED
RUNNERS UP: MOSHI

(continued on page 56)

(.....from page 55)

WINNER- OVERALL
 NETT(INDIVIDUAL EVENT)-
 NAZMUL JAFFER (DSM UNION)
 RUNNER UP: TAKI DAYA (MOSHI)
 GROSS EVENT: MAHMOOD SOMJI
 (ARUSHA)
 SENIOR UPCOMING PLAYER:
 MUSTAFA NASSER (DUBAI)
 1ST DAY WINNER- MURTAZA
 NASSER (DSM UNION)
 2ND DAY WINNER- FAYAZ JAFFER
 (DSM UNION)

6. SQUASH: LATE MUHAMMADALI
 MEGHJI TROPHY

WINNER: DSM UNION RED
 RUNNER- UP: MOSHI

INDIVIDUAL EVENT:

WINNER: ALI ASGHER HIRJI
 (ARUSHA)
 RUNNER UP: SHABBIR WALJI
 (NAIROBI)

UPCOMING PLAYER: AHMED
 GULAMALI(DSM UNION RED)

7. TABLE TENNIS: AL-HAJ
 MUHAMMAD DHIRANI TROPHY

WINNER: ADEN
 RUNNER UP: DSM UNION RED

INDIVIDUAL EVENT:

WINNER: MOHAMMED ABASS
 (ADEN)
 RUNNER UP: NADEEM (ADEN)

UPCOMING PLAYER: SAJJAD
 SHERIFF (DSM UNION)

8. TENNIS: ABDULHUSSEIN
 NURMOHAMED TROPHY

WINNER: DSM UNION RED
 RUNNER UP: NAIROBI

INDIVIDUAL EVENT:

WINNER: ALLY DEWJI
 (DSM UNION RED)
 RUNNER UP: ALI KHIMJI
 (DSM UNION RED)

UPCOMING PLAYER: MUHAMMAD
 RAFIQ KHIMJI (TANGA)

9. VOLLEYBALL: LATE ABDUL
 NASSER VIRJI TROPHY

WINNER: DSM UNION RED
 RUNNER UP: SONGEA

BEST PLAYER: ASIF JERAJ
 (DSM UNION RED)

UPCOMING PLAYER:
 DILAWAR DHALLA (SONGEA)

(continued on page 57)



The victorious Nairobi cricket team



Muhammad Abbas Roshanali of Aden receiving the table tennis winners trophy from Mahmood Panju, Secretary of the Organising Committee.

PAST WINNERS

Cricket

1984 Jaffery S.C. Mombasa
 1985 Jaffer S.C. Mombasa
 1986 Jaffery S.C. Nairobi
 1987 Union S.C. Nairobi
 1989 Union S.C. Dar es Salaam
 1994 Jaffery S.C. Nairobi
 1995 Hussaini S.C. Karachi
 1997 Nairobi Jafferys

Volleyball

1984 Jaffery S.C. Mwanza
 1985 Jaffery S.C. Mwanza
 1986 Jaffery S.C. Songea
 1987 Union S.C. Dar es Salaam
 1989 Jaffery S.C. Songea
 1994 Union S.C. Dar es Salaam
 1995 Union S.C. Dar es Salaam
 1997 Union S.C. Dar es Salaam

Badminton

1987 Jaffery S.C. Mombasa
 1989 Jaffery S.C. Mombasa

Golf

1985 Jaffery S.C. Mombasa
 1989 Kilimeru Gymkhana Arusha
 1997 Union S.C. Dar es Salaam

Squash

1984 Union S.C. Dar es Salaam.
 1985 Union S.C. Dar es Salaam
 1986 Union S.C. Dar es Salaam
 1987 Union S.C. Stanmore
 1989 Union S.C. Stanmore
 1994 Jaffery S.C. Nairobi
 1995 Hussaini S.C. Karachi
 1997 Union S.C. Dar es Salaam

Lawn Tennis

1984 Jaffery S.C. Mombasa
 1985 Jaffery S.C. Mombasa
 1986 Jaffery S.C. Nairobi
 1987 Jaffery S.C. Nairobi
 1989 Jaffery S.C. Nairobi
 1994 Jaffery S.C. Nairobi
 1995 Union S.C. Dar es Salam
 1997 Union S.C. Dar es Salaam

Football

1987 Union S.C. Dar es Salaam
 1989 Union S.C. Dar es Salaam
 1995 Union S.C. Dar es Salaam
 1997 Madagascar

Table-tennis

1987 Jaffery S.C. Nairobi
 1997 Aden

SPORTS FESTIVAL

(.....from page 56)

10. CRICKET: LATE EBRAHIM
SHERIFF DEWJI TROPHY

WINNER: NAIROBI JAFFERY
RUNNER UP: DSM UNION RED

BEST BATSMAN:
SAQLAIN (KARACHI)

BEST BOWLER:
AHMED SUMAR
(DSM UNION RED)

BEST FIELDER:
IMRAN LAKHA (DUBAI)

BEST ALL ROUNDER:
AASIF KARIM (NAIROBI)

11. UNION SPORT CLUB -
SPORTSMAN OF THE YEAR (1996)
(LATE AKBER H. PANJU TROPHY)
WINNER: AIN SHERIFF

12. SPORTSMAN OF THE 8TH KSISC
SPORTS FESTIVAL
(LATE AKBER H. PANJU TROPHY)
WINNER: TAHSEEL SHERIFF
(ARUSHA).

In the space of five days many victories were notched, many contacts were made, many lessons were learnt and surely, as in all tournaments, there were many losers who however don't need to lose heart because failure, like success, is never permanent. Congratulations to all those who made the Festival a success. Surely it was a knock-out!

Chairman appoints Sports Council

The Chairman of the Africa Federation has appointed the following to man the Supreme Council Sports Council:

Mohamed Nathoo	Chairman
Mohamed Panju	Secretary
Arif Karim (member)	Nairobi
Ebrahim Jivraj (member)	Tanzania
Naushad Dhanji (rep. from the Supreme Council).	

WINNERS WINNERS WINNERS

During the Festival, a souvenir magazine was published. The following have been declared winners of the Quiz 2 competition included in this magazine:

Muhammad Suheil Chagani (Age:13)
Abbas Bhimji (Age:16)
Mazaher S. Kassam (Age:16)
Al Hafidh Mahmood Wazir (Age:16)

Federation Samachar



The Vice Chairman of the Supreme Council, Mohamed Pirbhai presents the Tennis winners trophy to Dar Union's Captain, Rizwan Jaffer



A token of appreciation to the Dubai Team manager, Akber Somji by Dar Jamat President, Asgher Bharwani.



Taki Daya from Moshi receiving the Golf runner-up trophy from the Immediate Past Chairman of the Supreme Council, Habib Mulji.



Politics aside -- token of appreciation to Sajjad Bashir Tejani, Stanmore from Asgher Bharwani, Dar es salaam.

http://www.africafederation.org

Africa Federation launches Web Page on the Internet

Want to know if the Africa Federation has come up with a new circular? 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 or the rulings of our Marja? Want to be abreast with community news? or do you wish to contribute to a debate over the internet? If the answers to all the above are yes, all you need to do is use your fingers and press **http://www.africafederation.org** on your computer (after being connected to the internet).

With the Internet now having spread to over 150 countries and accessed by millions of users around the world, the Africa Federation has now launched its own Web Page on the Internet. This has been hosted through the courtesy of Hearbeat On-line who have also provided a free internet connection to the *Federation Samachar*.

Over the past few months the page was hosted on a temporary site thanks to Fatema Ahmed Alloo who has also designed the page for the convenience of our brothers and sisters around the world.

Fatema, who has her personal website (<http://www.cs.wcupa.edu/~ralloo/faloo>) has spent many hours to adapt the Web Page to the requirements of the Africa Federation. She obtained an IMIS Higher Diploma in December 1997 after completing her secondary education at Dar es Salaam's Aga Khan Mzizima Secondary School in November, 1995. In addition to being involved with the AF Web Page she also assists the Huseini *Federation Samachar*

Madressa Girls Section. She recently typeset the entire syllabus for them.

The Internet provides great opportunities for our Community brethren to contribute opinions and suggestions through the Electronic Mail (e-mail) which is perhaps the quickest and cheapest way of communicating. A person can ask Masaels and receive replies, obtain religious articles from Web Sites, contribute articles and so on. To enhance communication between brethren, the Africa Federation Web Site includes an E-Mail directory (to be regularly updated) of our brothers around the world.

The Africa Federation Web Page essentially includes the following main features (some details have yet to be placed as the site will be under construction for the coming few months):-

- *Africa Federation and all sub-committee office bearers
- *A brief history of the Khoja Shia Ithna-Asheris
- *A brief history of the Africa Federation
- *Jamaat Homepages with details for each Jamaat in Africa
- *E-Mail directory of Khoja Shia Ithna-Asheris around the world.
- *Picture Gallery including eventful photographs
- *Africa Federation Circulars to be carried on the day they are released
- *Community news to include news update
- *Federation Samachar - issues can be read online. Previous issues will be archived
- *Other magazines - links to other community magazines
- *News of death
- *Business profiles of Community businesses
- *Dialogue section to introduce current subjects for discussion over the net
- *Islamic resources - this section carries links to Islamic information like the Holy Qur'an and Nahjul Balagah among others.

* *Thought of the Week* -- this carries a concise food for thought article and is being updated each week.

For the site to be effective there is a need for all Jamaats to co-operate because without adequate information the site cannot be updated. All Jamaats in Africa are requested to send in the following details to the Africa Federation Secretariat for inclusion on the Web Page:-

- * Current office bearers
- * Explicit address details [physical, telephone, fax, e-mail]
- * Sub-committee members
- * Photograph of the Chairman
- * Brief History of the Jamaat
- * Newsflash [current projects or relevant information]
- * E-mail addresses of those having Internet facilities
- * Name of an appointed Web Co-ordinator who will update the Africa Federation Secretariat with news and events.

