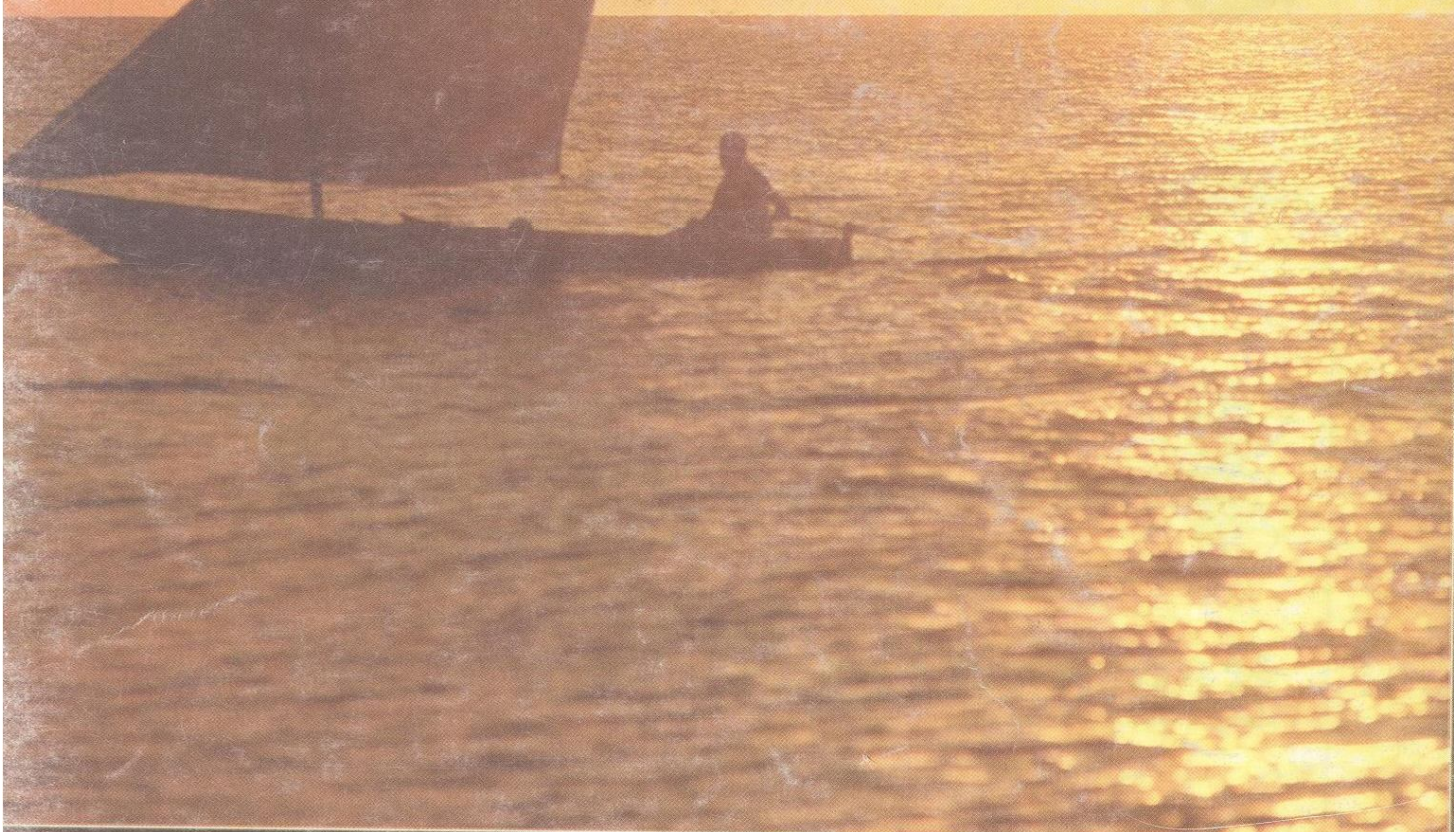


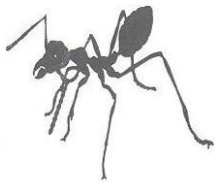
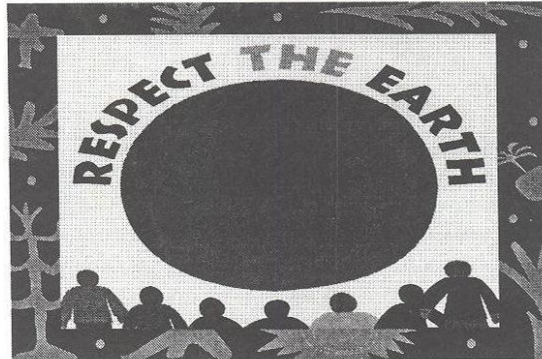
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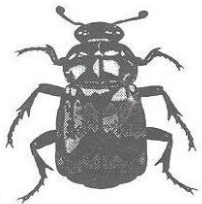


See Inside Africa Federation... a major
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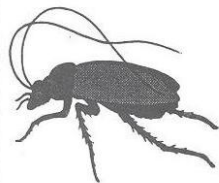
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COVER PICTURE

The scenic Zanzibar coast. Zanzibar hosted a memorable 57th Session of the Supreme Council with participants coming from far and wide.



From the Editor's Desk

In search of Islamic unity

The Holy Qur'an tells us that Muslims are one nation (umma) and stresses unity and brotherhood among the Muslims at large. Muslims are divided into various schools of jurisprudence (madhabs) some of which have sadly harboured hostility and grievances against others.

The sad thing about such hostilities is that they are often aggravated by preachers or religious leaders who are supposed to guide the community towards mutual living. For preachers, leaders or lecturers in our Madrasahs it is not wrong to guide or educate community members on our beliefs and on why on certain issues we differ from what members of the other sects believe. What is wrong is when we make a mockery of other sects for harbouring different beliefs. Mockery backed by half laughs may be amusing to a few attending a majalis or lecture but religiously this is destructive because rather than encouraging guidance or dialogue it provokes members of the other sects into anger. In religion there is no room for mockery.

In the Holy Qur'an Allah (SWT) says, "Hold fast to the rope of God and do not be divided." The objective of all Muslims is to achieve piety (taqwa), a relationship between an individual and Allah (SWT) which transcends every sectarian or for that matter even political affiliation.

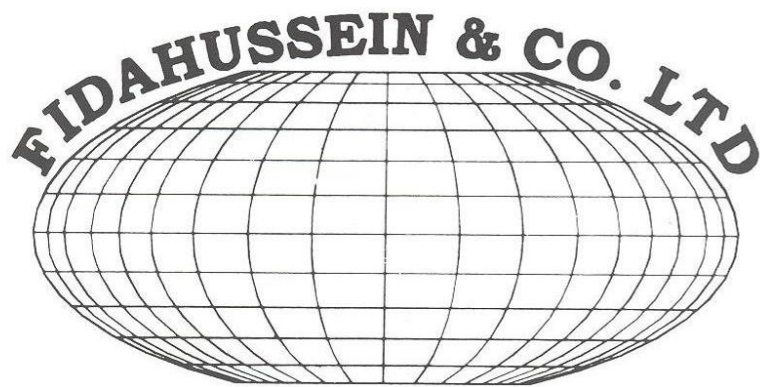
Islam is based on two fundamental truths: (a) the Oneness of God and (b) the Brotherhood of Man, and all Muslims believe that Prophet Mohamed (SAW) was the Messenger of God. Above everything else Islam is a positive Faith and the word 'Islam' means surrender to God. It also means peace. A Muslim is one who is 'in harmony with the decrees of the author of this world', one who has made his peace with God and His creatures. How can a man in peace harbour or initiate animosity against another God fearing person simply because of some differences in opinion or belief?

Considering the fact that Islam is a practical religion, and one most calculated to solve the world's many perplexing moral, social or economic problems, is it not sad that rather than a pragmatic implementation of its teachings towards humanity, peace and happiness, many Muslims are instead embroiled in magnifying minor sectarian differences which ultimately end up in hostilities.

In the Muslim world, hundreds have been murdered through sectarian killings and countries have even gone to war due to sect differences wherein thousands of innocent people have died with no purpose achieved. And it is no secret that the ruling regimes in some Muslim countries indulge in cruel atrocities against members of minority sects. Sometimes meetings calling for mutual unity are organised between religious scholars from different sects or even at Government level but these have a short-term effect often ending with the terms of the leaders or scholars involved. Very little is really laid out to minimise sectarian differences over the long term. Therefore to this day individuals and groups continue to defy the calls for peace.

If we believe that Islam is for the whole of mankind then the question ensues as to why there are differences among the Islamic sects. The truth is that it is not Islam but the sects which make Islam a difficult and misunderstood religion. By co-operating, meeting and discussing their differences candidly, the magnitude of their differences can be reduced to an extent where all sects would respect each other thereby helping to portray world-wide unity among the Muslims. This may sound utopian but at least it would help to define our role and to remind us not shelve our responsibilities in order to ensure that the running problem of sectarianism is not allowed to drift.

Munir Daya



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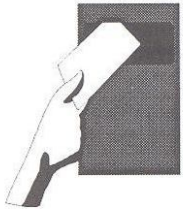


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Your letters

Views, opinions or articles should be addressed to:
The Editor
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Dear brother,

Samachar can be improved

I haven't been a regular reader though my kids relish the *Federation Samachar*. Lately, I made a point to go through a bundle of the past issues and I must admit that I have been thrilled with the improvements I have seen in the quality- not of the material only but also that of the articles too.

When a change is made, criticism is inevitable. And I hope that you will see mine with the correct perspective... Being involved in the advertising field in Dubai, I have been involved with many publications, newsletters, etc. in addition to my hobby as a part time writer.

We all candidly say - do not judge a book by its cover, while get drawn into a book or publication beginning with the cover. And that is the reason why all publishers very well design the cover pages.

Your front cover lacks the graphic scheme and can stand out if improved. The back cover invariably has an advert portraying a building on Samora Avenue whereas the sponsor could come up with different visuals to brighten the back page... the most important part of the publication.

Secondly, there is no theme to some of the articles, the letters to the editor are sometimes too long and some of them meaningless - like the one from Karachi saying Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) warned us of AIDS. I am sure you must be editing these letters and articles but I suppose the scissors are not sharp enough.

The publication also lacks colour photographs and illustrations that can put life into the articles. I am sure it's an expensive solution to have full colour but we are not short of well-wishers who would easily come in support of the 'only' interesting *Federation Samachar*

publication of our community by dishing out the funds required to adorn the magazine and depict the real class that it deserves.

Some adverts are too monotonous and have no depth. I would suggest you offer an ad agency or a graphic designer to handle the ads and charge the amount to the ad sponsors instead of publishing any material that comes through.

And finally, your tariff is not in line with regular publications. If the price of full-page color is "X" then the price of inside cover should be "XX" and the back page "XXX".

I hope my views will not be heeded as a reproach to your very beautiful publication and weighed in its own perspective.

Meanwhile I have written some general articles combined with illustrations, graphs and pictures on some subjects and would be willing to contribute in your future publications.

Akber Jaffer
Dubai.

Thank you for your comments. It is true that a final touch-up on visuals including the cover page, inclusion of colour photographs and involvement of ad agencies would provide a final uplift to the *Samachar*. However this would greatly increase costs and the present advertising and sales revenue just about covers printing costs. Nevertheless we are looking into including a few pages in colour and probably you may wish to avail us with practical suggestions to improve the cover page and the advert graphics. Meanwhile you are welcome to send us your articles which we would consider for publication.

Editor

Dear brother,

Congratulations on North American Edition

Congratulations on launching the first ever North American Edition of the *Federation Samachar*. This will make your esteemed magazine more readable around the world.

Delegate
Zanzibar

Dear brother,

We need to eye forged HIV negative certificates

I refer to the coverage on the HIV Resolution in the *Federation Samachar* (vol.31 no.3 April 1999) wherein many professional doctors around the world expressed their strong views.

One such point by Dr. Karim Manji of Muhimbili Hospital in Dar es Salaam referred to certificates being obtained through bribery and forgery. Due to this, we can still have children with a HIV positive status simply because their parents broke the laid out rules in the first place.

The Medical Board should consult with the professionals and elders of all Jamaats to keep abreast with the situation so as to ensure that implementation of the Africa Federation resolution is not unduly interfered with.

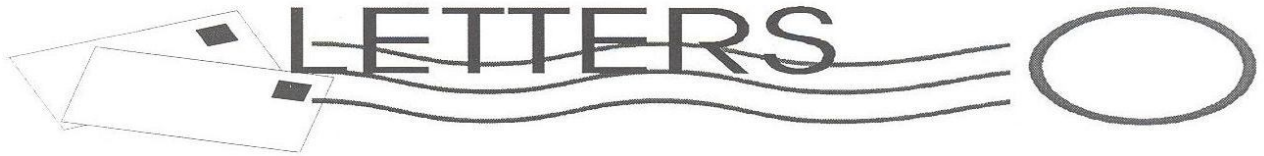
Munawwar H Okera
P.O. Box 80114
Mombasa

Dear brother,

Classify deaths according to towns

I refer to page 33 of the last *Federation Samachar* where you carried deaths of community members around the world under Death Jottings. May I suggest that the entries be grouped in a manner whereby the deaths are placed under headings of respective towns for easy reference.

Avid reader
Arusha.



Dear brother,

To or not to translate the Holy Qur'an

Through your esteemed magazine I wish to enlighten your readers on a sensitive issue in Morocco. While it does not directly affect members of our community, it surely is of concern to us because it involves our holy book, the Qur'an. Probably after the facts are read, a dialogue can be encouraged though I personally see only one side to this at present.

Johadi Lhoucine, is a secondary school teacher in Casablanca, Morocco, who wants to translate the Qur'an from Arabic to the Berber tongue, Tamazight. One may ask, what's the problem with that? After all the Qur'an has been translated into more than 40 languages for the vast Islamic Ummah. However, the efforts of Mr. Lhoucine should be evaluated in the light of certain facts. Firstly, the Arabic language is the key to understanding Islam,

Alif, Lam, Ra. These are the symbols of the clear book. We have sent it down as an Arabic Qur'an, in order that you may understand." [TMQ 12:1-2].

The rich meanings of the Islamic texts is present due to the vitality of the Arabic language. This in particular is what enables the carrying out of *ijtihad*, the process by which new things, situations and events can be judged by Islam. So, the foremost of scholars in Islam were gifted in Arabic though many were non-Arab. Also, the very miracle of the Qur'an, lies in its Arabic construction. This is the challenge which Allah (swt) Himself laid down till the day of Judgement for all mankind,

If you are in doubt as to what We have revealed to Our Messenger, then produce one surah like it if you are truthful." [TMQ 2:216] This emphasis upon the Arabic language is not a surrender to Arabic nationalism. Rather, it is a recognition of the need to understand and

Federation Samachar

implement the *deen*.

The Islamic State encouraged the learning of Arabic through the education system in schools and made Arabic the official language. New regions and countries united when they embraced Islam. This meant that they became learned in the Arabic language in order to improve their grasp of the *deen*. Which brings us to examine Mr. Lhoucine's efforts in a new light.

The Berbers embraced Islam from the opening of the Maghrib (North Africa) by one Musa bin Nusair in 88 *hijri* (707 CE). It was from that time that the Arabic language was introduced to the people. Since that time the Maghrib region has always been Arabic speaking, Muslims or not. So, it makes little sense to translate the Qur'an in an Arabic speaking region. It can only result in distancing Muslims from building stronger links with Islam. While Berber nationalism must never deny them the need to see Arabic as the language of the *deen*, equally, the Arabic language should not be used to yield Arab nationalism to counter Berber nationalism.

History tells us that the Moroccan government enforced Arabisation after a failed Berber led coup in 1971. Today there is a desire to block Mr. Lhoucine's translation of the Qur'an for this reason. This will not serve Muslims either, for Arabic is not sought in order to understand Islam, but as another pillar for nationalist pride. In my opinion though many Islamic Lands are Arabic speaking few, if any, have benefitted from its most vital fruit, the understanding and practical implementation of Islam. The Qur'an provides the guidance but leaves the implementation on us. I believe any sincere effort to translate the Qur'an should be encouraged.

**Concerned
Dubai**

Dear brother,

Zakireen need to be more involved

It is well known that there are a fair number of people in our community world-wide who only attend the Mosque and Imamabaras during the holy month of Ramadhan and the ten days of Mahe-Muharram. Some people only come for the night of Ashura.

Brothers in faith, let's be frank and just to ourselves: indeed is it that Azadari is more important than the rest of our responsibilities towards our faith in Islam? Each year we indulge in Azadari to remind ourselves on what our roles are in this world. Indulging in Azadari without practicing what Islam asks us to do defies the very purpose of Azadari.

The Zakireen have a big role to play in educating members of the community on this issue. They need to repeatedly emphasise in their lectures that Imam Husein (AS) gave his soul to save Islam and showed us practically on the day of Ashura the importance of Prayer (SALAT).

The Zakirs, many of whom we presume to be well-learned, should also approach the youngsters of the community to have their opinions and feelings of Azadari instead of only limiting themselves to the official deliveries in the Mosque and to their hosts and Jamaat elders. We should remember that Muharram is the only time that we truly have access to many of our members.

I also feel that our traditional Muharram majalis should be reorganised and changed with deliveries being followed by an 'open forum' discussion with the Zakirs.

**M. H. Mohamed
Al-Entezar Islamic Service
Mombasa**



Dear brother,

A befitting tribute to those who served in Zanzibar

The April issue of the *Federation Samachar* made good reading with interesting articles. I was nostalgic when I read the articles on Zanzibar where I was born, grew up, received my education and most of my training especially in our community work.

You have paid deserving tribute to a number of figures that played a great role in the progress of our community there. Particularly worth noting is the fact that the first Khoja Shia Ithna-Ashery Jamaat was established in Zanzibar and you have rightly published a photo of Marhum Haji Peera Walli who was the first President of our Zanzibar Jamaat in the year 1882. There are others to whom you have paid tribute that they earned. There were also others who silently served the community in their own way and made an indelible mark in the history of our community in Zanzibar.

At a time when our community was engrossed in a fit of quarrels, some nice people were not drawn to it and maintained their sanity. Some of them even went further with remarkable constructive work that helped in building the future of many of our brothers and sisters. Among the ones whom I admired most were the late Marhum Mohamed Hussein Sheriff Dewji along with Alhaj Abdularasul Mohamedali Khaku and Alhaj Hussein Dharamsi Gangji. They provided inspiring vision and leadership to a group of young men and under their leadership undertook projects that drastically improved the standard of education in our community.

As a result of their efforts an impressive kindergarten school with modern facilities was built, the management of Dato Hemani Girl's *Federation Samachar*

School was taken over and completely re-organised giving it a prestige that drew back a lot of our girls who had joined other schools. The Haji Dharamsi Gangji Madressa building was put to a maximum use by establishing a secondary school and a coaching class. Haji Husseinbhai and Haji Abdularasulbhai are now in an advanced age living in London and I wish them to know that the community is grateful for their wonderful work and pray for their health and long life.

Dear brother,

Praying with Italian assistance....

I congratulate you on publishing a very wonderful *Federation Samachar*. Keep up the good work done by you and your team. May Allah (SWT) reward you for keeping the community at large well informed.

Through the *Samachar* may I share a memorable experience which I cherish to this day. On one of my trips to London from Nairobi by Kenya Airways, I had a stop-over in Rome where I sought permission to disembark and recite my prayers.

Not having a compass with me, I ascertained the Qibla by guessing and said my Zohrain prayers. When I was praying my Asr prayers, two Italian policemen stood next to me. At first I thought they had come to reprimand me for disembarking and saying my prayers there.

To my pleasant surprise, they told me that I had prayed in the wrong direction. They then showed me the correct direction of the Qibla and laid down my Musalla for me to say my prayers once again.

Many a time some of our brothers and sisters shy away from saying their prayers for fear of mockery from especially the non-muslims. This example however proved that such fears are unfounded. One has to be steadfast in faith to say one's prayers wherever one may be.

Finally I pray for a healthy and long life for all our noble leaders including the Chairman of the World Federation, Alhaj Mulla Asghar and the Chairman of the Africa Federation, Alhaj Mohamed Dhirani for their patience and guidance to unite the community at large.

Anverali V.H. Waljee (Mulla Anu)
Mombasa.



LETTERS

Dear brother,

HIV Status is vulnerable to misinterpretations

I have noted with great interest the comments made on the above topic. I also appreciate and value the response made by some of my colleagues. All this goes on to prove that there are different approaches and views to the above subject and the community after deliberating will have to decide on its own as to what is the best approach for its members. Apparently the question which keeps on creeping up is on how to interpret the HIV screening test. If it is positive does it really mean that the person tested has the disease and if he is negative, does it really mean he or she is free from the disease and what about the person who tests negative but is in the phase of seroconversion—the so called window period.

To be able to interpret an HIV screening test and for that matter any screening test any community member is subjected to, it is necessary to understand some statistical principles and terms, like SENSITIVITY and SPECIFICITY of a test and the POSITIVE PREDICTIVE VALUE and THE NEGATIVE PREDICTIVE VALUE of the results which I will attempt to simplify:

SENSITIVITY of the tests refers to the reliability of the test to test positive if the person has the disease or in other words percentage of patients WITH DISEASE who will test *positive*.

SPECIFICITY of the test on the other hand refers to the percentage of patients WITHOUT DISEASE who will test NEGATIVE.

POSITIVE PREDICTIVE VALUE is the probability that someone who tests positive will have the disease.

NEGATIVE PREDICTIVE VALUE is the probability that someone with a negative test will not have the disease.

Please note that Sensitivity and Specificity are test specific and are not

Federation Samachar

dependant on the population. But Positive and Negative predictive values on the other hand refer to the tests ability to accurately predict who does and who does not have a particular disorder and are critically related to the prevalence of the disorder within the population being tested.

Therefore, the most important parameter when interpreting a HIV test is the POSITIVE PREDICTIVE VALUE (PPV). Additionally the probability of a POSITIVE test result's occurring in a TRULY infected individual is critically dependant on the PREVALENCE of HIV infection of the population being tested.

For example, assuming tests (HIV and WESTERN BLOT) of 100% sensitivity and joint false positive rate of 0.01% the rates of TRULY infected patients among those with positive Elisa/Western Blot results will vary depending on who is tested. In testing intravenous drug abusers from a major metropolitan center in which the prevalence is 50%, the positive predictive value will approach 100% (ie if the person tests positive he will have 100% chance of truly having the disease). Conversely in screening female school teachers from a rural area where the prevalence of HIV infection is 0.01%, 50% of the women testing positive would have FALSE-POSITIVE test results, and if the joint false-positive results increase to 0.1%, 90% of the positive ELISA and WESTERN BLOT results would be falsely labelled as HIV infected.

Now lets analyse the Positive Predictive Value of HIV screening for our community. Assuming the SENSITIVITY and SPECIFICITY of ELISA test to be 99% (as claimed by ABBOTT) and the prevalence of HIV to be 3% (anecdotal evidence at its best, mentioned in some of our communal meetings), then the PPV i.e the percentage

of patients who test positive AND will have the disease is 73.5%. This means 3 out of 4 who test positive will have the disease, but one out of 4 low risk asymptomatic member who tests positive will be labelled as HIV positive but will NOT have the disease and actually be FALSE POSITIVE.

The PPV of 73.5% is not a great number, and the community needs to decide whether we accept this figure and also the false positive results. We also need to consider the difficulties in counselling the individual who has a low risk for HIV infection and who tests positive and also the repercussion he will have to face. A common misconception is also that the false positive Elisa test will always be corrected by a confirmatory Western Blot test. In fact false positive results do occur, although the frequency is generally less common than the ELISA tests. False Positive ELISA reactions also occur when there is a cross reaction with other antibodies (HLA DR-4, DQW-3 and other autoantibodies) which have no link to HIV.

All the above problems are further compounded by the lack of Quality control and lack of specialised labs to further corroborate the results if required in the Sub Saharan Africa.

This does not mean that we lower our vigilance. It only points to the complex and sensitive nature of this disease. Passing a resolution without a comprehensive and multi-disciplinary guideline is not appropriate. The guideline should also address all segments of the society and not focus only on a group of people (those who want to get married) as HIV can target all ages. Therefore EDUCATION still is the key to PREVENTION.

Fuad H. Sherif, M.D.
Amherst University Medical Center
USA

LETTERS

Dear brother,

HIV Resolution should not be imposed

I am extremely surprised that a resolution on compulsory HIV testing for couples wishing to get married can ever be passed by any organisation, let alone contemplate one. Don't get me wrong. I am aware of HIV and its implication as a disease and as a carrier state. However there appears to be something that has been completely overlooked, "the sex education aspect". At the same time one can argue that by presenting such sex education, are we giving a "carte blanche" to the idea of premarital sex? The other dilemma is related to one's sexual inclination. We, like any other communities in the world, are not 100% heterosexual. HIV is more prevalent in people who have homosexual inclinations, multiple partners, in addition to other proven or known methods of transmission.

In all frankness, I feel that testing for HIV should be encouraged in all premarital couples, as well as in people who have homosexual (either true or heterosexual) inclination, even after marriage. After all, specially in "our men" there appears to be a lot of talk and down right encouragement for "Muttatism" which is a different, but nevertheless related subject, since it does fall into the category of relationship with multiple partners.

I would be inclined to concentrate on education for prevention at ALL levels and on making our people aware of the disease and its implications, and encouraging them to have the tests if they AGREE. The testing and a negative result for that matter, should not in my view, be a prerequisite for any Jamaat or person to perform Nikkah. To add to the dilemma one can perform one's own nikkah, and therefore there is no real need for any organisation, and also what about those people who engage in "Muttatism"? After all, from what I

understand this too is a form of marriage. Should they too be tested before and after?

My final point relates to the social implication of a positive result. Then

again if we can BUY certain things, can we not BUY a negative certificate?

Dr. Ashik Najarali,
Brampton, Ontario,
Canada.

Dear brother,

HIV resolution...the Marja's viewpoint

I have read much about the subject of the Supreme Council HIV resolution in the *Federation Samachar*. As my contribution to the debate, I enclose herewith copies of two letters, one from the representative of Ayatullah Seestani and the second from the Attorney General of Tanzania which are self-explanatory.

I hope you will find both the letters worthwhile to publish in the *Samachar*. Originals are available from me if any of your readers want to see these. My telephone contact is 0812 780 427.