The launching of a site on the Internet is a significant stride by the Africa Federation to stay abreast with the latest advancements in communication technology. We therefore call upon all individuals and Jamaats to extend their maximum co-operation to the Africa Federation Secretariat and to the following who are directly handling the site:

Munir Daya, Web Manager, who can be contacted on the following numbers for further details or questions: Tel: 0812 781 811, 26005, 116079, 113542 and 115419. Fax: 667856. E-Mail: Samachar@raha.com.

Fatema Alloo, Web Page Designer. She can be contacted on the following numbers: Tel: 20533, Mobile 0812 782 190, E-Mail: Fatema@aloo.net.

Women in mosques PRAY, WHY NOT?

A Lucknow student, Sadaf Fatima Rizvi, has led a revolutionary call to Muslim women to offer Friday prayers alongside the men in the historic Asafi Imam-Bara mosque.

WHEN 18-year-old Sadaf Fatima Rizvi led a delegation of Shia women to the Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister, Mayawati, demanding the lifting of the two-decade-old ban on the Azadaari (Mohurrum) procession, it shook the conservative Shia community of Lucknow. But it was her call to Muslim women to offer *Jumme ki namaaz* (Friday prayers) alongside the men in the Asafi Imam-Bara mosque that triggered off a religious revolution.

Fatima Rizvi, a first year B.A. student in the local Avadh Girls' Degree College hails from a family of Shias which has been regarded as the rehnuma (guiding lights) of Shiaism in India. Her maternal uncles — theologians Maulana Syed Kalbe Sadiq (Vice president, All India Muslim Law Board) and Syed Kalbe Jawwad — are well-known leaders in the local community.

Fatima's studies took her to Lucknow and staying at her religious maternal grandfather's house, put her in the thick of religious matters. She said that during Muharram, she could really sense the anger and frustration of the Shia women at the ban on the religious processions. Seeing the frustrations of her fellow women, she got involved with the Duqtaran-e-Zainabi movement, an organisation founded by Shia women in 1977, when the ban on processions was first imposed.

The Duqtaran-e-Zainabi draws inspiration from Bibi Zainab (a.s.), sister of Hazrat Imam Husain (a.s), who has always been looked upon as a true leader of women. Fatima is now the organisation's propaganda secretary and she says that her objective is to make it an organisation that truly cares for the upliftment of Muslim women.

On August 15, 1997 the organisation gave a call for Muslim women to join the men in the Friday namaaz at the mosque. It was a declaration of independence initiated with prayers. We asked women to come and pray alongside the men every Friday (in ofcourse a separate section).

The call resulted in a fatwa (religious decree) by some clerics, who felt the time was not ripe for Muslim women to make this move. When asked on the reservations of some of the Clerics, Fatima said that the call for women to pray in the Mosque does not in any way interfere with the tenets of Islam, as some claim.

She said Islam gives equal rights to both men and women and praying together is one such right. Women have been exercising this right in the Islamic countries like Saudi Arabia. During Haj, thousands pray together, irrespective of their caste, creed or sex. She questioned, "how can anyone say it goes against the tenets of Islam for women to pray in the Mosque?"

She said the call for women to attend Friday prayers was to enable women to seek enlightenment. The *Jumme ka khuṭba* (Friday sermon) is itself an enlightening

experience. Women will definitely benefit from this. It is high time they came out of their shells and assert the rights that Islam has already bestowed on them.

When asked on what the reaction of men had been she said, "very positive. Surprisingly, we have had an overwhelming response from the opposite sex."

One journalist questioned her: "Now that you have emerged as a high-profile leader of Shia women, are there any clashes with the older generation, including your grandmother and your great-aunts?"

In response she said: "I do not lead them, I work under their guidance. They are all happy that someone so much younger than them has had the guts to come out and do what they have always wanted to, but hesitated to, because of traditional barriers."

On her future plans, she said she vied for the all-round development of Muslim women with topmost priority to education, followed by schemes that will help promote economic independence. She welcomed all Muslim women to come under this banner and realise their full potential.

Inspirational Quote

Many people think that by hoarding money they are gaining safety for themselves. If money is your ONLY hope for independence, you will never have it. The only real security that a person can have in this world is a reserve of knowledge, experience, and ability. Without these qualities, money is practically useless.

All you need to know about tonsillitis

Tonsils are made up of blood vessels, supporting tissues and white cells and they lie at the back of the mouth on either side. They look simply like small swellings. They exist to fight infection.

What happens with tonsillitis?

This means that the tonsils are losing the battle a bit, and have become infected themselves, usually by a virus or a bacterium called Streptococcus.

Symptoms are swollen glands on the sides of the neck under the jaw line, pain on swallowing and sometimes flu-like symptoms; fever, aches and pains, catarrh build-up. It's very common during childhood and should be treated like flu. Aspirin crushed and gargled in water, Vitamin C supplements, plenty of liquid but not milk or ice cream, as dairy products may actually aggravate the condition and steam inhalation with your head covered over a bowl of hot water can all help. Some will need antibiotics, usually penicillin. Sometimes tonsils remain enlarged even if they aren't infected.

Does it make any difference if I take them out?

Removal is fine for enlarged, repeatedly infected tonsils. But remember, you can still get sore throats. It just won't be tonsillitis. Large tonsils that are not infected can cause problems of pressure in the throat and snoring.

How should I take care of myself?

Experiment by avoiding dairy products and see if this makes a difference to permanently enlarged non-infected tonsils.

Anything else I can do?

It depends. Sort out with your doc

Fitness as a fountain of youth

.....living strong to the eighties and nineties

There was a time when exercise was considered to be the domain of the young and energetic, when old age meant putting your feet up and taking it easy. Now, however, research shows that one can remain physically active throughout the life span. The physical and psychological gains from exercise are so beneficial that it is never too late to start because exercising enables the process of ageing to be slowed down.

The physical and psychological gains made from exercise are so beneficial in the second half of life, that even if one has never exercised before it's never too late to start. Anyone interested in slowing the process of aging should concentrate on three aspects of exercise:

Flexibility. Often premature ageing is nothing more than a loss of flexibility in the muscles, ligaments, tendons, joints and spine. A sad fact of some lives is the loss of independent functioning due to a stepping down of involvement in many of the activities that once were part and parcel of a normal day. Find a passion, volunteer, join a mentoring programme, garden, hike, teach and put to use that lifetime of hard-earned wisdom.

Strength Training. Older people don't always complain about a loss of endurance, but they do complain about a loss of strength. Not being able to lift bags of groceries, not being able to open your own pickle jar - all these things add to a frustrating day and a loss of independence. Physical therapists recommend that an attempt be made to continue lifting heavier items as people age from their 50s to 60s and so on. The adage that we tend to lose what we don't use, is never more evident than in loss of strength. Estimates on strength loss range from 15-30 per cent after age 50.

Aerobics. Moderate walking programmes are the number one exercise recommendations given to people over 50. Walking is easy on the joints, can improve heart and lung function and control weight. High blood pressure affects one out of every two people over age 60. For many, effective control of blood pressure must be managed with medication. After that, it's been shown that increased physical activity may decrease blood pressure even further. And not only will you keep the pressure down, but you can retain the strength of your bones thanks to daily walking routines. A combination of strength training and weight-bearing aerobics such as walking is the primary holistic means for preventing bone loss and osteoporosis, along with an adequate intake of calcium and magnesium.

Science will continue to seek solutions for extending life and the properties of youthfulness, but the key aspects of healthy aging are already known: resilience and flexibility, connection to people and inner faith, and a pleasurable engagement in the best that life has to offer.

tor whether you actually have tonsillitis, bronchitis or just a sore throat. If you have recurring sore throat, as some people do when they are run down and tired, your throat pain may just be your body's

way of saying calm down and chill out. Stimulate the immune system by rubbing an essential oil mix on the throat. One suitable recipe: seven drops bergamot, four drops of sandalwood in 50ml of base oil.

Basic facts on sports and HIV

by Hussein H. Ahmed

Sporting activities are enjoyed by our youths world-wide and through sports many of our youths travel for competitions thereby giving them an opportunity to mingle with others. Health has always been a primary prerequisite for a successful sporting career and while there are many aspects of how sports persons should maintain and engender good health, a serious issue nowadays relates to HIV infections that sports persons are vulnerable to.

Any sport that involves external injury presents a theoretical risk of HIV infection but in contact sports, where the skin may be cut, scratched or bitten and contaminated by another person's blood there is a need for special consideration to be given to the possibility of HIV infection.

The advice that follows is aimed at recommending good practice for avoiding all blood borne infection including HIV and Hepatitis B.

Q. Has anyone been infected with HIV through sports?

A. There are always risks but, out of millions of sporting events since HIV was identified, there has been only one reported incident of likely infection on the sports field. Here too the doctors are not entirely sure that the infection resulted from the incident which involved a clash of heads between two players during an amateur football match in Italy. Both players bled thereby raising the possibility of HIV transmission from one to another. However it could not be verified if any of the players was or was not having traits of HIV in the first place.

Q. What happens if someone is wounded?

A. Injuries are common in sporting events but the nature of bruises differ. It is important that the correct standards of health and hygiene be observed during application of first aid to treat wounds. Examples of common injuries are boxers bleeding from face wounds, footballers bleeding after collision and cricketers being hit by a ball.

In each case, whoever is organizing

the event in question must take precaution by calling a sports paramedic for the wound to be treated immediately. Untrained spectators should be avoided from offering any type of help. Trainers or those giving helping hand (first aid) should wear disposable water proof gloves and rinse wounds with antiseptic solution. Once cleaned, a wound must be covered with waterproof dressing. If bleeding continues the players should be out of the ring, pitch or court until the bleeding stops. Equipment with which the injured came into contact should be disinfected regularly as a part of rule.

Q. What medical equipment is needed?

A. Fully stocked first aid kit is very essential for all sports events and a qualified sports paramedic should be present.

Q. What about playing sports with an open wound or skin infection?

A. Open wounds, cuts, skin infection, blisters should be covered with waterproof dressing. It is advisable that wounds should be checked by a doctor before playing.

Q. Is it safe to share towels?

A. No, but not because of HIV transmission, but because there are skin infections such as herpes, impetigo which could be passed on. There should be no sharing of towels to ensure good hygiene and cleanliness of players.