Letter from M.T. Philip (Attorney General)...." *Be informed that it is not a criminal offence for a hospital or clinic to carry out tests of HIV infection without consent or knowledge of a patient. A hospital or doctor however have a duty to confidentiality on matters relating to patients. Abuse of confidentiality leads to medical malpractice and one can institute a civil case against the hospital or doctor concerned for damages suffered.*

The law has not made it a requirement for any religious organization to demand for a HIV certificate before conducting a marriage ceremony. Such law or practice will amount to interference with the the right to privacy enshrined and protected in our constitution."

Letter to the Marja...." In the recent meeting of the Africa Federation the following resolution was passed:- Quote: "AIDS: IT WAS RESOLVED THAT PRIOR TO RECITATION OF NIKAH FOR ANY MEMBER OF A JAMAAT, THE PROPOSED GROOM AND BRIDE SHALL PRODUCE SATISFACTORY EVIDENCE OF EACH OF THEM BEING FREE OF HIV/AIDS VIRUS" UNQUOTE.

Will you please guide me according to Shari'ah Muhammedi, can any institution such as the Federation or Jamaat make such laws or can they demand evidence as mentioned in the resolution?...The Marja responded as follows:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

ج : لا مانع من اتخاذ هذا القرار والالتزام به إلا أنه لا يوجب الزاماً شرعياً على الأعضاء .



٤ ربيع الثاني ١٤١٩

"There is no objection to passing such a resolution and to undertake it but as far as the Sharia is concerned members cannot be compelled to implement it."
Mustafa Alidina
Dar es Salaam.

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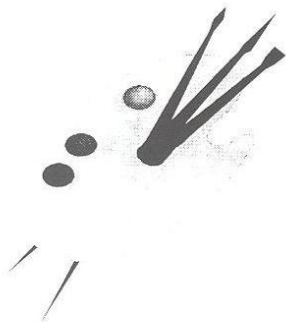
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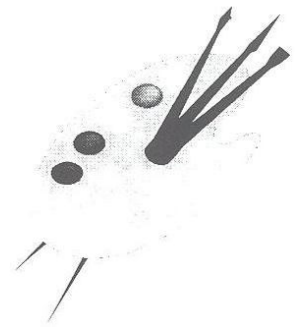
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London hosts Executive Council Meeting of the Council of European Jamaats

The Executive Council Meeting of the Council of European Jamaats was held on Sunday 20th June 1999 at Hyderi Imambargah, London. In an ambience of cooperation and mutual understanding and focussing upon the vision of service to the community, the President of the Council, Jafferbhai Dharamsi highlighted that collaboration and partnership with all organizations and member Jamaats shall remain the hallmark of the Council's work.

The President reported that during his visits to all the Jamaats in Europe, he was able to meet with Office Bearers and to address members of the community. He found that those who required the Council's services were resolutely behind the concept of partnership, to avoid replication and duplication of efforts. These meetings also highlighted that recognition of the Council will only come through hard work, dedication and perseverance.

The President then reported on his meeting with the Office Bearers of the World Federation of Khoja Shia Ithna Asheri Muslim Communities and outlined the protocol that the Council had agreed to pursue with the World Federation to gain its support for various Council Projects. The successful completion of the European Hajj Mission and deployment of Maulanas for Muharram demonstrated the will and energy of those who want to serve in the name of Allah (SWT).

The President went on to highlight the plight of the Kosovo refugees and said that at a meeting with the President of The World Federation, it was agreed that the focus of both organizations would be on meeting the spiritual needs of the people of Kosovo. To this end, he urged members who have undertaken collections for the Kosovo refugees to channel the funds through the World Federation.

The President then briefly spoke about the various projects undertaken by the Council:

- Islamic Education Course in Qum from mid July to mid August, 1999 for 12 boys (18 years +) led together with Shaikh Mustafa Jaffer of the Islamic Education Board. The purpose of this visit was to strengthen the understanding of Islam amongst the youngsters. This project was arranged in conjunction with the Khoja Group of Islamic Scholars in Qum.

- Summer Residential Camp from 14th to 24th, August, 1999 for Girls at Kingswood Centre, Isle of Wight. The camp will InshaaAllah increase interaction of our girls from across Europe in pleasant surroundings with teachers who will nurture them towards excellence. The camp will be led by Rubabbai Master, Shamabai Mawji, Nargisbai Panju, Mumtazbai Ladak and Ismatbai Kassam.

- Summer Residential Camp from 14th to 24th, August, 1999 for

Boys at Kingswood Centre, Isle of Wight. The camp will InshaaAllah increase interaction of our boys from across Europe in pleasant surroundings with teachers who will nurture them towards excellence. The camp will be led by Dr Murtaza Alidina, Dr Muhsin Alidina, Dr Mahmood Dato, Dr Hussain Jiwa, Mustufabhai Meghji, Sajadbahi Tharoo and Ali Akberbhai Hussein.

- Ladies Sports Tournament at Stanmore. This event co-ordinated by Hamidabai Hussein, will InshaaAllah ensure that the girls from across Europe enjoy a weekend of competitive sports. Talks and discussions on useful topics will be arranged during the period.

- Studies Skills Course from 31st August to 4th September, 1999 at Birmingham, led by Dr Mahmood Dato will inshallah guide the students in further and higher education how to take charge of their own affairs, not only in the non-educational side of their college/university time, but also in the learning and study patterns.

- Aalima for Europe. The Council is proposing to keep a full time Aalima to serve the needs of Khawateen in Europe and has approached Naseembai Walji who has graciously accepted the position. Naseembai studied in Qum and is fluent in English, Gujerati, Cutchi, Urdu, Farsi and Arabic.

- The Zahid Iqbal Rajabali Rashid Appeal. The Council took on this worthwhile appeal on behalf of the Rashid Family of Hyderi Jamaat. The Zahid Iqbal Rajabali Rashid Appeal is an opportunity to help educate a young boy to achieve social independence and dignity.

- Madressa Teacher's Seminar in Stockholm. The Council is proposing to hold this teaching seminar during the first weekend in September. The teachers from Trollhatten will travel by bus over to Stockholm.

Committee Reports

The following Committee activities

(continued on page 12)

Islamic Education Board (IEB) organises Public Speaking Short Course in Birmingham

The first Public Speaking training short course was organised by the Islamic Education Board of the World Federation, aimed specifically at Zakir(a)s and Madressa Teachers of the community, and to the communal personalities who have to speak in public in the Jamaats.

The course was a residential one, held at the Zainabiya Complex in Birmingham. It was held over the Easter weekend for a full intensive two days and nights from 2-3 April, 1999. There were eight participants, four from Wessex and four from London. Three participants dropped out at the last minute due to sudden illnesses. The course intended to have no more than twelve participants.

The Course Team was led by Dr Mahmood Dato (London); the team were Shabbir Lakha (London), Mujtaba Dato (Los Angeles), Ali Akber Husein (London), Shelina Kurji (Birmingham), Suhail Valji (London), and Shabbar Dhalla (Reading).

The course was delivered in modular format, where each member of the Course Team contributed modules, relevant to their interest and expertise. The course format was a combination of short lectures, intensive and thorough practical interactive sessions, debates, discussions, video playback assessment, verbal peer and Course Team assessments and feedback.

The aspects covered were:
Purpose of Communication
Appearance and Dress
Audience Factors Preparation
Structuring a Talk Rehearsal
Delivery Eye Communication
Gestures Coping With Questions
Posture Humour
Pauses and Non-Words Vocal Variety
Visual Aids Humour
Debating Techniques

Participants had ample opportunity for interactive hands-on experience in practising each of the module, in front

of the participants and the Course Team.

Each participant was videoed (on their own separate cassette) during their turn of the practical sessions, and the end of the course, each participant was presented with their own video, to review at their own leisure and learn from the sessions.

Verbal, written, on-the-record and private feedback from the participants has indicated that the course has been a resounding success. Many felt though that it was rather very intensive.

A number of suggestions have been put forward by the participants to make the course even better, and these have been noted by the Course Director.

The Course Team also has had a through debriefing session under the Course Director, and all the points for improvement and changes for the next course have been noted. The Course Team has already started preparing for the next course next year.

The course ended with a formal Course Dinner, where dignitaries of the World Federation, Council of European Jamaats and the hosts, Birmingham Jamaats were invited. Each participant was required to put their skills learnt during the course into practice by giving a short talk on the aspect of the course.

With the compliments of the IEB, each participant was presented with a graduating certificate, a copy of the course group photograph, and their own personal video cassette. Birmingham Jamaat presented to each participant the Birmingham Silver Jubilee mementos.

Based on the resounding and unqualified success of this course, the Islamic Education Board of the World Federation is planning to have this as an annual course. The next one is tentatively scheduled in the Spring of 2000.

Haji Naji Memorial Housing Scheme inaugurated in India

The Secretary General of the World Federation, Dr. Sibtain Panjwani, was in Gujarat, India, from 1st April to 5th April, 1999. The main purpose of his visit was to inaugurate the 70 flats Complex of Haji Naji Memorial Housing Scheme. This scheme, dedicated to the memory of the great benefactor Allama Haji Naji, was principally launched by the World Federation and was made possible by the tireless efforts of the Council of Gujarat and Bhavnagar Jamat. Moreover generous donors from all over the world contributed to the flats which cost ten million Indian Rupees.

After the inauguration, the Secretary General attended the opening of the Sheriff Hasham Orphanage in Mahuva and a Samuh Lagna programme involving marriages of many of our brothers and sisters.

During his stay in Mahuva, he had an opportunity to discuss several important subjects concerning the welfare of our people in Gujarat. He also visited Mota Khutavda, Rajula, Una and Ahmedabad where the new Sadat Colony financed by the World Federation at Mahuva and Una are coming up at the required pace.

The Secretary General received full co-operation from the liaison officer of the World Federation, Haji Aunali Salehmohamed, whose guidelines and advice were extremely helpful. Also helpful were the Council of Gujarat, Management of Surat and Bhavnagar, Mahuva, Una and Rajula.

The man of knowledge is the one.....

"The man of knowledge is the one who recognizes that what is known is very little compared to what is not known, and as a result he considers himself ignorant, and accordingly he increases his efforts to know more by going out in search of knowledge."

Imam Ali (A.S.)

Changes in the NHS and Opportunities for Jamaats in the United Kingdom

The new labour government in the UK has introduced a concept of Primary Care Groups (PCG) whereby GPs with other health care professionals will form a group and manage finance of their patients' health. Hospitals have become self governing Trusts and provide care to patients. The hospitals (provider units) like Leeds United, Central Middlesex, Milton Keynes General, etc. are providers of services. PCGs will purchase the services.

Opportunities for Jamaats: The NHS Executive realised, through various research that the Ethnic Minorities have been marginalised in terms of access to services. To ensure that the Ethnic Minority agenda gets highlighted, the Department of Health is promoting special attention. At the same time, seizing this opportunity, various groups have created Equal Voice Groups within hospitals. These groups represent various ethnic minority communities and are used by the hospitals to seek views and opinions of services to ensure that they are sensitive to the needs of ethnic minority culture and religion.

Jamaats in the United Kingdom can take the following opportunities to highlight their needs:

1. Assess whether an Equal Voice Group exists locally and if so, ensure that the Jamaat is a member of the group. The benefits are enormous.

** For example, in Wessex, our Jamaat has, through membership of the group, succeeded in providing halal food, prayer room facilities and ghusl khana facilities for our members in local hospitals.*

** It has also been successful in providing training to nurses and doctors in ensuring services are sensitive to their needs.*

2. Request the local health authority and local primary care groups to

Federation Samachar

forward the Jamaat a copy of their intentions and ensure that it contains plans on what services will be made available to ethnic minority groups.

** For example, in Wessex, we have been successful in arguing the possibility of screening for Thalassaemia within the ethnic minority population.*

** Highlight the need for availability of circumcision for male children on the NHS. This issue has now been taken up by Baroness Cumberledge who is the Health Minister responsible for Ethnic Minority issue and it is hoped that guidance on this to health authorities will be forthcoming.*

3. Apply to become a board member at your local health authority, hospital or community trust as non-executive director or the PCG as lay member representative so that your community too can become part of decision making process on health issues.

4. The Medical Advisory Board of the World Federation does provide extensive services for screening including vision and dental checks within the Khoja Shia Ithna Asheri Muslim Communities in the United Kingdom. As there is some cost associated with this service, it would be very useful to highlight the benefits of these service and the subsequent cost of it to the NHS Ethnic Health Unit with the intention of seeking some funding.

This World and the Next.....

Imam Ali (as) wrote to Salman al Farsi (ra) : *To continue, surely, the likeness of this world is that of a snake: it is soft to touch, and deadly poisonous. The ignorant child is distracted by it, and the one with understanding and intellect is cautious of it. So turn away from what fascinates you in it, for how little of it stays with you.*

Cautious US-Iran relations

Iranian President Mohammad Khatami has called on President Clinton to change Washington's traditional policies towards Iran to prove that he really wants a better relationship with Tehran. President Khatami said he welcomed a statement made by President Clinton in April last year, in which he said that Iran had been subjected to a lot of abuse by western nations in the past.

The Iranian leader described President Clinton's words as courageous, but said it would be difficult for the President's personal opinions to change America's domineering attitude towards Iran and the Islamic world. He said: "I think the traditional policies of America are too deep rooted to be changed by such statements." But if American behaviour did change in a practical way, there is a basis for building new relationships.

Relations between the US and Iran, hostile since the 1979 Islamic revolution which toppled the US-backed Shah, have thawed a little since President Khatami took office in 1997. Tehran officials have repeatedly called on Washington to show its good will by lifting sanctions against Iran and releasing frozen Iranian assets. Washington has called for direct talks with Tehran over three concerns: Iran's alleged support for international terrorism; the search for weapons of mass destruction; its opposition to the Middle East peace process. Iran refuses to talk to the Americans, saying they must first cease hostilities. Mr Khatami said: "For America's definition of terrorism to be a condition for establishing relations, this is a selfish demand and we don't accept it. We oppose terrorism and are victims to terrorism." Mr Khatami said Iran only gave political support to Arabs and Palestinians opposed to the US-brokered peace process in the Middle East. "We have said we don't have any practical interference concerning Palestine. It is natural to support any humanitarian work to confront the occupation of land and fight oppression and this does not mean we give support in the form of weapons. We only give political support."

Can there be a life without TV?

Could you survive without TV for a week? From 22nd April, 1999 millions of television viewers were asked to do just that for International TV Turnoff Week which ran until April 28. The campaign was promoted by social activist groups, TV Free America, the Media Foundation in Canada (publishers of "Adbusters" magazine) and White Dot in the UK. Since the first campaign in the U.S. in 1995, an estimated 12 million people worldwide are said to have switched off the idiot box completely.

But the mere suggestion - even for just a week - horrified many people who were asked to comment on the Turnoff Week. "Go without TV for seven days? What could I do?" said one who watches TV 12 hours a day. "I stay at home, and the TV keeps me from getting bored."

"I am trying to get rid of this TV sickness, but I'm always tempted. I know the bad effects such as eye problems. I can't do as much work or get enough sleep because of my favourite programmes, but there are advantages too. I get information about the world, health and even learn new recipes" said another.

One student at the English Medium School, felt a TV-free week was "not a very good idea". "Maybe it's good for people who are addicted to watching television. I watch a maximum of four hours of TV a day. That's not addiction. And there are advantages to watching TV. When you are tired, some comedies get you laughing and laughter is good for you," she added.

Others considered TV a source of cheap entertainment instead of spending membership fees to join a club or gym. However they overlooked the fact that watching TV is not as healthy as any outdoor activity. One sportsman said, "A week without television is not a bad idea. If you spend all your time sitting at work, then go home to sit in front of a TV, you could become lazy."

One 12 year old student said he would study or do something else instead of watch TV for the next seven days. "I watch only four hours of TV a week, but just informative programmes like quiz programmes and comedies. I don't like the serials my parents watch as they are stupid. So going without TV for a week will not be a problem."

Dubai-based clinical psychologist Dr Jerome Murray and author of "From Uptight to All Right" believes that TV occupies too much of our time. "It has taken on the role of being baby-sitter, parent and teacher. In the United States, where I come from, people spend an average of four to six hours watching TV. That's about as much time as they spend in school.

"It's breaking down family ties. Parents and children aren't communicating. Where people once talked to each other around the dinner table, now they eat their meals in front of the TV and if they talk, it's to say 'Be quiet, I'm watching this'."

Although not opposed to "limited viewing", Murray is convinced children learn false values from TV, especially concerning violence. "It endorses violence. In cartoons nobody gets hurt after being shot or burned; they all bounce back. But some documentary channels can make TV a good educational tool."

He also disagreed that TV is relaxing. "The absence of work does not mean the presence of recreation. People aren't relaxing in front of the TV, they are vegetating. What did people do before television? They went for walks, talked to each other, played games.

"People should be doing activities that involve both sides of their brain, like reading, talking, or problem-solving. Simply watching TV only occupies the right side of our brain, which controls visual imagery as well as creativity and artistic ability. It neglects the left, which is responsible for logic, linear reasoning and word skills."

A new book on daily du'as is released

The Tayyiba Publishers & Distributors has published a new book in their series of Dua books. The book DAILY DU'AS is a useful book including Duas and other taqibaat to be recited after the daily prayers everyday. The book includes:

- Common Duas after every Salat
- Taqibaat from the Holy Qur'an
- Duas for Sajdah ash-Shukr
- Duas for Qunoot
- Specific Duas after each salat
- Duas and Ziyarat for each day of the week

All Duas are in easy to read Arabic with a simple English translation. Brief commentaries on some duas are also included.

This is a great book for both young and old. Waqf labels can be included for those wishing to donate to Madrasahs and Mosques for *Isalae thawab* of Marhumeen.

The publishers are offering a bulk discount for purchase of 10 copies or more. Price is CA\$7.00 or US\$5.00 + shipping. For information or orders contact:

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The Life Transaction...

"I am making a connection which no one has made before me: Islam is submission, and submission is certainty, and certainty is the affirmation of the truth, and affirmation of the truth is acknowledgement, and acknowledgement is performance of what is obligatory, and performance of what is obligatory is appropriate action."

Imam Ali (a.s.)

NASIMCO President visits Tanzania, Pakistan and India.

From 30 March, 1999 to 20 April, 1999 the President of NASIMCO Alhaj Ghulam Abbas Sajan visited Tanzania, Pakistan and India.

In Tanzania he was the guest of the Africa Federation for the Supreme Council Meeting which was held in Zanzibar on April 2nd and 3rd, 1999. The coverage of the meeting has been carried elsewhere in this issue.

While attending the Zanzibar meeting, Ghulambhai had an opportunity to meet Presidents and delegations of various Jamaats of Africa and he also met the Editor of the *Federation Samachar*, Munir Daya to discuss the progress of the recently launched North American Edition of the *Federation Samachar* which is a joint undertaking between NASIMCO and the Africa Federation.

Reflecting on his visit to all the three countries, Ghulambhai said, "Both at the Zanzibar meeting and at a subsequent meeting with the office bearers of the Africa Federation, we made the following offers:

- Bringing our Somali brothers and sisters currently stranded in Tanzania and Kenya to Canada. There is a possibility that this could be done after we receive the necessary information and support from Africa Federation.
- The new immigrants to Canada often experience difficulties that they do not anticipate before arrival. These include housing, job search, government red tapes, etc. NASIMCO has offered assistance subject to resources being available.
- Projects where we could work in co-operation for the betterment of the community. Africa Federation has to make suggestions when it is ready for any such project.

During my stay in Dar-es-Salaam, I visited World Islamic Propagation and Humanitarian Services (WIPAHS) location in Kibaha on April 6, 1999 with Haji Saheb. The location is about

an hour from Dar-es-Salaam. The sight comprises approximately 70 acres of land with several buildings thereon.

This facility is for ladies (girls) only and is providing excellent services. Included are agricultural projects, women's vocational training, educational facilities, teachers training, and proficiency in computers. WIPAHS is well managed and connected with government officials for humanitarian projects. WIPAHS is actively involved with the current draught in Tanzania and has dug numerous wells in the area surrounding Dar-es-Salaam. WIPAHS has also acquired a building for medical facilities.

We discussed the possibility of CIDA funding being available for some of WIPAHS projects. It was agreed that WIPAHS would submit projects for consideration.

In Pakistan we visited several schools operated by Mehfil-e-Murtaza, Khoja Pirhai Jamaat and other organizations. We also visited Zainab Panjwani Hospital and the site for a new hospital to be built by the Jamaat, and the housing projects of the Zainabia Housing Society. All of these organizations are doing an excellent job.

In the course of the meetings several achievements by the various organizations were highlighted. In addition to the issues raised in Africa, the issues of concern were:

- Lack of planning within our communities world-wide was discussed at length. After a lengthy discussion it was suggested that it was necessary to have a meeting of the various organizations and individuals involved in philanthropic activities. This meeting should be well planned and well publicized and should also include major donees. This subject could be a theme of a specific conference to be held early in the year 2000.

The issue related to Dubai Jamaat was raised to ponder into the situation where Khojas of non-East African origin are not allowed to become voting members. This issue could be a subject at the next World Federation Conference.

- Possibility of projects on cooperative basis and obtaining CIDA grants.

The visit to India included Hydrabad, Gujarat (Ahemdabad, Mahuva, Talaja and Bhavnagar) and Mumbai. In addition to being active in North America, NASIMCO has been very active in India. As an example, over a period of time NASIMCO has sent over 11 million Rupees to Gujarat alone for various well intentioned projects.

India is where we have a major challenge. The level of poverty is beyond imagination. However, it can be tackled through coordination of the activities of those involved in philanthropic activities. The major challenges are education and housing. As a matter of fact a challenge was made in Mumbai that we should aim for removal of the housing problem world-wide through a co-ordinated process (the suggestion was that we should start with the Khoja community first and then proceed from there).

The issues discussed included the points raised in Africa and Pakistan. In addition, a subject for discussion and action was suggested, "How did poverty come to the Shi'a? Now that it is with us, is it going to stay? If there is a solution, what is it?" It was suggested that this should also be included in the Conference planned for the year 2000.

A pertinent point was raised both in Pakistan and India. It was observed that while there were efforts made to assist the Sadaats (through Sehme-Sadat) and the Khojas, very little was done for the group which was neither Sadaat nor Khoja.

Muslim Women receive apology and right to wear head scarves in American Head Scarf Case

Seven Atlanta Muslim women who were sent home in February, 1999 for refusing to remove their religiously-mandated head scarves have reached a settlement with their employers according to their attorneys.

The settlement ends a religious discrimination complaint filed by the women against Atlanta-based Argenbright Security Inc. with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, which negotiated the settlement.

Silvio Fernandez, deputy chief of the agency's Washington field office, confirmed that an agreement had been reached. "I think it's a very positive settlement for everyone," said the women's District-based attorney, Martin F. McMahon. "The EEOC did a great job in this case and acted so expeditiously."

Under the agreement, the women will each receive \$750 in back pay, an additional \$2,500 and a letter of apology from Argenbright. In addition, the firm has agreed to conduct a company-wide training session on accommodating religious practices in the workplace and to inform all employees about the widespread Muslim belief that women should cover their hair in public out of modesty.

Even before the settlement, Argenbright had said the women were welcome to return to work wearing their scarves. The company denied that they had been fired, saying it "regretted any misunderstanding."

The women, all recent immigrants, were working at Dulles security checkpoints as screeners for passengers and luggage when asked by an Argenbright supervisor late in February to take off their head scarves. The women refused because wearing the scarf is a religious requirement in Islam.

They approached the District-based Council on American-Islamic Relations, a Muslim advocacy group, which assisted them in filing a complaint with the EEOC on Feb. 26, 1999. McMahon said he hoped the case signals that the Islamic head scarf "won't arise again as an issue" in the workplace.

Argenbright attorney Charles Best confirmed that a settlement was concluded but declined to comment further.

Asked if she were happy about the settlement, Iklas Musa, of Alexandria, who is originally from Sudan, replied: "I don't know. . . . I think so, maybe." Musa said the women were told by McMahon, their attorney, that a settlement would be better than fighting Argenbright in court.

Rueaia F. Mohammed, of Herndon, said she would have preferred Argenbright to make a public apology "on the TV or in a magazine." Although she has been out of work for two months, she is receiving back pay for only three weeks, she said. Mohammed said that if she does not find another job, she will return to her job at Dulles, but "if I find another job, I won't go back."

The settlement does not include an admission by Argenbright that it violated federal civil rights laws requiring employers to accommodate religious practices on the job as much as possible. It does require the firm to pay the women's legal fees.

The Muslim workers were employed by Argenbright Security Inc. as

security personnel. Terms of the settlement agreement, reached include:

1. A personal letter of apology from Argenbright Security to each Muslim worker.
2. Company-wide sensitivity training on issues of religious accommodation.
3. Notice sent to all Argenbright employees about the significance of the Islamic dress.
4. Back pay for the time missed by the employees.
5. An additional payment to each employee.

"The head scarf covers the hair not the brain..."

6. Payment of the workers' legal fees.

Both parties also agreed that there would be no retaliation against the workers.

"This case is all about seeking understanding and respect for religious practices. A lack of understanding led to great emotional pain and suffering for the seven ladies and their families. We stand with the ladies and congratulate them for their determination to maintain religious values in the workplace," said CAIR Executive Director Nihad Awad. "A head scarf covers hair, it doesn't cover the brain," said Awad.

Awad added that employers should be aware that it is illegal to discriminate against a worker because of their religious attire.

CAIR publishes a booklet called "An Employer's Guide to Islamic Religious Practices" designed to prevent just such incidents. CAIR also issues an annual report on the status of American Muslim civil rights. The 1998 report, called "Patterns of Discrimination," indicated an 18 percent increase in total incidents and a 60 percent rise in discrimination cases. The increasing discrimination can best be countered by constructive measures as done in the Head Scarf case.

First Shia Islamic Centre planned for New Zealand

The Ahl-ul-Bayt Foundation of New Zealand has embarked on a project to build the first Islamic Ahl-ul-Bayt (A.S.) Centre in New Zealand. This New Zealand Foundation, the first Shia Organisation in New Zealand, was formally established in 1993 with the blessings of Marhoom Ayatollah Golpaygani (A.R.).

After over 10 years of carrying out religious activities in rented offices, warehouses and community halls, plans are well underway to build a new permanent Islamic Centre for promotion and propagation of Islam as per the teachings of the Holy Prophet (SAW) and the Holy Ahl-ul-Bayt (AS).