Q. What about bath etc.?

A. Baths for general good hygiene are strongly recommend for players after training sessions or games and no sharing of soap is advisable though no infections through soap have so far been reported.

Q. What about travelling overseas?

A. Always rely on your own sports paramedic who will be fully equipped. Depending on the host country to help you for first aid kit leaves you unaware whether the equipment used is sterilised or not.

A meal on time...

MANY illnesses result from a succession of irregular meals or from the habit of eating whatever catches the fancy or happens to come in handy. Such "carelessness" results in decreased body efficiency. You are what you eat. Hence, eating good meals on time is very important.

A complete and balanced diet is essential to meet the needs of an individual. Nutritionists define good meals as those which (1) supply nutrition to meet body needs (2) protect against disease and (3) are enjoyable to eat. Researchers have discovered that the custom of three meals/day is based on convenience and not on biological needs. Tests show that the factors of blood sugar concentration and muscular efficiency are lowest before breakfast and remain at this (low) level until a meal is taken. After eating, blood sugar rises sharply and efficiency increases but the two fall again to a low level within two-and-a half to four hours unless another meal is taken. From these facts, it appears that a high level of energy can be maintained by eating every two-and-a half to three hours throughout the day.

It is unfortunate that breakfast is so often slighted because people stay in bed until the last possible minute and rush with dressing and "eat on the run". One needs a good breakfast more than any other meal in order to bring one's blood sugar, concentration and muscular efficiency to peak level. It always pays to make breakfast a heavy meal and discipline oneself to get up early enough to eat it in a relaxed way.

Most people find it easier to plan three main meals a day making them not too heavy, and balancing each one. If there are to be two or three snack meals, these should be planned along with the main meals. The "snack" is a good way to get in the vitamins and mineral foods. Nutritionists recommend as snacks, foods such as milk, soups, stew, fruit juices, fruits and salad vegetables rather than candy, pastries, ice cream or sweet and starchy foods.

The ideal daily meal plan should distribute the day's nutritional requirements through a moderate breakfast, light lunch, fairly heavy dinner and three snack meals. How heavy the noon and evening meals should be depends on one's age group and occupation. Those who do light work or who study in the afternoon can avoid drowsiness by eating a light lunch. A light meal at night is more conducive to ensuring sound sleep especially in small children and the elderly. An overweight person should avoid all food before retiring. Ultimately each family must decide what diet arrangement suits its members best.



Numbers in the Holy Qur'an

contributed by Haji Akber Tejani, India

1 (One)

And your God is one God, there is no God by He, most Gracious most Merciful (Al-Baqara: 163)

2 (Two)

“Two from the sheep and two from Goats” Two from the camels and two from the Oxen (Al-Ana’am: 143)

3 (Three)

So believe in Allah and his prophets and do not say three Gods, stay away, it will be better for you. (Al-Nisa : 171)

4 (Four)

And God has created every animal from water, some of them creep on their bellies, some walk on two legs and some walk on Four. (Al-Noor :45)

5 (Five)

They say they were Five, their dog being the sixth, a guess work of the unknown. (Al-Kahf : 22)

6 (Six)

Your guardian is Allah, who created the heavens and the earth in six stages (Al-Aaraf : 45)

7 (Seven)

The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of God is that of a grain of corn, it grows seven ears, and each ear has a hundred grains. (Al-Baqara : 261)

8 (Eight)

And on that day, eight angles shall bear the Throne of your Lord above them (Al-Haaqah: 7)

9 (Nine)

There were Nine men of a family in the city who made mischief in the land and would not reform. (Al-Naml: 48)

10 (Ten)

God will not call you to account for the useless oaths, but will call you to account for your deliberate oaths. So its expiation is to feed ten poor persons. (Al-Maeda: 89)

100 (Hundred)

God caused him to die for a hundred years, and then raised him up again (Al-Baqara: 259)

200 (Two hundred)

If there are twenty patient and persevering among you, they will be victorious over two hundred. (Al Anfaal: 65).

300 (Three hundred)

And they stayed in their cave for three hundred years and (some) add nine more. (Al-Kahf: 25)

1000 (Thousand)

The night of Qadr is better than a thousand months. (Al-Qadr): 3)

2000 (Two Thousand)

And if there be a thousand among you they will vanquish two thousand with the permission of Allah (Al-Anfaal: 66)

5000 (Five Thousand)

Yes, if you remain firm and guard from evil, your Lord would help you with five thousand angels, who would fiercely fight even if they enemy should rush here. (Ale-Imran: 125)

100000 (Hundred Thousand)

And we sent him (Yunus) to a hundred thousand (men) or more. (Al-Saffat: 14)

Courtesy: “The wonders of Creation in the Holy Qur’an” published by the World Federation of K.S.I. Muslim Communities London.

ISLAM’S VIEW OF CHRIST

by Suhail G. Punja, Qum, Iran

Islam regards Jesus as one of its five greatest prophets - the others being Noah, Abraham, Moses and greatest of them all the prophet Mohammed (p.b.u. them all)

The holy Qur’an confirms the virgin birth of the Messiah, and has a chapter titled ‘Maryam’ in honor of the noble mother of Jesus: When the angles said: "O Mary, surely Allah gives you good news with a word from him (of one) whose name is the messiah, Jesus son of Mary worthy of regard in this world and the hereafter" (3:44) She said: "My Lord when shall there be a son (born) to me when man

has not touched me?" He said: " Even so. Allah creates what He pleases: when He has decreed a matter, He only says to it *be* and it is." (Quran 3:46).

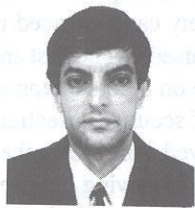
Islam also confirms the miracles performed by Jesus Christ such as the healing of the lepers and bringing the dead back to life. Ref.: (Holy Quran 3:48,49).

But it differs with the Christian belief that Jesus was the “Son of God” as well as his alleged crucifixion and says in this respect. “The Christ, son of Mary is only an apostle of Allah ... believe therefore in Allah and His apostles, and say not three (trinity) ... Allah is only one God: far be it from

His Glory that He should have a son.” (Holy Qur’an 4:171)

Muslims also believe that Jesus Christ, like other prophets before him, foretold the coming of the final messenger to mankind, Mohammed Mustafa (p.b.u.h). In particular, they point to the verses in St. John’ Gospel (16:17-14) about his tidings of the ‘comforter’ or the ‘Paraclete’ to come after him.

The Qura’n corroborates Jesus’ prophecy in the following words:“And when Jesus son of Mary said: O children of Israel surely I am the apostle of Allah to you, verifying that which is before me of the Torah and giving the good news of an apostle to come after me, his name being Ahmad.” (Holy Qur’an 61:6)



Wayside Wisdom

by Munir Daya, Dar es Salaam

Marriage and Education – where should our priorities be?

The growing dilemma amongst our parents and school going girls is on what girls should do after they complete their basic education. The education curriculum in almost all countries enables youths to complete their ordinary and advanced level examinations by the age of 16 or 18. For boys, the dilemma of what to do next is diminutive because they essentially have only one meritorious choice and that is to educate themselves if they want to be successful future bread-winners for their family and if they want to be mature and respectable individuals.

When having to make a decision, the dilemma facing girls is on which of various options to choose from after completing school. Among the questions that a girl may come face to face with at this stage of her life include: *does Islam encourage women to study?; should she study further and delay marriage?; should she opt to simply get married and be a domestic wife?; should she get married with the understanding with one's spouse that she will continue her studies after marriage?; or, if she decides to study, will she use her education to seek employment?* Making a decision is not easy but at the same time not making a decision is perilous because it can draw a girl into being extremely vulnerable in life.

In making a decision it is first important for girls to know what Islam says about the role of women in general and about education in particular. Ask a Muslim woman today on how she defines her role in society and the chances are that she will tell you that she wants to be a devoted wife, mother and daughter-in-law. This is fine but rather ironically her sense of being

“devoted” is often bigoted because to her it often means consenting to the husband’s request and demands, reasonable or unreasonable. This bigoted attitude has motivated the west to stereotype Islamic women as being mysteriously veiled, heavily guarded by her husband or being a “yes” woman to her husband even if she is being unduly exploited. Can one really blame the western person for presuming such images as true, especially if our women do not practice or propagate and explain what Islam actually prescribes for women?

Why the misconception on the role of women?

A primary reason for misconception on the role of women in Islam and the fact that Islam encourages women to be educated, is the dress code prescribed for women, the hijab. There are many who question on how our women can go to universities where there are male teachers or students while others claim that Islam does not recommend women to study too much. Some westerners, and regrettably, some Muslims, take the hijab to imply restricting women indoors. Some Muslims use the hijab as an excuse to stop girls from studying further but the irony is that they end up making the same girls more vulnerable through lack of education. By doing so, they intrinsically also contradict Islam because Islam does not discriminate gender-wise with regard to education.

Islam, as a whole, is described in the Qur’an as a religion which balances the needs and freedom of an individual with due consideration of the society one lives in. Muslims dressed as prescribed by Islamic law have the right to mingle with others when the pur-

pose is noble (like in a school) or for other constructive reasons as long as that right is not abused by misconduct. This implies that the environment in which they see and talk to one another should be a clean respectable environment where sexual temptation is practically eliminated.

During the Prophet’s life, women fought in battles, nursed the wounded, argued with the Caliph and even taught religion. The whole idea of modesty in dress is to ensure that both sides are not distracted by physical appearances. The dress code applies equally to men and women. Both should not look sexually inviting. That might not seem like too much fun but this is conducive for a better family-oriented society where men and women treat each other with mutual respect as human beings, rather than as sex objects. These are the general requirements for the Muslim dress code for men and women. Thus the hijab in no way should be interpreted as being a reason not to allow our girls to study.