The site of the proposed centre is 27 Ben Lomond Crescent, Pakuranga, Auckland. The community of about 350 people under the banner of the Islamic Ahlul-Bait Foundation of New Zealand organise lectures and elegies in Arabic, English, Farsi and Urdu. The gatherings are normally attended by a truly cosmopolitan attendance involving mumineen from Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, India, East Africa, Fiji and even a family of Chinese origin from Singapore.

During Muharram in Auckland, the active participation of youths in recitation of the Holy Qur'an and speeches on Kerbala is a measure of the parents' foresight and commitment to in-grain Islamic teachings in the posterity.

The community is comprised of a very high percentage of professionals, mostly migrant engineers, doctors and other professionals from Iraq. The resident Alim, Syed Majid from Iran is an akhund with a difference. He is a black belt in karate and the madressa, which has some 50 children, have karate and swimming lessons every weekend in addition to teaching of the holy Qur'an, fiqh, tareekh and akhlaaq.

The origins of Shii settlement dates back to the early seventies when Br.

Khalil Waljee from Zanzibar and Iqbal Somani came to New Zealand. Br. Iqbal was among the Asians expelled from Uganda. Subsequently Brother Muhammad Reza Rashid (originally from Kera) arrived from Calcutta after a short period. Thereafter, mumineen from Iran, Pakistan and India began arriving in small numbers.

For the past three years there has been an exponential growth in population as professionals from Iraq began settling in New Zealand to escape the brutal regime in Iraq.

The residential property bought some five years ago to serve as Husainiyyah is now too small to accomodate the growing numbers and hence the need for a new Centre.

The proposed new Centre will have:

- * Congregation halls for ladies and gents for salat/majalis;
- * Class rooms for madrasah;
- * Fully equipped library with computer and research facilities;
- * Room for Ghushl-e-meyyit;
- * Cooking facilities;
- * Recreation facilities;
- * Alim's residence;
- * Car-parking facilities.

The Foundation is holding a Khums Ijaza from Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenie, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali al-Husaini Seestani, Ayatollah Makarem Shirazi and Ayatollah Fazel-e-Lankarani. Ayatollah's Seestani's Ijaza has a limit of US \$ 300,000.

The total area of the site is 2026 sq. metres inclusive of 14,000 sq. feet of covered office and warehouse space. The projected cost of putting the premises up including soft furnishing and installation of audio-video systems is about US\$ 550,000.

For further details the Islamic Ahl-ul-Bayt Foundation can be contacted on the following address:

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P.O. Box 9962,
Newmarket,
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Ph: +64 9 525 6533
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Web Site URL: <http://www.islam.org.nz>
E-mail: ahlulbayt@islam.org.nz

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Iran bans skull-carving in mourning ritual

In Muharram this year, Iran banned worshippers from carving open their skulls with swords as part of the ceremonies of mourning on Ashura day.

"According to the fatwa (religious decree) by Shiite dignitaries, self-flagellation is prohibited during the mourning ceremonies," Iranian police said in a statement.

In recent years police have tried to curb the practice of "Ghameh-Zani," in which devout Shiite Moslems cut open their shaved skulls during the holy mourning month of Muharram.

The rite, which is also widely practiced in Lebanon and Pakistan, "gives the impression that Shiite Moslems are superstitious and irrational," supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said.

Over 4900 couples get married on Prophet's birth anniversary

Over 4,900 couples entered into a marriage union in Tehran on 30 June, 1999 on the auspicious occasion of the birth anniversaries of the Prophet Mohammad (saw) and the sixth Imam, Hadhrat Jaafar Sadeq (as). The couples were wedded at ceremonies across the nation under the auspices of the Imam Khomeini relief committee and other philanthropic people.

Wedding ceremonies were held in Isfahan, Tehran, Khorasan, Fars, Kohkiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad, and Golestan provinces. The essential items of the newly wed couples were furnished by the Imam Khomeini relief committee. This philanthropic committee has so far arranged weddings of about 160,000 couples across the nation.



DATELINE IRAN

Iran hails U.S. Policy Change

On 29 April, 1999 the Iranian state radio hailed a United States decision to lift sanctions on food and medicine to Iran and said it was taken in the face of mounting political and economic costs for Washington's policies.

In the first reaction to a decision, announced in Washington a day earlier, to permit the sale of food to Iran, Libya and Sudan, all targets of earlier sanctions, Tehran radio said the move was dictated by the realities of the global economy. "This decision is a response to widespread international pressure, as well as growing pressure from US companies fighting for a share of international markets," the radio said in a commentary.

"Washington knows that past sanction policies have not been able to deter the countries that were subjected to these sanctions. The only result was that American companies were deprived of markets in more than 40 countries in the world," the radio said.

The Clinton administration's decision could pave the way for US farmers to sell hundreds of millions of dollars in wheat, soybeans and other commodities to Iran, Libya and Sudan. The policy change is also expected to clear the way for the U.S. Treasury Department to grant a license to Niki Trading Co, which has sought permission to sell about 3.55 million tons of farm goods to Iran, including 2.0 million tons of wheat. Other US firms may also seek similar sales.

Praying for peace on Saudi soil...

Beneath the optimism generated in the Gulf by Iranian President Mohammed Khatami's landmark visit to Saudi Arabia in the middle of May, 1999 were long-standing tensions that marred regional ties for 20 years.

Saudi King Fahd said Khatami's visit had paved the way for better days for both countries. "The door is wide open to develop and strengthen relations between the two countries in the interests of the two peoples and the Muslim world," the Saudi monarch said.

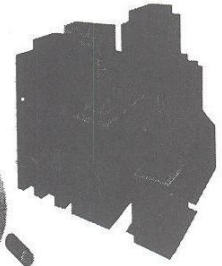
Khatami's pilgrimage at the holy city of Mecca on May 18, 1999 perhaps best symbolized the distance Riyadh and Tehran have covered. Twelve years ago, the grand mosque was the scene of a bloody clash between Iranian protesters and Saudi security forces. Nearly 400 Iranians were killed.

"A visit to Saudi Arabia by an Iranian President would have seemed inconceivable until a few years ago," a UAE-based diplomat said. "Mr Khatami's consistent overtures have helped create a climate for things to move ahead," he said.

However the other Middle East countries are not sure the current moderate policies will ultimately prevail and this has made them wary of Khatami's proposal for a collective regional security arrangement that would exclude US forces. The Gulf monarchies fear that Iran would have a clear superiority in any regional military alliance because of its larger size. Tehran's continuing anti-West tirades is also a source of concern among many in the region who have grown used to Washington's security umbrella.

Few expect Khatami's Gulf tour to lead to any radical shift in geopolitical contours. But those familiar with the rancor that has gripped the region for two decades were nevertheless impressed by the image of an Iranian President praying for peace on Saudi soil.

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KSIJPA announces informal Zoning approval of construction project

The Khoja Shia Ithnasheri Jamaat of Pennsylvania (KSIJPA), has announced that at a meeting held on May 6, 1999 the Planning Commission of South Whitehall Township effectively recommended an informal zoning approval of the Jamaat's construction project for a 15,000 square feet multi-purpose facility which will sit on a 4.3 acre parcel of land on Ridgeview Drive near Allentown. Formal project approval of the *Al Ahad Islamic Center* was expected to follow.

The *Al Ahad Islamic Center* will include separate main halls and Bayt-us-Salat for ladies and gentlemen, respectively, a 12 classroom Madressa annex, a library, and an A'lem's apartment. The Center will accommodate parking for more than a hundred cars. The cost of the entire project, including the cost of the property, is estimated to be in the US\$1.2 million to US\$1.5 million range.

The construction Sub-Committee comprised of Brothers Mohammed Khaku, Rizwan Dinani, and Murtaza Gangji, advised that closing on the property took place on May 25th 1999. A ground breaking ceremony was scheduled for 17th Rabi'al Awwal to coincide both with Milad-un-Nabi – the Prophet's (Peace be upon him) birth anniversary – as well as the Jamaat's Twenty-fifth anniversary celebration.

The Project Manager, Brother Kazim Dharsi, indicated that the next phase of the construction project is land development, which entails preparing the property for Phase 3, the construction of the Center. The cost of land development is anticipated to be approximately US\$250,000.

Commenting on the project, Brother Mohammed Khaku, KSIJPA's President, said "We urge our brothers and sisters-in-Islam around the world to donate generously towards this

GOP foreign policy analyst says Islam has a "mandate for violence, war, terror"

On 29 June, 1999 the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), along with a number of other national and local Muslim, civil liberties and interfaith groups, held a news conference outside Republican headquarters in Washington to demand that GOP officials condemn Islamophobic statements by a Senate Republican Policy Committee foreign policy analyst. News conference participants also called for the analyst's dismissal.

In an open letter to Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott (R-MS) published as a full-page advertisement in The Washington Times, the Islamic advocacy group revealed that James George Jatras called Islam "a self-evident outgrowth...of the darkness of heathen Araby" and a "gigantic Christian-killing machine."

Jatras's Internet article referred to the much needed Center, and request you to spread the word about the *Al Ahad Islamic Center* project throughout your Jamaats, to your friends and families. We need your help and prayers to make this project a reality."

The Khoja Shia Ithnasheri Jamaat of Pennsylvania, a registered non-profit organization, caters to the religious, cultural and social needs of 300-plus individuals, most of whom are located in northeastern Pennsylvania. KSIJPA is a member of NASIMCO (North America Shia Ithna-asheri Muslim Communities) and is affiliated with the World Federation of Khoja Shia Ithna-Asheri Muslim Communities.

Momineen are requested to please donate generously and get 'Thawab-e-Jaree'. Cheques are payable to:

The Al Ahad Islamic Center Project
The Khoja Shia Ithnasheri Jamaat of PA, 1335 Chew Street, Allentown PA 18102.

Donations can also be sent via:-
NASIMCO, P.O. Box 87629,
Thornhill, Ont. Canada L3P 5W0 or
THE ISLAMIC SHIA ITHNA-
ASHERI JAMAAT OF
TORONTO, 7340 Bayview Avenue,
Thornhill, Ont. Canada L3T 2R7.

"pseudo-Prophet" Muhammad and claimed "Islam has been unthinkable without its mandate for violence, war, terror..." Jatras also made a derogatory reference to Arab Muslims and wrote: "...it is beyond me what spiritual values any Christian has in common with someone whose idea of beatific bliss is boinking an endless parade of the well-rounded houris said to inhabit the Muslim paradise..."

The open letter from CAIR Executive Director Nihad Awad to Sen. Lott read in part:

"I hope you agree that these remarks should be repugnant to all Americans...We respectfully request that you, as Senate Majority Leader:

1) Acknowledge the deeply offensive nature of Mr. Jatras's Islamophobic statements.

2) Take appropriate action to ensure that a person with such views does not have a hand in formulating American foreign policy. Only these steps will provide concrete evidence that the Republican Party represents all Americans, regardless of faith or national origin."

Church too condemns statement as being intolerant to Christians and Muslims alike

A spokeswoman for the United Methodist Church - General Board of Church and Society read a statement calling Jatras's remarks 'intolerant and offensive to Christians and Muslims alike' and cited a church policy that seeks to "counter stereotypical and bigoted statements made against Muslims and Islam..."

Islam is one of the fastest growing religions in this country. There are an estimated six million Muslims in American and some 1.2 billion world-wide.

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DATELINE TORONTO

By Baqir Alloo

History Making Eid Prayer was held at Concord-Ontario on Sunday March 28th. Over 3000 Shia brothers and sisters and some children gathered to perform Eid Al-Haj Prayers in a spacious hall. It was for the first time in Canada and perhaps in any other western country that Shias from different ethnic groups and countries gathered to pray together and socialize at refreshment time. The program was initiated by Ahlul-Beit Assembly of Canada under the leadership of the well known A'lim Sheikh Ebrahimi. The program started with the recitation of verses from the Holy Qura'n and Du'a e Nudhba. Prayers were conducted by Sayed Mohamed Rizvi who then delivered an inspiring Khutba explaining the significance of unity and cooperation among the Shias and with other Muslim communities in Canada. The success of the program ushers a new chapter and should prove a forerunner of many such programs in future.

Toronto Jamaat Elections were held on Sunday April 11th when ladies and gents members thronged to the polling stations to vote for their favourite candidates. **Speaker of the Jamaat Brother Shabbir Jaffer** announced the results on the same night. **Alhaj Ali Raza Rajani** was declared the winner for the post of **President**, **Alhaj Razak Damani** as **Vice President** and **Brother Ejaz Taki Jeraj** as **Mukhi**. The uncontested posts of **Secretary**, **Treasurer** and **Chair Lady** went to **Br. Shabbir Jeraj**, **Br. Haider Haji** and **Sr. Shirinbai Sumar** respectively. Contested seats on the Ladies Committee went to **Lailabai Kara**, **Kanizbai Remtulla**, **Batulbai Mawji** and veteran **Zehrabai Habib**. Toronto Jamaat is experiencing unprecedented influx of people from different parts of the world. The challenging task for the new Executives will be to quicken the development of the ambitious projet at the 9000 Bathurst Jamaat property which has an area of 26 acres. Plans for constructing a multi purpose hall and a mosque has already been approved by the Jamaat and awaits approval of the City of Vaughan.

Ja'fari Islamic Youths election was held on 9th May when **Riffat Mamdani** was elected as **Director**, **Muslim Huda** as Financial Director, **Rizwan Devji** as Recruitment and Development Director, **Nahid Bardai** and **Benyamin Madani** as Assistant Directors. JIY plans to have a number of programs and activities for our youths in religious, educational and social fields.

Moharram Program at the Bayview Centre experienced a record attendance this year. During the first twelve days, majalis in Urdu were rendered by Maulana Sayed Muhammad Ansaar Naqvi of Dar es Salaam while majalis in English were rendered by Brother Mustafa Muhsin Jaffer of London and Ladies majalis in the morning had Zakera Maleka Naqvi of Houston to preach. On Ashura Day, ladies and gents marched in a solemn procession along Bayview Avenue when leaflets explaining the event of Kerbala were distributed to the public. A Blood donation clinic was also held and 113 pints of blood was collected and donated to the Blood Bank. Majalis were held at various locations and centres in Ontario. At the West Selby Centre, Sheikh Arifhussein Bata attracted a good crowd. Sheikh Shabbir Maisam preached at Kitchener, Sheikh Shafiq Hudda at Hamilton, Sheikh Sadiq Rahim at London-Ontario and Agha Mohamed Hussein at the Crescent Village. During the Arbacen Ashra, Professor Sayed Abul Kassim from UP-India preached at the Bayview Centre and Sayed Nadim Sarwar rendered marsiya and nauha. Zakira Sultana Rizvi from Pakistan preached to the ladies in the morning majalis.

MUSLIM MEDICAL SCHOOL APPLICANT GRANTED SECOND INTERVIEW AFTER BEING GRILLED ABOUT HER FAITH

A Muslim woman applicant to State University of New York Stony Brook School of Medicine has been granted a new admission interview after being asked what she says were degrading and inappropriate questions about her religious beliefs and about the role of women in Islam. The original interview allegedly included questions such as: "What motivated you to take Arabic as a second language? Did religion have anything to do with it?" "Do you consider yourself a religious person?" "Do you think that women hold an 'exalted position' in Islam? If so, how do you explain the oppression faced by women in Middle Eastern countries?" "Do you think that government and religion should be one or kept separate?" "If your brother or your father forced you to do something for religious reasons, how would you feel?" "Do you care about women in the Middle East? Do you relate to them?" "How do you explain that women can't drive in Saudi Arabia, or that they can not leave their homes or hold jobs in various countries in that region?"

The applicant was also allegedly told that she had a naïve view of the world because she had grown up in the United States. Five months after the interview, the applicant was notified that her admission had been denied. (She maintained a 3.7 GPA in her undergraduate studies, and scored a 31 on her MCAT. She was provisionally accepted to four other medical schools). In a letter to the medical school's dean, CAIR asked that the allegations be investigated, and if true, that the interviewer be disciplined. An apology was also sought for the Muslim applicant with also a request that the medical school faculty be given sensitivity training in religious diversity. To date the medical school has not addressed the question of what disciplinary measures, if any, the interviewer will face.

Respect that beard....

The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), a Washington-based Islamic advocacy group, has asked for the immediate reinstatement of a Muslim New York State Park Police officer suspended without pay for refusing to shave what he regarded as a religiously-mandated beard. The officer, who serves in Babylon, N.Y., said he was asked to surrender his gun and badge when he arrived for work on 22 June, 1999. Park Police officials had previously denied his request for religious accommodation.

This action is puzzling given that two different courts have ruled in favor of a law enforcement officer's right to wear a beard for religious reasons. The latest ruling, issued by the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit said the Newark (N.J.) Police Department's no-beard policy was discriminatory because it allowed medical but not religious exemptions. (Fraternal Order of Police v. City of Newark) The opinion stated: "Because the Department makes exemptions from its policy for secular reasons and has not offered any substantial justification for refusing to provide similar treatment for officers who are required to wear beards for religious reasons, we conclude that the Department's policy violates the First Amendment."

In a related case, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) last year issued a "determination" that Delta Air Lines and its contractor ServiceMaster Company made no effort to accommodate Muslim workers who wore beards for religious reasons. Also in 1998:

1) A Coca-Cola bottling company in Wisconsin altered its policy forbidding beards on employees who come into contact with customers. The new policy allows beards worn for religious or medical reasons.

2) Adirondack Transit Lines, Inc. of Kingston, N.Y., made an exception to its no-beard policy.

Federations Samachar

The Sayyid who likes playing football and using his colouring book

He is a little over 3ft tall and only seven years old, but in April this year he drew crowds of up to 2,000 Muslims for a week in a corner of north-west London to listen in rapt silence to his every word.

Mohammed Husayn Tabatabai, an Iranian, is being hailed a 'miracle child'. He has memorised all 600 pages of the Koran, Islam's holiest book, as well as hundreds of sayings from the Prophet Mohammed. Such children have been heard of before in the Middle East, where they are known as hafiz, but he is unique. Not only does he know the thousands of verses by heart, but last year, at the age of six, he became a doctor of religion after proving to examiners at the Hijaz Islamic college in Coventry that he had grasped the meaning of the verses too.

When presented with a moral problem, says his father, Sayyed Tabatabai, he can sift through the thousands of verses in his head to select the exact one that answers it. As Mohammed enters the main hall at the Islamic centre in Maida Vale, members of the audience surround him, each trying to touch his robe and the bright green scarf around his neck. A few hug him and stroke his head, unsure whether to treat him like a child or a cleric. He is full of nervous smiles as he crosses the sea of bodies, but once on the podium - his small frame dwarfed by a huge screen above his head on to which his magnified image is projected - he assumes the stern authority of a seasoned preacher. His soft, high voice quickly builds in confidence as he begins his 40-minute lecture on the Koran. As he casts his gaze around the room there is no evidence that he is using notes, or an Autocue.

In Iran his fame is already established: he appears twice a week on national television in his own show, and is regularly photographed with leading clerics from the regime. He has toured 10 countries, including the Gulf states, Turkey, Syria, Bosnia, and east Africa. His minder in Britain, Jawad Balaghi, says Mohammed did not make a single mistake during his doctorate exam. 'He is more than genius, he is without equal.' Mohammed's family is from Qum, Iran's holiest city, where Ayatollah Khomeini, the leader of the Islamic revolution that toppled the shah's regime in 1979, studied and taught. The boy is starting to learn English but is too bashful to speak it. He gives his lectures in Farsi, Iran's native tongue, and Arabic, the language of the Koran.

Mr Tabatabai, a cleric, accompanies his son wherever he goes. He says the boy's talent became clear to his mother at two, when he preferred to read the Koran than play. Using a system of hand signs to represent the different words in the Koran that Mr Tabatabai devised himself, his son memorised the whole book in 12 months. When asked how he feels about his talent, Mohammed says he likes the attention and is happy to help other Muslims. Mr Balaghi, who heads the al-Majlis al-Hussaini, a religious organisation for Muslim Shi'ites, says he is planning to bring the boy permanently to London, where he hopes they will be able to found an Islamic college together. Mohammed will be its senior lecturer, he says.

The child may be extraordinary, but he also likes very ordinary things. Mr Tabatabai says: 'At home he plays football with his little brother and enjoys using his colouring book.'

Elections



ELECTION ROUND-UP

Dubai

The current Executive Committee members who run the Khoja Shia Ithna-asheri Jamaat of Dubai are:

President: Abdulhamid Karim
Vice President: Hasnain Jaffer
Hon. Secretary: Askary Khimjee
Hon. Asst. Secretary: Sajjad Hemani
Hon. Treasurer: Mohamed Manji
Asst. Treasurer: Mohamed Hemraj
Mukhi: Abbas Manji
Assistant Mukhi: Qasim Hemraj
Committee Members:
Khalil M. Champs
Ebrahim Khimjee
Ghazanfarali Hameer

Switzerland

The current Executive Committee members who run the Shia Ithna-asheri Council of Switzerland are:

President: Dr. Shabbir Hassam
Vice President: Dr. Hussein Khimji
Hon. Secretary: Riyaz Mohamedali
Hon. Treasurer: Hanif Kanani

K.S.I.M. Senior Citizens- Stanmore

The current Executive Committee members who run the K.S.I.M. Senior Citizen Association of Stanmore are:
Chairman: Ramazanali K. Dhanji
Vice Chairman: Gulamabbas Janmohamed
Hon. Secretary: Rhemtulla M. Rhemtulla
Hon. Treasurer: Abdul Pradhan
Asst. Hon. Treasurer: Mohamedraza H. Rahim
Member: Mulla Fidahusein Khaki

Federation Samachar

Mwanza

The Mwanza Jamaat had their elections on 25 February, 1999 with the following being elected into office:

Chairman: Habib I. Rai
Vice Chairman: Mehboob H. Rajabali
Hon. Secretary: Mohamedrafik A. Parpia
Hon. Ht. Secretary: Salim R. Dhalla
Hon. Treasurer: Rizwan Hussein Railey
Committee Members:
Bashir M. Rashid
Saqlain A. Hirji
Asgar M. Manji
Mohamedfayaz R. Fazal
Abbas H.H. Khimji
Hussein G. Najfi
Sajad H. Rai
Trustees:
Rustamali A. Fazal
Hussein M. Pirbhai
Riyaz H. Railey
Mohamedrafik A. Parpia

Nakuru

The Nakuru Jamaat had their elections on 25 February, 1999 with the following being elected into office:

Chairman: Murtaza Janmohamed
Hon. Secretary: Munir Walji
Hon. Treasurer: Mehdi Roshanali
Committee Members:
Mohammed Hussein Jaffer
Hassan Fazel
Board of Trustees:
Hussein Jaffer
Munir Walji
Murtaza Janmohamed

The following additional appointments were made:

MRC: Mohammed Jaffer
Madressa Incharge: Murtaza Janmohamed
Federation Samachar: Munir Walji
Education Board: Munir Walji
Central Health Board: Mohammed Jaffer

Mauritius

The following New Managing Committee for the years 1999 to 2001 was elected at the Annual General Meeting of the Ahle Bait (A.S.) Propagation Organisation held on Tuesday, 13th April 1999.

President: Raza H. K. Esmael

Vice President: Rajabally G. Husen
Secretary: Shabbir H. Rajani
Asst. Secretary: Goolam H. K. Esmael
Treasurer: Sajjadhusain Rajani
Members: Hassan Abbas Adamjee
Husain H. Ismail
Auditors: Abidally Kassamally Esmael
and Mr Yusuf Gulam Husen.

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INNA LILLAHI WA INNA ILAIHI RAAJIUN

Marhum Moez Gulamhusein

The President of Mehfile Zainab, Paris Alhaj Moez Gulamhusein, passed away in Makkah on the night of Monday 5th April, 1999 (18th Zilhajj), after suffering a heart attack and was buried on 7th April, 1999 in Makkah.

As an active member of Mehfile Zainab of Paris and of Majunga Jamat in Madagascar, Marhum will ever be remembered for his devotion and selfless services. It was because of his tireless efforts that our brothers in La Courneuve were fortunate to have a beautiful Imambargah, comprising of all the necessary facilities.

Lately, an urgent need was felt for the expansion of the Imambargah, and Marhum proposed to purchase an adjoining building which would allow extension to the existing Imambargah. In the meantime, he decided to go for Haj, where he became the permanent guest of Allah (SWT).

Marhum had been an Executive Councillor of the World Federation. On many occasions he attended the Africa Federation Conference and Supreme Council sessions, the last one being the Supreme Council meeting in Kampala in March 1997.

We pray for his maghferat. May Allah (s.w.t.) in His mercy place him in high abode in the company of Ahlul Bait (a.s.), and May Allah (s.w.t.) in His mercy, grant patience and courage to his family to sustain the great loss. Please offer Sura-e-Fateha.

Marhum Habibbhai Walji

The late Habibbhai Walji of Kampala, Uganda died on 20th March, 1999 (02 Zilhajj, 1419) in London.

Marhum Habibbhai was a well known personality and a reknown philanthropist. His contributions to the entire Community were immense in various activities. His services in socio-religious works in Africa, India, Pakistan and U.K., is notable. His vast experience in Community matters resulted in many of our brothers constantly seeking counselling and guidance from him.

Murrabi late Habibbhai initiated many charitable projects especially for the most needy, orphans and widows. His worthy donations for the Resident Aalim's flat for Kampala Jamaat and a medical dispensary remain testimony of his commitment to the Community.

Late Habibbhai was blessed with ample resources at his disposal which he devotedly used for the cause of Islam and particularly for the community and also to help the down trodden section of society. His demise leaves a large vacuum in the Community.

We pray for his maghferat. May Allah (s.w.t.) in His mercy place him in high abode in the company of Ahlul Bait (a.s.), and May Allah (s.w.t.) in His mercy, grant patience and courage to his family to sustain the great loss. Please offer Sura-e-Fateha.

Marhum Haji Anverali M. Siwjee

The sudden and untimely demise of Alhaj Anverali Mohamedali Siwjee on Saturday 5th June, 1999 came as a shock to Tanga Jamaat in particular and the community at large. He was a prominent member of Tanga Jamaat and was always ready to offer a helping hand to any individual.

Marhum Anverbhai as he was popularly known served the Tanga Jamaat in various capacities including as Committee Member, Vice Chairman of the Jamaat, a member in Marriage Reconciliation Board etc. He served the Jamaat as a Honorary Chairman for at least nine terms and he was the pioneer and Chairman of the Jaffery Charitable Dispensary for seven years.

As an active philanthropist he was very popular among other communities. Some Mosques, Madressas and also few boreholes stand as proof of his contribution in these Sawabe Jariya.