On education, the Prophet (SAW) has accentuated that *“To acquire knowledge is binding upon all Muslims, whether male or female.”* He has also said that *“one who travels in the search of knowledge, to him God shows the way of Paradise.”* Another saying pertaining to education which is attributed to the Prophet (SAW) is: *“Acquire knowledge, because he who acquires it, in the way of the Lord, performs an act of piety; who speaks of it praises the Lord; who seeks it, adores God, who dispenses instruction in it, bestows alms; and who imparts it to its fitting objects, performs an act of devotion to God. Knowledge enables its possessor to distinguish what is forbidden from what is not; lights the way to Heaven; it is our friend in the desert, our companion in solitude, our companion when bereft of friends; it guides us to happiness; it sustains us in misery; it is our ornament in the company of friends; it serves as an armor against our enemies. With knowledge, the creatures of Allah rise to the heights of goodness and to noble positions, associate with the sovereigns in this world and attain the perfection of happiness in the next.”*

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The Prophet (SAW) has also said: "Seeking knowledge is a mandate for every Muslim (male and female)." This includes knowledge of the Qur'an and the hadith as well as secular knowledge. Along with men it is also the obligation of women to promote good behavior and condemn bad behavior in all spheres of life. As a matter of fact, women are encouraged in Islam to contribute their opinions and ideas. There are many traditions of the Prophet (SAW) which indicate that women would pose questions directly to him and offer their opinions concerning religion, economics and social matters. To do so effectively they need to acquire good education which would supplement their own natural talents.

We should envision....

As a community, we should envision the youths, both boys and girls, as young persons who enter high school and journey through various phases of life, educational institutions and social entities eventually to attain maturity and independence to be full players in society. To this effect we must aspire to ensure that our girls or boys are encouraged to be:

- **Good practicing Muslims with good knowledge of Islamic tenets.**
- **Educated persons or even better, professionals.**
- **Active participants in community and other altruistic activities.**
- **Good and honest citizens.**

We should envision that in traversing this journey to the destined maturity and independence, youths make choices at each phase. These choices will determine the success of their life. We, as a community, can to some extent guide them when they have to make a decision on what choice to opt for. Our role should be to nurture and support them towards making rational decisions so as to guide them towards a successful path. This vision comes with a shared responsibility on the part of the youths, the parents and the community. Various projects will have to translate this vision into tangible action and ultimately, through our pragmatic actions, success will soar as high as we are willing to dream. Let us not

forget that our *attitude* will determine the *altitude* of success!

While maintenance of a home, providing support to her husband, and bearing, raising and teaching of children are among the first and very highly regarded roles for a woman, if she has the skills to work outside the home she may do so as long as her family obligations are met. Rather than destine women to be housewives, Islam recognises and fosters the natural differences between men and women and upholds the fact that some types of work are more suitable for men and other types, for women. For example, women can be good social workers, lecturers, journalists, consultants, gynaecologists and doctors.

UNDP report says educated women are better able to maintain finances

A recent Human Development Report of the UNDP points out that finances are generally better spent when educated women control the usage of funds. Citing an example, the report points out that in the Philippines, the greater the share of household income earned by women, the greater has been the consumption of calories and protein. This report also discloses that in countries where women are better educated, this has strong positive effects on children there. Many studies — including some in Bolivia, Brazil, Cote d'Ivoire, India, Kenya, Malaysia, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, the Philippines and the United States — show that better education for parents, especially for mothers, increases the likelihood of their children being educated. And mother's education, says the report, has also been an important contributor to the impressive health achievements by China, Costa Rica and Sri Lanka, despite these countries' low incomes. Educated parents not only encourage their children to be educated but also guide their offspring towards handling life in a mature manner thereby encouraging them to eschew malpractices or bad social behaviours like thieving, drinking, gambling, adultery, jealousy, back-biting, inquisitiveness etc. which are sinful and often ruin peace in a family.

Concerning motherhood, the Prophet

(pbuh) said: "*Heaven lies under the feet of mothers.*" This implies that the success of a society can be traced to the mothers that raised it. The first and greatest influence on a person comes from the sense of security, affection, and training received from the mother. Therefore, a woman having children must be educated and conscientious in order to be a skillful parent. Educated women are also economically more productive, understand family problems better to be able to sort out pressing problems, understand better the importance of hygiene and nutrition in family health and are likely to be able to communicate well with their husbands.

After accepting the fact that Islam prescribes women to be educated, the next question that then arises is on the duration and timing of such education. After completing school, if girls take long courses they would qualify in their early twenties. By then they would lose some of the physical charm they possessed some four years earlier and in the process they are likely to find themselves attractive to fewer members of the opposite sex as compared to when they completed school. Moreover during the years they study, the girls have to suppress their sexual desires and not all girls can do this easily. There are many cases where girls have given in to the human part of them! Another point worthy of consideration is the fact that medics advise women to try and have children at an early age because in later years complications often arise at the time of delivery. Taking long courses immediately after school therefore has some disadvantages for girls. An alternative could be to take short courses or to be engaged while one is studying. Yet another alternative is to get her fiance's consent to allow her to study after marriage.

In the years gone by, most of our women have been domestic housewives working in a household for their husband, children and other family members, if it is a joint family. However there is a saying that "*necessity is the mother of invention*" and with some families, particularly in western

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countries, having a hard time to survive on one income, new dimensions were created which compelled women to consider education more seriously so that they could subsequently take up careers and job occupations to supplement their husband's income.

Transformation has been slow and it will take some time for this trend to percolate to the community at large. However one also needs to consider the fact that not all educated women need to work because in a fair number of households there is no real need for women to supplement the husband's income and again, with working women there are bottlenecks because a working woman has to divide time between her work at home and in the office. Her daily routine would start early in the morning with many responsibilities on her shoulders before going to her workplace. Preparing breakfast, lunch, getting her children ready for school are but few of the tasks. She spends the best part of the day in the office and when returning home she has to fulfill other duties in addition to paying requisite attention to the needs of the children — school and madrasah homework, health appointments, social or sports activities etc. There are also the daily Wajibats to perform, like Namaaz.

When husbands are understanding they do help to alleviate the responsibilities being shouldered by the wife but if the support which men give to women is considered, the bitter truth is that it is often entirely a male's discretion to help his wife or not. The degree of cooperation which is provided by males varies from person to person. It may have become a fashion to say that society has changed and that more men are now doing the housework but, in reality, it appears that the core of society is still the same with males considering it an obligation to help out in home chores.

Working at home is equally painstaking

In the case of women who perform their traditional home role as housewives, what many husbands forget is that if one compares a woman's daily

routine with his work in the office, not much difference can be found. As housewives, women are equally busy with the difference only being that their work does not earn financial rewards. In such situations it is always helpful for husbands to express their appreciation in one way or another but how many do? It should be noted that when a woman works at home she can compensate the lack of financial rewards by spending time constructively to engender worthy family lives and values. Again, how effectively this can be done depends on the level of education of the mother with due support from also the father.

Sometimes there are problems when a career woman is either equally or better placed than her husband (work-wise) to the extent of being able to shatter her husband's ego. When a woman earns more than her husband, the chances are that she could try and dominate but again Islamic values clearly prescribe the role of a woman in a family and if secular education is coupled with adequate religious education, the wife, irrespective of how successful she is, will be guided to behave modestly and rationally.

Another issue to be considered with regard to working women is that they have to perform the traditional role of bearing and rearing children. Most matters related to the upbringing of a child relate to mothers. In some cases, say after delivery, she has to be away from her job for some time and if she is in a competitive industry like computers, where technology changes fast, long absence from a job could have adverse effects by making her lose out on latest trends and technology.

In cases where both a husband and a wife have parallel careers that require full commitment from each towards their jobs, further problems arise. The list of problems are many but the best option for our women is to pursue education irrespective of whether they intend to work in future or not. With education they help to provide themselves with a range of options after marriage unlike the uneducated mothers who very often deeply depend on their husbands to guide them through life.

All mothers have an important responsibility of caring for their household

and immediate family. It would be a sad paradox if in our enthusiasm to produce educated mothers, who subsequently get bogged down in the race of enhancing their careers, we encourage them to absolve their family responsibilities. The children of today are our community of tomorrow and at no cost should mothers disregard their children. This then leads us to three streams of situations.

Three streams of situations

One, where females take care of household matters without much significance being given to education. In this role a woman is always dependent first on the father, then on husband and son—always sacrificing for everyone.

Secondly, where women are financially independent, more confident, striving to achieve, not ready to make many compromises and no longer ready for any undue husband's dominance. They try to keep their house in order but face problems because of being overburdened by responsibilities at home and work.

Thirdly, are the educated women who prefer working in the household because they do not really need to go out to work. They can additionally involve themselves in social or religious activities or can even occupy themselves with part-time income earning chores like freelance writing for newspapers. Such women, with the valuable asset of being educated, are able to fend for themselves if the need be and are in a better position to take care of the family in the event their spouses die.

Ultimately what is appropriate and what is not for any woman differs from individual to individual depending on one's interests, financial status, number of children, capabilities, health etc. Having accepted that it is important to acquire knowledge, as far as the application of this knowledge is concerned, there should be a mutual understanding between the husband and the wife with the objective of not sacrificing marital responsibilities and Islamic values in the course of one's life. After all, a family is just like a cycle with man and woman its two wheels. It can work properly only if the wheels move in coordination and harmony.

Why Islam abhors yet allows "Talaq"

Part Three

by Mohamedhusein Kermalli, Dar es Salaam

CHECKS AND BALANCES IN SHAR'I AND STATUTORY LAWS

"Of all things allowed as *halal* in Islam, *Talaq* is the most abhorrent act in the Sight of Allah (s.w.t.) and His Prophet Seyyidina Muhammad (s.a.w.).

In the previous parts One and Two of this topic which appeared in the March and July issues of the *Federation Samachar*, we first discussed the status of women in Islam and the process by which men and women are united by "AQD/NIKAH" to form a family unit in which husband and wife in their respective roles as equal partners, work together in close co-operation for the happiness, prosperity and growth of the family guided by the principles of family life in Islam.

However when marriages in some unfortunate cases, do not work for reasons discussed in the previous article, separation becomes inevitable followed ultimately by *Talaq*, the details of which were then discussed at length including different classes and types of *Talaq*.

In this third part, we will consider how *Talaq* is finally effected, checks and balances provided in the Shar'i and Statutory Laws, some common *Fiqh* masael and the rationale behind all this, in broad outline.

THE SIGHA - THE SHAR'I DECLARATION OF DISSOLUTION:

As marriage (*Aqd/Nikah*) is con-
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tracted by the *Sigha* which is pronounced by the two parties to the marriage or their representatives (*wakils*) without which marriage, according to Islamic Laws is invalid, so is *Talaq* which likewise cannot take place without the *Sigha* pronounced, in this case, by the husband alone, who as we have seen, has a unilateral right to divorce, or his *Wakil* duly appointed by him. The pronouncement has got to be made in the presence of two just (*adil*) witnesses who must hear the actual pronouncement.

Therefore, a court judgement to divorce does not automatically dissolve the marriage. It just constitutes a civil divorce, while the parties married under the Islamic law continue to be married until the Islamic divorce in the form of the *Sigha* is pronounced in accordance with the *Shariah*. Meanwhile the wife cannot remarry.

THE WORDINGS OF THE SIGHA

The Islamic *Sigha* of *Talaq* is very short and simple. It must be pronounced in correct Arabic either by the husband or his *Wakil* in the presence of two just (*adil*) witnesses, who, as stated above must hear it. If the husband himself pronounces the *Sigha* and the name of the wife is for example, Faridah, the husband should say "*Zawjati Faridah Ta'liq*" meaning my wife Faridah is divorced and released from the wedlock. If on the other hand, his *Wakil* pronounces the *Sigha*, the *Wakil* says "*Zawjatu muwakkili, Faridah, Ta'liq*" meaning the wife of my representative,

Faridah, is divorced - released from the wedlock. However, the *Sighas* in *Khula'* and *muba'rat* divorces (explained in detail in Part Two) are slightly different in their wordings. Those who wish to know these should refer to *Tawzihul Masael - The Risalah of our Marja*.

THE SHAR'I LAW

Before we discuss some of the important issues related to *Talaq*, such as conciliation and the *iddat* it is worthwhile to know the source and the general meaning of the *Shar'i* law of divorce.

THE SOURCE AND SUMMARY OF THE LAW

The law of divorce like all other Islamic laws is derived from the HOLY Qur'an and *Ahadith* of our *Aimma* (a.s.) -- Surah 65 carries the title of "*Attalaq*". Ayah 1/7 and also several other surahs, namely Surah 2, Ayahs 228/32, 236/37, 241 and Surah 4, Ayahs 19/21, 35, 128 cover a wide range of issues relating to *Talaq* and aim at providing checks and balances against hasty and unthoughtful action on the part of the husband. These help to discipline and control a husband's unilateral right to divorce given by the Law. They warn husbands wanting to divorce their wives to act fairly and justly, lest they should be guilty of punishment from Allah (s.w.t) for any excesses and harmful actions done against their wives.

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The Ayahs stress the importance and virtues of conciliation and lay down conditions under which *Talaq* can be validly given. They regulate the proceedings for the *Talaq* to be finally effective, provide precautions to safeguard and protect the interest of the wives, enact rules relating to *Iddat* (the waiting period), give injunctions to the husband to keep the wife undergoing divorce proceedings in honour, grace and respect and treat her with kindness.

At every step, man has been warned to have fear of Allah (s.w.t), be cautious about his duties requiring utmost carefulness in the matter of effecting divorce so that the sanctity of marriage is not violated. Such is the equity of the Islamic Laws of divorce which provide a perfect model of a just, wise and equitable law to the world where today every other marriage (one of out two) runs *on the rocks* and ends in divorce.

IDDAT (THE WAITING PERIOD) MEANING AND DURATION

The word *Iddat* is derived from the Arabic word *Adad* which means number. But in Shar'i law the term is technically used to mean the waiting period of a wife after the pronouncement of *Talaq* before she can marry another man. Generally the period of *Iddat* is counted as three menstrual periods after the pronouncement of *Talaq*. This means that prior to *Talaq* if the husband had sex with his wife during the clean days (i.e free from menstrual bleeding) she has to wait until after the two subsequent menstrual periods are over and when the third period begins, she will be deemed to have completed her *Iddat* and is free to

marry again as the dissolution of the marriage would then be considered complete.

The concept of *Iddat* in an Islamic divorce is also recognised by the statutory Law (Re: Section 115(f) of Law of Marriage Act 1971).

SOME COMMON CASES

For a pregnant woman who has been divorced, her *Iddat* lasts until the delivery of the child. Therefore the length of her *Iddat* can be as long as nine/ten months or as short as one hour, depending upon the time of delivery. For a woman who is irregular in her *Haidh* and does not get it for several months, if she is divorced by her husband after sexual intercourse, she should keep *Iddat* for three complete lunar months after the date of her divorce. The method of calculating the number of days is to take 30 days for the first and the final month in order to ensure the completion of three complete lunar month days, bearing in mind that the commencement of *Iddat* is from the time the divorce is pronounced.

RATIONALE OF THE *IDDAT*

The *Iddat* has a delaying effect on the break of marriage, giving further chance to the parties to think seriously again and again and find solution to the matrimonial problems that have beset their marriage. Both parties are advised to be conscious of the social, moral and spiritual commitments they made when they got married. They should fear All-Just and All-Knowing Allah (s.w.t) and seek His mercy and help. The husband is advised to keep his wife in his home and behave kindly towards her. The wife is advised to behave affectionately and lovingly with her husband and try to attract him

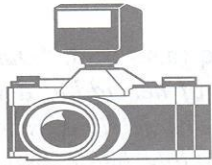
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Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said: "*During the period of her Iddat, a wife should make herself look as beautiful as possible before her estranged husband in order to attract him back and facilitate conciliation before the Iddat expires.*" If by any chance they happen to patch up during this period, *Talaq* will be automatically terminated.

The rule that the divorce should not be pronounced while his wife is having her menstruation has also a strong purpose. It is a fact that during this period she is both physically and emotionally repulsive. Therefore the time when a wife has her menstruation is obviously not conducive to conciliation.

Moreover the wisdom behind *Iddat* is that it serves the common interest of the husband, wife and the child, if the wife is pregnant, as it establishes the parenthood of the child and ensures full care for a wife by the husband until the wife delivers. It also provides for the maintenance of the child by the father after the birth when the *Iddat* of the wife ends.

In the fourth and final article which will appear in the next issue of the *Federation Samachar*, we will complete our discussion of this topic by looking at the various sections of the Laws of Marriage Act 1971 that apply to divorce. We will also consider the functions of conciliatory boards and their importance in dealing with matrimonial disputes brought before them. Moreover we shall consider the question of reciprocal gifts given during marriage from the point of view of both, the Shar'i and Statutory Laws. Make sure you don't miss the final part in the next issue of the *Federation Samachar*.



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**The East African Khoja Shia Ithnaasheri Preliminary Conference
held in Dar es Salaam on 10 November, 1945**

CURRENT LEGAL ISSUES

English Version of
(Al-Mustahdathat Minal Masaa'il Ash-Shari'a)
According to the Edicts of Ayatullah al Uzama
Syed Ali al-Husaini Seestani

Raffles for charities

The following letter was addressed to our Marja-e-Taqleed by the Africa Federation to obtain his ruling on the question of sale of tickets by raffles for charities and the reply received is appended for information.

Question:

"Recently a practice has started under which funds/donations are raised for Jamat projects by raffles. Articles like motor vehicles, air tickets etc. are obtained as donations and then tickets are sold. All the tickets sold are then put in a box and one ticket is picked as a winning ticket; the buyer of this picked ticket is then awarded the prize.

Before the tickets are sold, it is explained to the buyers that their intention (niyyat) in buying the ticket would be that they are giving donations for the intended project without an expectation of a prize. However, the prize given to the lucky winner is considered as an appreciation.

The question is therefore whether such a raffle is allowed in our sharia and what are the conditions."

Marja-e-Taqleed's Reply:

"If those who buy the tickets, pay the money as a help for the charity projects (and not as payment for the possible prize), then there is no difficulty in this action. And Allah (s.w.t.) is knowing.

Signed Ali al-Husayni al-Sistani and SEALED"

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Question: A physician examines a lady to determine whether or not she is infertile. He does not see any part of her body, apart from the position of inserting the instrument of examination, without touching her. Is this permissible, and is there a difference between the situation of "difficulty and necessity", on the part of the patient? Is it all right for the doctor to open a surgery for such purposes? And is the ruling different for examining a Muslim woman or an unbeliever?

Reply: The permissibility is the woman's prerogative. For instance, incapability of bearing children could lead to her facing *haraj rafie' littakleef* (an untenable situation that could waive the fulfilment of certain religious obligations). There may be a good reason forcing her to bear children. Should this be the case, it is permissible for the man-doctor

and woman-doctor to gaze, only when the situation permits, though, it must be kept to the minimum. This is concerning Muslim women. As for the unbelievers, it is advisable to observe such detail in their case as a matter of *Ihtiyat luzumi*. Allah is All Knowing.

Question: Is it all right for an infertile woman [seeking medical treatment] to expose her genitals for treatment out of necessity?

Reply: It is all right if there was a necessity forcing her to beget children, or being infertile may lead her to fall into *haraj rafie' littakleef*.

Question: If one year elapsed on bank shares, is khums payable? If so, would the khums be levied on the actual value of the shares or on their purchase price?

Reply: Khums is payable on the actual value.

Question: "Does *Jumuah* Ghushl make up for wudhu?"

Reply: *Jumuah* ghushl and similar ones have been proved through reliable sources to be *mustahab*. It is evident that they make up for wudhu. Al-Masaa'il, p.341.