Marhum leaves a widow, son, and two grand children. He was about 58 years at the time of his death.

We pray for his maghferat. May Allah (s.w.t.) in His mercy place him in high abode in the company of Ahlul Bait (a.s.), and May Allah (s.w.t.) in His mercy, grant patience and courage to his family to sustain the great loss. Please offer Sura-e-Fateha.

Marhum Anverali Tharoo

The sad demise of Murabbi Haji Anverali Karmali Mohamed Tharoo has deeply grieved and shocked the Tanga Jamaat and the community at large. Murabbi was one of the oldest members of the Jamaat and was well aware of the history of Tanga Jamaat. He was also well informed on worldly affairs and gave wise counsel to many.

He was elected Tanga Jamaat's first constitutional President in 1958, and

Federatioe Samachar

remained in office for three consecutive years. Thereafter he served in various capacities in the managing committee and also taught in the Madressah.

He also very actively participated in recitations of the Holy Qur'an and Duas during the Holy Month of Ramadhan. Marhum's majalises, which emphasised the propagation of Ahlul Bait (a.s.) were very popular among

Community members.

As the Community mourns the passing away of Marhum Averbhai, we pray for his maghferat. May Allah (s.w.t.) in His mercy place him in high abode in the company of Ahlul Bait (a.s.), and May Allah (s.w.t.) in His mercy, grant patience and courage to his family to sustain the great loss. Please offer Sura-e-Fateha.



Death Jottings

inna lillaahi wa inna
ilaihi raajiuun

The following deaths have been reported since the last issue of the *Federation Samachar* which carried death announcements up to 15 March, 1999.

Marhum Mohamed Mehdi Mohamed Hasham Abdallah, Dar-es-Salaam, on Wednesday 23rd June, 1999, 9 Rabi-ul-Awwal 1420 A.H.

Marhuma Zainab-bai Anver Alidina (Maliya Baba), Dar-es-Salaam, on Tuesday 22nd June, 1999, 8 Rabi-ul-Awwal 1420 A.H.

Marhuma Fatmabai Yusuf Gulamali Remtulla, Dar-es-Salaam, on Sunday 20th June 1999, 6 Rabi-ul-Awwal 1420 A.H.

Marhuma Sakinabai Jaffer Suleiman Khaku, Karachi, on Tuesday 15th June 1999, 01 Rabi-ul-Awwal 1420 A.H.

Marhuma Zaitunbai Sherali Jivraj, Mombasa Monday 14th June 1999, 29 Safar 1420 A.H.

Marhum Mohamedhusein Jaffer Rahim, London, Saturday 12th June 1999, 27th Safar 1420 A.H.

Marhum Akber Mohamed Ismail, Dar-es-Salaam, Friday 11th June 1999, 26th Safar 1420 A.H.

Marhum Anverali M. Sivjee, Tanga, Saturday 5th June 1999, 20th Safar 1420 A.H.

Marhum Haider Hussein Ali Teja, Dar-es-Salaam Friday 28th May 1999, 12th Safar 1420 A.H.

Marhum Hussein Gulamali Karim, Nairobi (formerly of Arusha) on 20th May, 1999, 4th Safar 1420 A.H.

Marhum Anver Tharoo, Dar-es-Salaam Thursday 20th May 1999, 04th Safar 1420 A.H.

Federation Samachar

Marhuma Nargis Khatoon Yusufali Manji Haji, Dar-es-Salaam Tuesday 18th May 1999, 02nd Safar 1420 A.H.

Marhuma Khairunbai Esmail Virjee, Arusha Tuesday 18th May 1999, 02nd Safar 1420 A.H.

Marhuma Kulumbai Aladin Merali Sumar, Karachi Monday 17th May 1999, 01st Safar 1420 A.H.

Marhum Azad Mohamedali Gulamhusein, Mombasa, Monday 17th May 1999, 01st Safar 1420 A.H.

Marhuma Aminabai R. Khalfan, Bukoba, Friday 14th May 1999, 27th Muharram 1420 A.H.

Marhum Mohamed Akber Rasool, Mauritius, Friday 07th May 1999, 20th Muharram 1420 A.H.

Marhuma Mariambai Hassanali Dharamsi Pirani, Mombasa, Saturday 01st May 1999, 14th Muharram 1420 A.H.

Marhuma Kulumbai Muraj, Nairobi, on 29th April, 1999, 12 Muharram 1420 A.H.

Marhum Ayaz Hussein Dattu, Zanzibar, Sunday 25th April 1999, 9th Muharram 1420 A.H.

Marhuma Kulumbai Mullah Hassanali Khaki, Mombasa. Wednesday 21st April 1999, 4th Muharram 1420 A.H.

Marhum Mohamed Nayani, Nachingwea, Tuesday 20th April 1999, 3rd Muharram 1420 A.H.

Marhuma Zehra Akbar Kermali - Dar-es-Salaam, Monday 19th April 1999, 03 Muharram 1420 A.H.

Marhuma Sughra Tasleem - Mwanza, Monday 19th April 1999, 02 Muharram 1420 A.H.

Marhuma Sherbanubai Hussein Fazal, Mombasa. Sunday 18th April 1999, 1st Muharram 1420 A.H.

Marhum Mulla Bashir Hassanali Rahim, Wessex, England, Saturday 10th April 1999, 23rd Zilhaj 1419 A.H.

Marhum Moezbhai Gulamhusein, Mecca, Monday 5th April 1999, 18th Zilhaj 1419 A.H.

Marhuma Hamidabai Fazlehusein Dewji, Dar-es-Salaam, Monday 5th April 1999, 18th Zilhaj 1419 A.H.

Marhum Mohamedhusein Hirji, Leicester, Monday 29th March 1999, 11th Zilhaj 1419 A.H.

Marhum Sherali Abdulhusein Alidina, Dar es Salaam, Thursday 25th March 1999, 7th Zilhaj 1419 A.H.

Marhum Yusuf Gulamhusein Moloo, Dar es Salaam, Wednesday 24th March 1999, 6th Zilhaj 1419 A.H.

Marhum Asif Fidahusain Jaffer, Leicester, Wednesday 24th March 1999, 6th Zilhaj 1419 A.H.

Marhuma Laila Fazal, London. Monday 22nd March 1999, 4th Zilhaj 1419 A.H.

Marhum Haji Habib Walji, Peterborough, Saturday 20th March 1999, 2nd Zilhaj 1419 A.H.

Marhum Javad Mohamedali Abdulrasul Muraj, London. Friday 19th March 1999, 1st Zilhaaj 1419 A.H.

Marhum Kassimabbas Razahusein H. Punjani of Dar-es-Salaam, Monday 15th March 1999, 26th Zilkad 1419 A.H.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Mohamed Shams Khaku

The family of Gulamhusein S. Khaku would like to express their profound thanks and gratitude for all those who sent messages of sympathy and condolences in our bereavement over the sad loss of Mohamed Shams Khaku who passed away in Mombasa on Friday 12th March, 1999 at the tender age of 14 years.

Your participation in our grief has been a source of great solace to all of us, and we ask that you continue remembering Mohamed Shams in your prayers. May Allah (SWT) rest his soul in peace among His chosen ones. Ameen. We humbly request you to join us in remembering the Marhum with Sura-e-Fateha.

Family of Gulamhusein S. Khaku

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Muslim Personal Law with Shia viewpoint to be accommodated in Mauritius Constitution?

In 1998, the Government of Mauritius formed a Committee comprising of renowned Jurists and Lawyers to see into the possibility of reintroducing the Muslim Personal Law in Mauritius. The Committee set up by the Government released a communique whereby it called for any individual or organisation to submit representations on the Muslim Personal Law which were to be considered by the Committee while preparing the Law. The deadline for submission was 30th November 1998.

With the objective of incorporating the Shia school of thought in the constitution, the Ahle Bait (A.S.) Propagation Organisation sought details on this issue from the Africa Federation.

The Federation obliged by despatching a copy of "Islamic Laws" (according to Shia Faith) by courier and this was submitted to the Government Committee on 27th November, 1998 just three days before the closing date.

While tabling our representation, the Secretary of the Committee

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informed the Ahle Bait (A.S.) Propagation Organisation that the Laws were not sufficient. They requested to see legal documents showing how these laws were implemented in East Africa.

The Organisation once again reverted to the Africa Federation for further constitutional details. The Africa Federation responded by sending the ISLAMIC LAW (RESTATEMENT ACT, 1964) of the Government of Tanzania governing the marriage law in Tanzania. A copy of the law was then forwarded to the Committee.

This is the first time a Shia Organisation has submitted a representation to the Government in Mauritius and it now remains to be seen if the Muslim Personal Laws are ultimately accommodated in the constitution.

In a despatch of thanks to the Africa Federation for the assistance provided, the Organisation has also expressed its gratitude to one of its members, Brother Hasan Abbas Adamjee for his initiative in following up and pressing on the issue.

Consular facilities established for visitors to Pakistan

Under the auspices of the Chairman of our Nairobi Jamaat, Mohamed Kermalli, accompanied by the Chairman of the Setwel Committee, Kenya, Ramzan M. Nanji and the Trustee of Nairobi Jamaat, Manzoor Kanani the following issues were resolved with the High Commission for Pakistan and Permanent Representative to UNEP and UNCHS (Habitat), Nairobi to ease the travel by our Community members to Pakistan.

1. Pakistan Passports held by Somalia brethren without nationality card will now be renewed for a period of one year during which tenure they will assist the holder of the Passport to obtain a nationality card.

2. All visitors from our Community planning to go to Pakistan can get their visas by getting a consent letter from Nairobi Jamaat and a self addressed Bank Draft of U.S. \$ 1,000 which can be obtained from any branch of Habib Bank Ltd.

The inconvenience experienced by members of our Community from upcountry to lodge their applications for visa personally has been sorted and it has been agreed to allow four senior members of Nairobi Jamaat to request for issuance of visas on Nairobi Jamaat's letter-head.

To process visas for Tanzania Passport holders in Kenya, it is mandatory to obtain a "No objection certificate" from the High Commission of Tanzania and visa fees are K.shs 7,220/= for a single visa.

For those aspiring to visit Pakistan, the Nairobi Jamaat will only issue a consent on a written request from respective Jamaats. Meanwhile the Pakistan High Commission in Tanzania at Dar-es-Salaam has reopened and was expected to once again issue visas thereby taking care of applicants from Tanzania.

**From the desk of the Bilal Muslim
Mission of Kenya**

REPORT OF ACTIVITIES

MUHARRAM 1420 A.H.

**Murji wins
parliamentary seat**



Hasnain Mohamed Murji (pictured) of Mtwara, Tanzania successfully contested a parliamentary seat in the Mitema constituency in March, 1999. The Chairman of the Africa Federation, Mohamedbhai Dhirani sent him a congratulatory message on behalf of the community.

(i) Annual programme of majalis in Kiswahili were held from April 17 to 26, 1999 at the Bilal hall from 8:15 p.m. The programme commenced with recitation of holy Qur'an and Utenzi (marthiya in Kiswahili).

(ii) The attendance was very encouraging, with numbers reaching 150 people including ladies. The majority of the audience were non-Shia brethren including a group of students from an Islamic College.

(iii) The following topics were covered by the speakers:

- Status of Ahlul Bayt
- Events after demise of holy Prophet
- Moral lessons
- Tarikh of Karbala

All the majalis have been recorded in video for circulation. These will have greater effect on the public.

(iv) The majlis on Ashura night commenced at 7:15 p.m. and ended early so as to participate in the Julus (Ashura procession) organised by the Ithna Asheri Young Mens Union of Mombasa

(v) Similar programmes of majalis were held at our masjids in the rural centres. The majalis were recited by the masjid Imam. Students recited Utenzi and matam in Kiswahili.

(vi) A Special programme of majlis and A'amals of Ashura for ladies was conducted in Kiswahili on Ashura day at Bilal Hall by the Zahra Womens Group, Mombasa.

(vii) Two sabil points organised by the Ithna Asheri Young Mens Union were manned by our muallims. Pamphlets on the tragedy of Karbala and significance of sabil were distributed. Special issue of Sauti ya Bilal was presented at these points.

(viii) Use was also made of modern Information technology by despatching daily messages of Muharram by e-mail. The theme of the twelve messages were selections from letters and speeches of Imam Husayn a.s. on his way to Karbala. Messages of appreciation were received from several recipients.

Mombasa's Azimali Mohamedraza Karim is Sportsman of the year

The Africa Federation has adjudged Br. Azimali Mohamedraza Karim as the Sportsman of the year for 1998. Azimali is an outstanding sportsman and an all-rounder of various sports—cricket, squash, football, swimming, tennis, table-tennis and volleyball. His performance in cricket has been excellent and he also undertook training with the Kenya national team which participated in the World Cup in the United Kingdom.

In addition to being a keen sportsman, Azimali also regularly conducts coaching sessions for our youngsters in cricket and squash. He is also a member of the Volunteer Corps and Bibi Sakina group.

In view of his achievements and having been awarded the "Sportsman of the year" 1998 by the adhoc Committee during the 57th Session of the Supreme Council held in Zanzibar from 2nd to 5th April 1999, he will be presented with the Abul Fazl Cup floated by the late Kassamali Nazarali Alibhai Panju at an appropriate occasion in Mombasa.