POLITICS

By Issa Peera, Australia

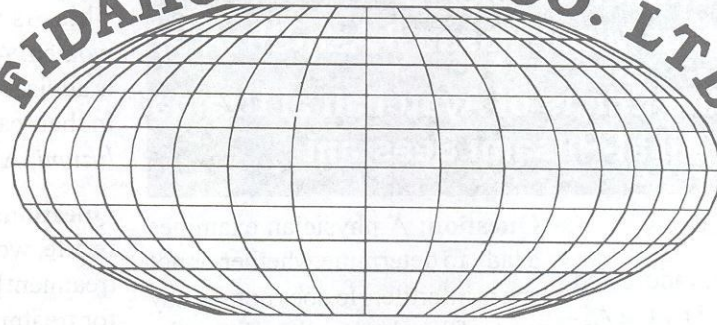
Brother Issa Peera is an Attorney in Australia. Some of his poems have appeared in the old Zanzibar Magazine "SALSABIL" using his pseudonym "Masih".

What trade is politics, what craft
An honest man in it has no part
Serpent-lie, it turns, twists, spits and stings,
From the creature cunning, politics learnt the art.

Politics is blind to ends, noble and ignoble,
it employs means, moral or immoral,
In seeking victory no weapon too terrible
For politics is the art of the possible.

Everyone in the game aspires to power
But room is small at the top of the tower
So fight there ensues, fierce, fiendish, fatal even
Making the milk of humanity watery and sour.

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The status of a housewife in Muslim society

Professor Sayyed Q M M Kmoonpuri, Ph.D., Dar es Salaam

In an Islamic society, the housewife is like a prime minister. She is totally responsible for everything that happens in her house and outside her house within the limits of her influence. The housewife is neither an employee nor a slave. She is a queen and her husband and her children are her adoring soldiers. Her supreme position in her house provides her a good opportunity to show her talents, artistic abilities, hospitality and management skill of domestic affairs.

All good husbands show appreciation and respect for the great work a housewife does. The apparent isolation of a housewife from the outside world gives a wrong impression that housewifery is an economically dependent occupation. This is utterly wrong. A housewife cannot be regarded as an economically inert or inactive partner because she invests herself exclusively in the role of homemaker. By doing so she provides a peaceful and comfortable home to her husband who can then earn money and other things of great value.

Many studies have shown that man's psychological, intellectual and physical well being depends on his wife's potential. Many writers, scholars and scientists have acknowledged the great contributions of their wives in their intellectual endeavours. Many of them have dedicated their works, books and discoveries to their wives with such admiring remarks- *'This work could not have been completed without the help of my wife'*, *'I owe a great depth to my wife who*

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has provided continual energy to do this work.' Such remarks showing commendation are very common. Even those scholars whose wives are not intellectually associated with them have acknowledged that their work could not have been completed without the patience and understanding of their wives.

Of course there are many women too who are not supportive wives. They create serious problems for their husbands. Marriage is not simply a biological union of male and female! Rather, it is an institution of great enterprise. In any way, a housewife cannot be considered an inert partner; she either generates or consumes an enormous amount of energy. The Holy Prophet (S.A.W) prays to Allah (SWT) about bad wives, saying; *"Oh Allah! I take refuge in you from a wife who makes me old before the period of my old age."*

Housewifery is a Characteristic feature of Woman

Expectations about proper gender role behaviour are related with biological differences of male and female. Studies have shown that there are obvious differences between males and females based upon anatomical, chromosomal, hormonal, and reproductive features. But gender roles are so much a 'taken-for-granted' feature in Western culture that many people hardly recognise the biological laws associated with gender roles. They have created their own social norms contrary to the biological laws and do not iden-

tify certain roles as clearly feminine or masculine.

Gloria Bird, a renowned sociologist writes *"For nothing has influenced more changes in relationships and family life than redefined assumptions about the meaning of gender and the division of roles and responsibilities between the sexes."* Islam precisely prescribes gender roles for almost all aspects of behaviour. In a true Islamic society, gender roles are fixed according to the psychological and physiological aspects of being male or female with a male or female being characterised by stereotype behaviours that never overlap. In Islamic perspective, gender roles are what indicate others, and to oneself, one's maleness and femaleness. Both husband and wife have well defined sets of expectations and norms which clearly direct them for what is permissible and usual behaviour for their sex.

For example, housekeeping is interwoven basically with the woman, presumably the married woman. An ideal woman is one who is an ideal housewife or an ideal housewife is an ideal woman. The housewife's natural ability emphasizes that she is biologically equipped to do her job. Every normal healthy woman is naturally inclined and has a natural ability to manage multifarious household duties. A man can not be a housewife. He is biologically unfit for

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this job. Man's inclination or woman's resistance is an anomalous behavior and defect. It runs counter to the biological law and of course Islamic shariah.

The working couples or dual career marriages frequently end with divorce or long separations. It is obvious that, when both marital partners equally get involved in business or employment, they would inevitable neglect many natural demands of each others.

For instance, an employed wife may find it difficult to stay at home to care for her sick husband. Dual-career families get some financial satisfaction in terms of material benefits but both husband and wife feel extensive pressure and stress. It is not unusual for couples to feel frustrated when they return home and find each unconcerned or indifferent to the other when they desperately need each other for comfort. When both husband and wife feel tired and drained of energy and neither really relishes doing chores, or when one partner is expected to do most of the household work, marital tensions become inevitable.

Marriage, household work and child bearing are usually considered by employers to be a barrier to their productivity. This makes a woman incompetent at her work place as well as at home. Serious conflicts occur both at home and at work place when the demands of one role interferes with demands from the other role. The working wives have to do most, if not all the household work in addition to their full working load under employment commitments. The natural gender role expectations always demand her to do her natural duties. Thus it is practically difficult for dual career women to

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The Status of a housewife in Muslim society

accommodate both house and outside work.

When a working woman neglects office work in favor of household work, the employer issues warning letters, and if she compromises household work in favour of office work, the husband gives threatening signals. Thus a working woman becomes a target of humiliation and criticism in either or both places.

The Kingdom of a Housewife

Many people in our Muslim society have developed a concept that housewives are liabilities to their husbands. They classify housewives as women who are illiterate, economically inactive, socially backward and menial. This however is contrary to the truth and portrays a housewife wrongly. This wrong image has particularly been developed by the West because they need and use women for their commercial ventures.

A woman's role is unduly undermined by the West, particularly by the media (including television) thereby aggravating the plight of housewives. The truth is that the status of a housewife is like a co-worker in her husband's endeavours. She is the equal of her husband in production but the tools of her endeavours are different. This is a difficult equation which many people in the West do not understand. To know her worth in economic terms, it is necessary to know the domain of her kingdom. She amazingly controls different chores at home. This is her primary function without

which men would have serious difficulties.

The housewife and In-law Relationship

Marriage brings together a man and woman from different families. Each family has its own way of running home affairs. Thus for a newly wedded woman, it is a difficult task to become an active member of an entirely new set-up of living system. It has been found that most of the marriages are disturbed by in-law relations.

The most troublesome and common in-law conflicts are between the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law. There are many factors involved which indicate conflict, but the most common are mainly the psychological and emotional factors.

The new young girl who until marriage was served by her mother finds herself thrown into competition with her husband's mother after marriage where she is often judged in terms of her ability as a cook and a housekeeper. In her husband's house she finds a new mother of totally opposite character. The mother-in-law suffers psychological problems after seeing a new woman in her house having equal or even greater importance. Islam teaches us how to overcome these psychological problems in many ways (this is beyond the scope of this article) but ultimately a successful Islamic wife is one who lives cordially with her in-laws winning their affection without in any way being unduly ignominious or servile.



YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

by Sayed Saeed Akhtar Rizvi from his book by the same name

Q. Is abortion allowed after rape?--- if I live in a town, city or village and some unbelievers raped my wife or daughter and impregnated her is it *haram* to have an abortion for her? How would I go about this issue?

A. The punishment in Islam for raping a woman (i.e. having sexual intercourse with a woman other than his wife, without her genuine consent) is death; it makes no difference whether the culprit is a Muslim or Kafir. However such a sentence can only be given by a duly appointed Qadi of Sharia'ah who needs to analyse all the evidence available and then decide the case.

As for the woman, it is a sin and crime on her part to abort the foetus. The child that is born out of such an incident will be affiliated to the mother and will be legitimate on her side. The mother and child will enjoy their mutual rights including the right of inheritance from each other.

The fact is that in Islam a child born out of wedlock is considered illegitimate and is not affiliated to either of the physical parents. But there are cases where a child is considered legitimate, like for example, when at the time of conception both parties are under the impression of being lawfully married and then it transpires that it was not so -- in such a case the child is affiliated to both parents. In some cases the child is considered legitimate to one parent, to whom the child is affiliated, and

illegitimate to the other parent with whom it has no relationship, as for example in the case mentioned in the above question.

Q. Is a Muslim permitted to eat the meat of an octopus, shrimp or oyster?

A. Octopus and oysters are *Haram*. Shrimps are halal.

Q. Divorce under pressure --- some people took me by force to an 'Alim and pressurised me to divorce my wife despite me not wishing to divorce her. They compelled me to sign the divorce paper which I kept for two weeks without informing my wife and then tore it up. Is this a valid divorce? Is my wife divorced from me?

A. As a general rule, divorce under duress or compulsion is invalid. In the case quoted above, even if it were a valid divorce, the husband's behaviour in living with the wife and tearing the divorce paper constitutes revocation of divorce and the wife continues to be legally married to the husband.

Editors footnote: During final divorce proceedings which involve the signing of actual documents, Alims should probably seek an assertion from the party concerned that they are conducive to the divorce.

Q. Marriage with sister-in-law? ---Zaid's sister-in-law (wife's sister) is divorced and staying with him and his wife. Islam says that he cannot marry his wife's sister unless due to some reasons. His problem is that his wife's

sister is in love with him and this was brought to his attention by his wife who does not object even if Zaid wishes to marry her. Zaid is getting more inclined towards her but at the same time he does not wish to commit any sin. Can he marry her or do mut'ah marriage with her?

A. I was shocked to receive the above letter. Marrying two sisters at one time is absolutely haram (unlawful). There is no question of there being or not being a reason. It is forbidden in the holy Qur'an and is not lawful under any circumstances in any sect of Islam.

Now one may appreciate why Islam forbids a woman to come with open face before her brother-in-law and why a man is forbidden to look at his sister-in-law's open face. If people remain within the boundaries of Shari'ah such *fitnah* and mischief will never occur.

I most sincerely advise Zaid to at once turn this woman out of his house, who is not averse to breaking the home of her own sister. For God's sake, terminate all contacts with her. May Allah (SWT) give Zaid tawfeeq to follow Islam and not be tempted by Satan.

Q. Is a child of Mut'ah marriage entitled to inheritance from his father or mother upon his or her death?

A. Certainly. A legitimate offspring inherits both parents, whether he is born in the so-called "permanent marriage" or by way of a mut'ah marriage.

Q. Using obscene language --- is bad or filthy language allowed to be used in Husainiyah?

A. Such language is not allowed anywhere. In fact, if one uses such language in sacred places like the masjid or Imambara, the magnitude of the sin increases.

Polemics of territory

by a correspondent

Has the World Federation as a federal body, or for that matter, the Africa Federation, also a federal body, a "territory" for "direct" operation and performance in the spheres of their activities in view of the federal nature of their Constitution?

The obvious answer is "No". A federal body like the Africa Federation, as an example, is formed by constituents with a common identity or interest. In this case, the constituents are a group of Jamaats. However, each Jamaat always has its own territorial mandate and operates under its own constitution, no matter whether there is a federation or not.

By forming or joining a federal body no Jamaat forfeits or delegates *ipso facto* any of its constitutional power or authority. The Constituent Jamaats as members can however, by democratic decisions, delegate to the federal body such of their authority in such manner from time to time as may be deemed of common or collective interest or benefit for achieving some or all of their respective aims and objects, which normally are also common.

The nature of authority which can be and is delegated to the federal body include (not limited to):-

(a) Performance of certain activities on behalf of all Constituent Jamaats (members) - examples:

Collection of Khums under single Continental Ijaza; welfare medical assistance; higher education scholarship loans; recruitment and employment of resident alims under a standard contract form.

(b) Standardisation of any socio-religious ceremonies and common dates for observing religious traditions at the Jamaats' level.

(c) Resolution of disputes among the Constituent Jamaat or between any of them and their respective member.

In fact, the position of a Constituent Jamaat as a primary legal entity (or unit) is much stronger than that of the federal body. The federal body cannot even by a great majority vote, for instance, dictate any unwilling Jamaat to adopt a standard form of constitution, though this may be desirable. It is an exclusive prerogative of the members of each Jamaat to decide on the form of constitution they want for their Jamaat.

However, the federal body can deny membership to any Jamaat or expel it from membership. It cannot though dissolve the Jamaat, for every Jamaat has its own independent existence, its own territory to cater for and its freedom how to cater subject to the provisions in the constitution.

The independence of existence and freedom to serve is so strong that there can be even more than one Jamaat in "a territory" for almost identical aims and objects and yet they are "local" i.e. with a common local territory.

It will be noticed therefore that the federal body cannot interfere or intervene in the affairs of any member or encroach on its territorial mandate EXCEPT where authority has been delegated in the spheres concerned.

Apart from the delegation of authority, there are also administrative ethics to be followed. These are even more important where unity, brotherhood and understanding are the religious pillars in the community for the success of a federal body which by its very federal nature is always fragile and must function with Wisdom.

The ethics dictate, and the Africa Federation has been very seasoned in this, that the federal body has the prior consent or "a green-light" from the member concerned regarding the timing for and the extent of any activity planned for the member in its territory (back yard) even where the federal body has the delegated authority for it.

It will also be noticed therefore that any communication of information intended for any Jamaat in Africa, North America, Gujarat, and elsewhere by the World Federation has been and must be with the WF - member for the region concerned.

Therefore any claim of any federal body wherever it may be in the community that there is an unrestricted access to each and everyone's back-yard for any direct activities faces the constitutional and ethical barriers. The more formidable barrier are the laws of the land which do not differ much from country to country.

Adventurism in the polemics of territory indicates a signal for aggravation which should not be tolerated in any way by our community at large.

Dear Children,

Asalam un alaikum.

Welcome to the fourth Childrens' Page of the *Federation Samachar* and thank you young boys and girls for your response to the prize questions and puzzles in the last issue. The response was again fair with the winner this time being Mehtaab Ismail, P.O. Box 788, Morogoro. Mehtaab is 9 years old and he says that he likes solving the puzzles in the *Samachar*. Congratulations Mehtaab and we are also carrying some of the jokes you sent us.

We remind children to send in their short stories, jokes, puzzles etc. which will be considered for use in future issues. In this issue we have a story with a moral lesson which we hope you will like.

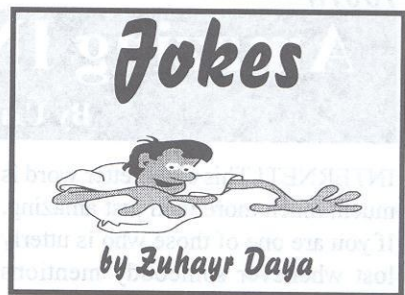
The Eagle and the Fox

AN EAGLE and a Fox formed an intimate friendship and decided to live near each other. The Eagle built her nest in the branches of a tall tree, while the Fox crept into the underwood and there produced her young. Not long after they had agreed upon this plan, the Eagle, being in want of provision for her young ones, swooped down while the Fox was out, seized upon one of the little cubs, and feasted herself and her brood.

The Fox on her return, discovered what had happened, but was less grieved for the death of her young than for her inability to avenge them. A just retribution, however, quickly fell upon the Eagle. While hovering near an altar, on which some villagers were sacrificing a goat, she suddenly seized a piece of the flesh, and carried it, along with a burning cinder, to her nest. A strong breeze soon fanned the spark into a flame, and the eaglets, as yet unfledged and helpless, were roasted in their nest and dropped down dead at the bottom of the tree. There, in the sight of the Eagle, the Fox gobbled them up. The moral of this story is that *Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.*

Solution to previous issue's PRIZE PUZZLE

M		S	A	W		H	S	Y	A	R	U	Q	
	E			B		B			L		U	U	
		C		U		I			I	R		B	
			C	R		L	A		A		J	A	
Z	A	I	D	A		A	M	N	K		A		
				Q		T	E		H		R		
A	B	D	U	L	M	U	T	T	A	L	I	B	
M					A	B	A		D		M		
E				A	D	A	F		I		L		
N			Z		I				J		A		
A		M			N				A				
H	A				A				R	U	A	H	T
H	I	J	R	A	H	L	I	A	R	B	I	J	



Hassan: what did the bee say when he came home?

Mujtaba: tell me

Hassan: honey I am home.

Hassan : my father is scared to cross the road

Sarfaraz : why do you say that

Hassan: he always catches my hand before we cross.

Teacher : what would happen if electricity had not been invented.

Student : we would have to watch TV by candle light.

Do you miss your prayers? No

Do you smoke? No

Do you miss your fasting? No

Do you drink? NO

Do you gamble? No

Do you do anything that is bad?

Sure, I am good at telling lies.

Teacher: What product is Mtwara in southern Tanzania known for?

Student: I don't know

Teacher: Come on! Where do you get cashewnuts from?

Student: We borrow it from our next door neighbour.

A Few Smiles and twisters

by Mehtaab Ismail

* What did the big chimney say to the small chimney?

You are too small to smoke.

* How many hairs does a rabbit's tail have?

None, they are all on the outside.

* What happened to the man who stole the calendar?

He got twelve months.

* I have one, you have one;
I use yours more than you do;
You use mine more than I do;
What is it?

Answer: Your name.

Amazing INTERNET...

By Uzma Khan

INTERNET! This eight letter word is much, much more than just amazing. If you are one of those who is utterly lost whenever somebody mentions anything about the Internet, it's time to roll up your sleeves and get ready to ride this information superhighway or 'cyberspace'.

The internet is the largest computer system in the world. It connects thousands of computers around the world. The Defence Department of the United States began the Internet in the late 1960s. The network grew by leaps and bounds and soon included others than the United States Armed Forces. Eventually other global organizations joined in. As it is so widespread, it's not controlled by anyone. It is its own master and no one has the right to censor the information available on it.

The Internet offers many exciting and informative features such as e-mail, entertainment, discussion groups, on-line shopping and countless more. But before we discuss these let's get you 'hooked up' first.

To start surfing on the Internet, you have to have access to a computer first. (But hey! even if you don't have one at home we'll show you other ways). Next you need to choose an ISP. ISP stands for International Service Provider. These are companies that charge a fee and give you access to the Internet. All the information comes to the ISP first and then they pass it on to your computer. You also need a modem which is a device that exchanges information between your computer and the Internet. Programs and a telephone line are two more things that you need. Most ISPs provide you the special computer programs free of charge.

If you are wondering how all of this gets together to let you access information on the Internet, here's how. All the computers around the world are connected together by telephone lines on which information travels and reaches you. The modem we spoke of, translates the information (which is in computer jargon) to a form which you

can easily read on your screen. Similarly any input that you feed from your computer is first translated into computer language by the modem and sent along the telephone lines. A modem at the other end will again translate this information.

Now having hooked up, let's talk about the Worldwide Web or WWW. This is a graphical, easy-to-use system on the Internet which offers a wide amount of information. Now a good question to ask at this point would be 'who's putting all this information on the net'? The answer is governments offer information such as federal budgets and NASA reports to educate the public. College and universities offer details about their courses, credit hours, admission procedures, etc. Companies offer free information to promote their products and get you interested to buy their products. All this information is stored on web pages. Besides information they may also contain graphics, sound and even video clips. Each page on the web has a unique address called a URL (Uniform Resource Locator). If you know the URL of a page that you've read or heard about, you can enter it on your screen and that page will be displayed at once, no matter which computer in the world it may be stored on!

But suppose you don't know the URL or the address and want to get your hands on all the information you can about, let's say, the Bermuda Triangle. Well, then you make use of 'Search Engines'. All you do is enter the URL of a search engine, let's say Yahoo, which can be found at <http://www.yahoo.com>. As soon as Yahoo appears on your screen you see a search box. You type in whatever you are looking for and click on the search box. As soon as you do that, Yahoo starts searching the web for the words keyed in. Amazing, isn't it? The search engine does all the searching for you. Lycos, WebCrawler and Altavista are other search engines to try out. But if you are serious about going searching then metacrawler found at <http://www.metacrawler.com> is an excellent

bet as it uses a number of search engines for your request. When your search results appear there may be some pretty weird sites that are also downloaded. So you have to read the brief descriptions given next to them to locate the ones that interest you, and then open the pages you want to view.

One of the most widely used features on the Internet is e-mail on which a message can travel across the world in seconds. To send a message on the e-mail, all you need is to know the e-mail address of the person. You need to be very sure of this and type in each dot and letter accurately otherwise your e-mail will come back to you. You can use 'smileys' to pep up your messages, e.g. :-) is a smile, :-(is a frown, while ;-) is a wink. You'll know what I mean when you turn your head sideways to view the smileys. You can again access to e-mail on Rocketmail and hotmail found rocketmail.com and hotmail.com on the Internet which are free. Or you can have an e-mail software installed on your computer as free mail on the Internet does prove to be very slow.

With access to e-mails, mailing lists are the next best thing on the Internet to get to know. There are discussion groups that use e-mail to communicate. They cover a wide variety of topics for discussion. Once you find something interesting you can subscribe to it and you will start receiving e-mails concerning that topic.

It is wise not to subscribe to too many lists at the same time as your mail box might become flooded with messages. Visit <http://www.neosoft.com/internet/> panel for a lot of available mailing lists.

Newsgroups are other types of discussion groups for which you need a newsreader - a programme that lets you read and send articles to newsgroups. Chatting is also a popular feature and all-time favourite on the net. This lets you communicate instantly with people around the world.

Well to do all this and more on the Internet you first need to have a computer. But no sweat! If you don't have one, there are many cybercafes which allow you to surf the 'net for a fee. Happy surfing!

Lunar Crescent Visibility and Islamic Calendar

by Mohamed F. J. Moledina, San Diego

Introduction

Muslims do not have a definite calendar at this time and some of them feel that it is impossible to make one because there is something unpredictable about the motion of the Moon. This causes a great deal of argument and confusion in the community and is most embarrassing for all of us.

In reality, the calendar based on the holy Qur'an that was established during the days of prophet Mohammad (pbuh) is quite definite and can be used internationally if we get organized and agree upon certain conventions.

Because this has not been done we often have conflicting interpretations on what the actual Islamic date is. Europeans went through a similar phase in the last century. As they started travelling over great distances quickly, there was confusion over dates. Soon a date line was agreed upon among the leaders and the common man was merely informed after the decision.

With advancements in technology Muslims have been debating on a possible lunar calendar. The lunar cycle is not as obvious as the solar cycle of day and night. Many people do not realize that just as we can not ascertain whether it is day or night at our location by calling relatives in distant countries, we cannot be certain about a lunar date confirmed by someone half a world away. One has to look at the local sky. Every Muslim is not an astronomer, he can not rationally decide about such matters. His decisions are often based on emotional and devotional reasons and are often scientifically wrong. It is essential that the community pay urgent attention to solve this problem.

The Motion of Heavenly Bodies

The relative motion of all heavenly bodies is governed by a few simple laws commonly known as Newton's laws of motion and the law of gravity.

The curved path of a body through the heavens is such that gravitational force is always balanced against (i.e. equal and opposite to) the centrifugal force due to the curvature of the path and the inertia force due to the acceleration of the body. As a result planets generally move in an elliptic orbit around the sun such that the sun remains at one of the foci of the ellipse. A circular orbit is just a special case of an ellipse when the two foci are congruent. The two equations that have to be solved simultaneously for computing the orbit of a planet are as follows:

$$\text{Gravitational force} = G * M1 * M2 / R^2 \dots (1)$$

$$\text{Acceleration of a body} = G * M2 / R^2 \dots (2)$$

Where: G is the gravitational constant, M1 is the mass of the planet, M2 the Mass of the Sun, and R is the instantaneous distance between them.

For a two body system the method of solution is quite simple. As the number of bodies increase it becomes increasingly difficult to solve these equations. But all this has been done by modern computers and tables giving relative positions of bodies in our solar system are available in most libraries. To construct a calendar all one has to do is to learn to read and use them.

The Earth, Moon and Sun System

The holy Qur'an states that the Sun and the Moon move according to "hisab" i.e., governed by laws. We have known these laws for some time in enough detail to be confident about their location in the heavens at any time. This is all that is needed for constructing prayer time tables and calendars. A calendar can be considered merely as a special prayer time table that tells us when to say Subeh or Eid prayers etc.

Motion of the Earth

The Earth basically moves in three ways.

i) It spins on its axis to produce day

and night. This takes 24 hours. Its spin axis is tilted about 23.5 degree in relation to its orbital plane.

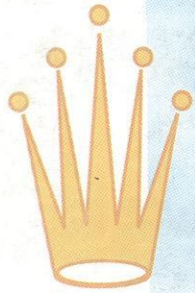
ii) It revolves around the Sun in a near circular orbit. Because of the tilt of its rotational axis the sun appears to move north and south through the year. This change in the angle of incidence of light from the Sun is responsible for the change of seasons. Its rotational period is about 365.25 days or roughly a year.

iii) A third less known motion of the Earth is called precession. The axis of rotation describes a cone in space over a period of about 25800 years. This necessitates frequent correction in the length of the solar year to prevent the seasons from sliding through the year. This is done by means of a system of having or not having leap years (366 day years) every four, one hundred, four hundred, and four thousand years. This also corrects for fractional number of days in a solar year.

Motion of the Moon

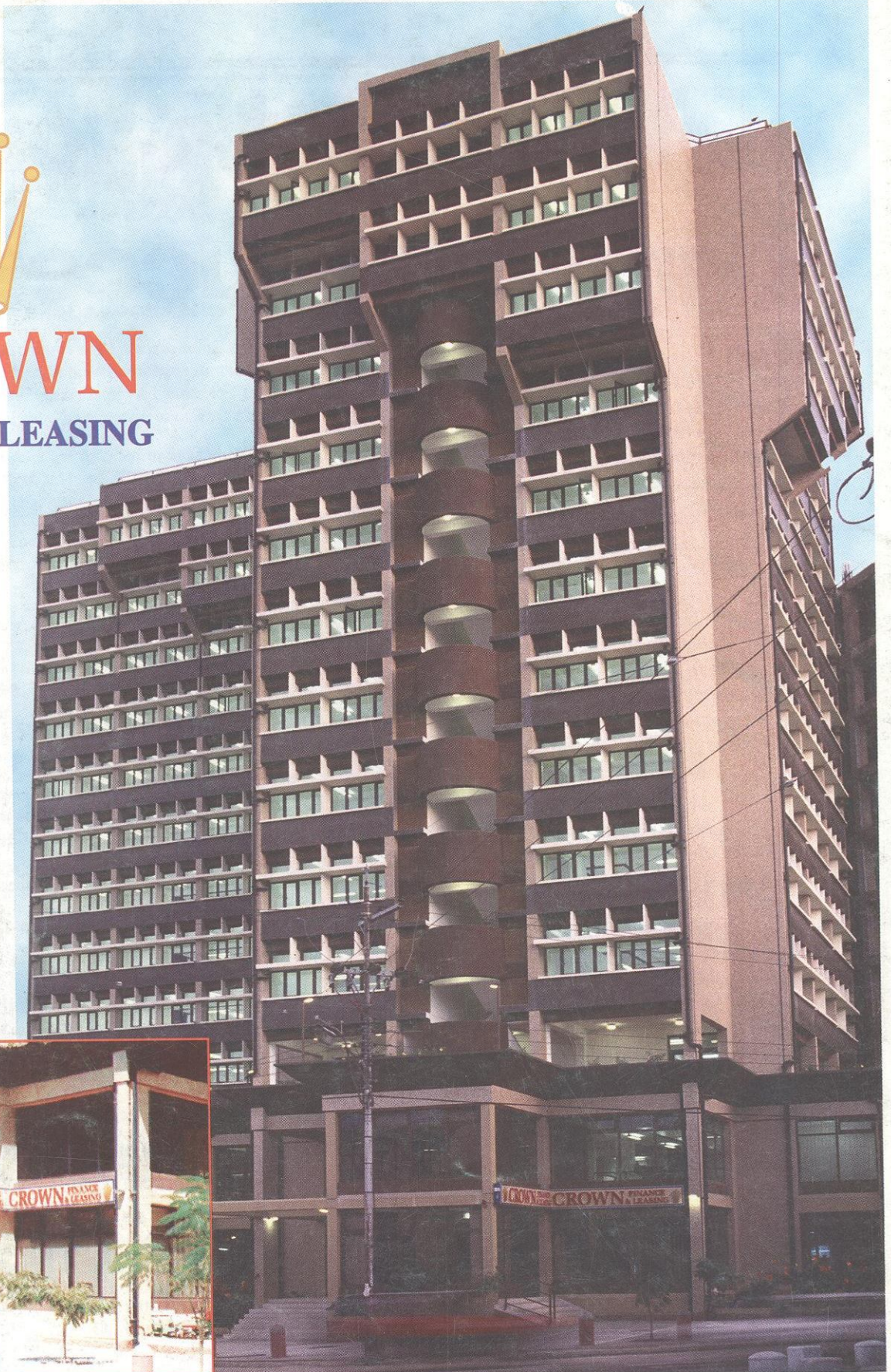
The Moon moves under the influence of gravity, mainly, of the Sun and the Earth. It is also disturbed slightly by other planets. Its orbit around the Earth is only approximately elliptic because the Sun disturbs it. Its orbital plane is tilted in relation to the Earth's orbital plane (ecliptic) by about 5 degrees. The Moon's orbital plane is not fixed in space in relation to the stars. Even though it maintains a constant tilt in relation to the Earth's orbital plane, the line of intersection of these two planes (nodes) rotates slowly in space. Because of the tilt of its orbit the Moon appears to move to the north and south of the Sun, and the new crescent is sometimes seen to the left and at other times to the right of the setting Sun. Viewed from space the path of the Moon is like a sine wave superimposed over the near circular path of the Earth.

(continued on page 78)



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