The Chairman of Supreme Council, Mohamedbhai Dhirani and his office bearers, the Chairman of Sports Council, Mohamedbhai Nathoo and his Committee members wish to record their congratulations to Br. Azimali Mohamedraza Karim. On behalf of the Editorial Board we also congratulate Azimali for this prestigious award.

Nairobi notes.....

* The Community on Friday, is a new pamphlet in circulation among the members of Nairobi Jamaat and those outside. It discusses various social, educational, cultural and religious issues and is published by The Community - A Magazine of the Haydari Madrasah. For subscriptions, write to meadows@swiftkenya.com.

* The resident Aalim of Nairobi, Sheikh Mumtaz Sheriffee has taken up training of Dua and Quran. Every Sunday morning after breakfast the young members of the community gather in the mosque to be trained for about an hour after which they go and play sports.

Restructuring Committee forwards proposals

Following the Resolution passed at the last Triennial Conference held in Dar-es-Salaam in April, 1998 a Committee was formed by the Mombasa Jamaat to look into the restructuring of the Africa Federation.

The Restructuring Committee consists of:

Hassan A.M. Jaffer - Chairman
Akberali A. Karim - Member
Masumali Meghji - Member
Asaf M. Gulamhussein - Member
Murtaza H. Jaffer - Member

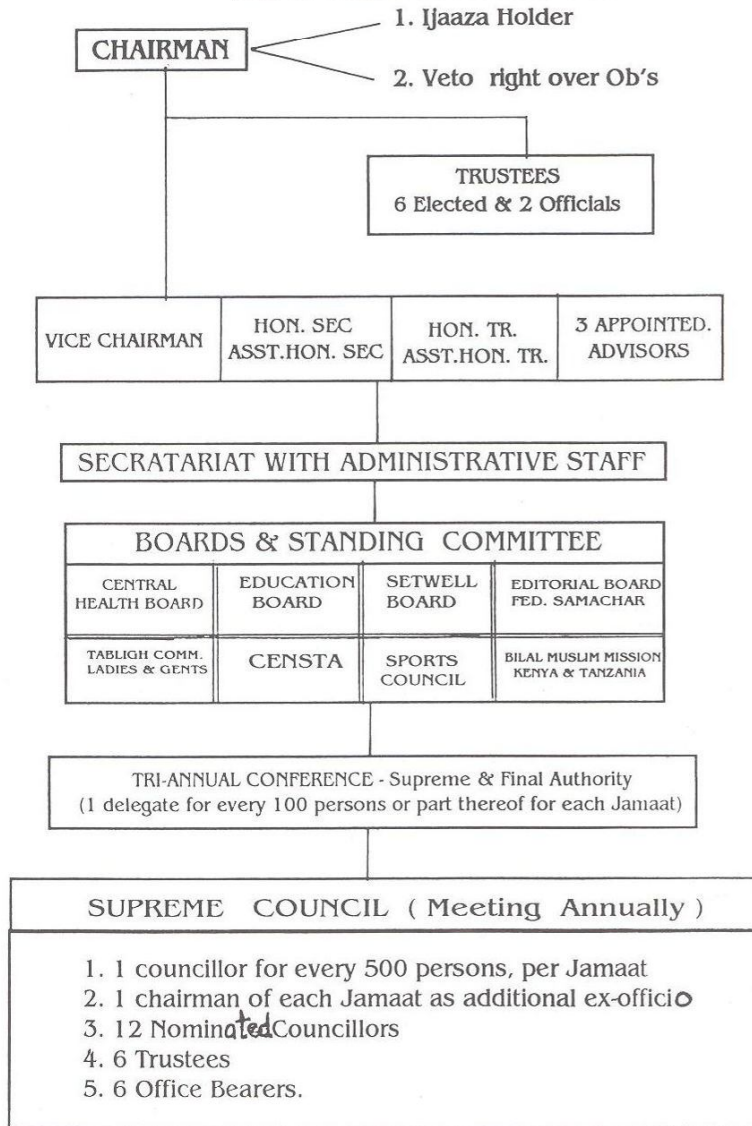
This committee has produced a report containing its recommendations involving radical changes in the present set-up of the Federation. All Jamaats have been requested to minutely study the proposals, seek advice from prominent members of the Community, hold joint meetings with various sub-committees and thereafter forward their suggestions/recommendations to the Secretariat not later than **10th August 1999**.

The Secretariat in consultation with the Restructuring Committee will then call a meeting to prepare the final draft. On the basis of this final draft a special meeting will be convened to discuss the recommendations and where necessary, propose amendments to the present Constitution.

NOTES ON "PROPOSED RESTRUCTURE"

1. **CHAIRMAN** - No change
2. **TRUSTEES** - No change.
3. **VICE CHAIRMAN:** Create three geographical regions and replace the post of one Vice Chairman with three Vice Chairmen elected from each of the three regions created. (See relevant note No. (3) and the proposed constitutional amendment for C1.30).
4. **SUPREME COUNCIL/ EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**
Abolish Supreme Council and replace

CURRENT STRUCTURE



with the Executive Council. Proposed structure of the Executive Council and related constitutional amendments covered under note (2).

5. REGIONAL SUB COUNCILS

For the Federation to prove more effective, dependence on the current structure whereby individual Jamaats can only air their views in annual Council meetings is inadequate since the constraint of time often inhibit airing of the problems and views of

especially the smaller Jamats. It is recommended that regional sub Councils be formed to meet periodically for review, coordination of activities and resolution of local issues at local levels where possible without waiting for the annual Council meetings.

Common day to day problems such as academic education, madrasah and religious education, medical insurance

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Around Africa

(.....from page 31)

and specialised medical treatment, youthful activities such as sports, debates, career guidance, etc., and other related matters of social affairs can conveniently be handled at such regional levels and thus bring neighbouring Jamats closer to each other and in the process reduce pressure on the Secretariat. As a result, the Office bearers can devote their time to major issues.

The generation gap is widening. Increasing number of the educated and the enterprising youths run shy of community affairs. An average youth knows little about the role and function of the Federation, save for some vague ideas. As a result the sense of belonging and consequent active involvement is conspicuously lacking. This is serious. The future rests with the youths. If the youths are alienated from the mainstream of the Community and are not interested to work for the structured organisations like Jamats and the various arms of the Federation, how are we going to produce the new breed of leadership? Where will it lead? We must try to understand the youth and try to instill in them the sense of belonging and involvement. To achieve this objective, reforms in all spheres of our activities are called for. Loud exhortations and pious platitudes alone will not achieve much. One way of addressing to this problem would be to make special effort to involve youths in the regional sub-Council affairs as a training ground for their greater future involvement.

The proposed structure of the Regional Sub Council is:

Group A - Mombasa, Tanga, and Nairobi.

Group B - Nairobi, Nakuru, Kampala, Rwanda, Arusha and Moshi.

Group C - Bukoba, Mwanza, Dodoma, Kigoma, and Bujumbura.

Group D - Dar Es Salaam, Zanzibar, Morogoro and southern province of Tanzania.

Proposed composition of the Regional sub Councils:

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- Regional Vice Chairman to chair meetings of the Regional sub-Council.

- One Chairman of each Jamaat.
- Local Councillors.
- Two nominees from each Jamaat.
- Plus any invitees to review specialised subjects.

- The proposed sub Regions Council should meet at least once every six months.

- Minutes of the deliberations to be copied to the Secretariat, who will report suitably to the executive Council.

- Where possible, Groups A + B and Groups C + D could also meet jointly whenever such need is felt.

- Instead of tying down to rigid formula, terms of reference and modus operandi could be gradually evolved.

SECRETARIAT

The function of the Secretariat has to be strengthened. Too many burdens placed on the honorary workers are the major impeding cause in attracting more workers. It is proposed that the post of Executive Secretary be created and suitable personnel recruited for the purpose.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

See relevant notes and constitutional amendments proposed.

BOARDS AND STANDING COMMITTEES

There is a need to appoint select committees to review and evaluate the role, function, relevance and effectiveness of all Boards and Standing Committees in order to make them more practical and effective in keeping with the dictates of the present times.

CONFERENCE

Constitutional amendment proposed for one delegate out of every 250 persons to be elected or nominated by the member Jamats, instead of the current provision for one delegate out of every hundred persons.

(1) Voting rights at the Conference also need to be rationalised so as to maintain principles of democracy and not give

any Constituent Jamaat a deciding block of votes. This can be achieved by restricting the number of votes that each Constituent Jamaat/Territorial Council will have at the Conference to the number of councillors such Constituent Jamaat/Territorial Council is entitled to on the Executive Council.

This scenario will require a constitutional amendment. The amendment proposed caters for a bigger participation in terms of the number of persons attending the Conference, and thus contributing in the discussions at the Conference, than the Executive Council but restricts the voting right as stated above.

Clause No. 6 to be amended to read as follows:

"6. Each constituent Jamaat shall be entitled to elect one delegate for every 250 persons, or part thereof, of its total population to represent the Jamaat at the Conference. Such delegate shall be elected at a General Meeting of the Constituent Jamaat, provided that the Chairman of a Constituent Jamaat shall have the power to appoint a substitute for an elected delegate who is unable to attend the Conference. Such a substitute shall enjoy all the privileges of an elected delegate.

Notwithstanding the size of the delegation, the Constituent Jamaat shall have the same number of votes at the Conference as the number of councillors it is entitled to nominate on the Executive Council."

Four other clauses require amendments in relation to the Conference. These are clauses 11, 12, 15 and 17.

Proposed as follows: -

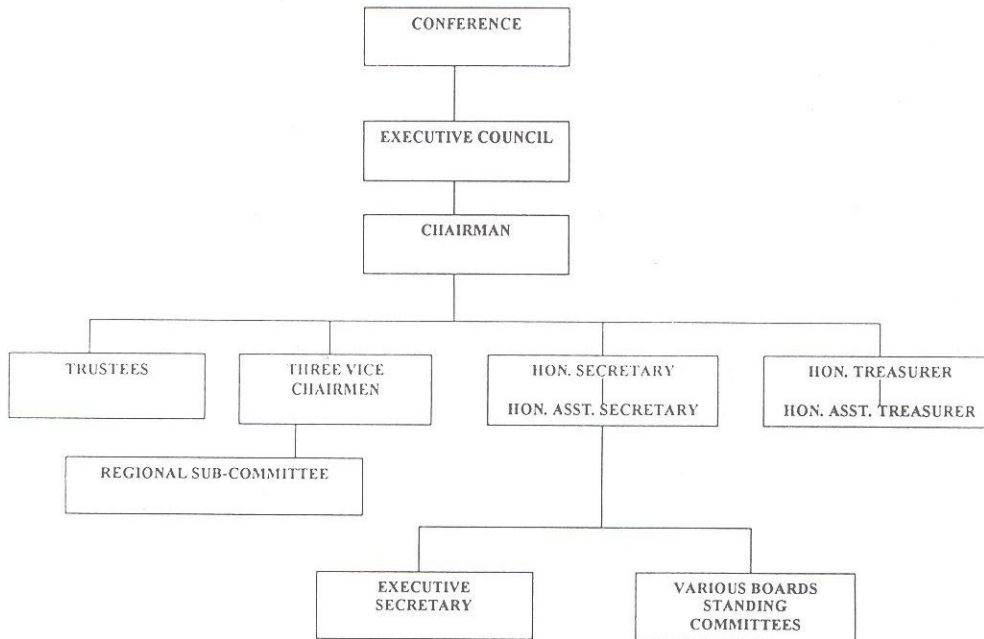
11. The retiring Chairman and office bearers of the Federation shall be entitled to attend the ensuing Conference as delegates, albeit without the power to vote, unless elected as a delegate.

12. A total of fifty percent of all constituents Jamats shall constitute a quorum at any Conference provided that all zones are represented.

15. Replace Vice Chairman with Vice Chairmen.

(continued on page 33)

PROPOSED STRUCTURE AND MANAGEMENT CHART



(.....from page 32)

17. Replace “the Vice Chairman” with “a Vice Chairman”.

(2) Presently, the Federation functions through the instrumentality of the Supreme Council. The very size of the Supreme Council precludes it from meeting any more often than its scheduled annual meeting.

The functional arm of the Federation needs to meet more often in order that matters affecting the Community can be monitored more effectively and action taken. To this end it is proposed:

- that the Supreme Council be scrapped
- that the Constitution be amended to replace the Supreme Council with an Executive Council
- that all the functions of the Supreme Council be transferred to the Executive Council
- that the executive Council shall meet every three months.
- That the Executive Council shall comprise of

- a) the Executives
- b) the Trustees
- c) Councillors representing Constituent Jamats and other bodies such as the Territorial Council, and

d) Nominated Councillors, and - that one third of the total composition shall form a quorum for its meetings provided always that two regions are represented.

In order to cater for the foregoing, a number of Constitutional amendments will have to be effected.

- a) RESOLVED that the Supreme Council be and is hereby made redundant and in its place is created an EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, which shall have the same powers and functions as heretofore resting with the Supreme Council. As a consequence thereof, wherever in the constitution there shall appear the words “The Supreme Council”, these shall be deleted and replaced by the words “The Executive Council”.
- b) Clause 21 (a) (ii) to be amended to read “Three Vice Chairmen”.
- c) Clause 21 (a) (iv) to be deleted.
- d) Clause 21 (b) to be deleted.
- e) Clause 21 (c) to be replaced by the following:

“Besides the Office bearers and the Trustees, who shall be members of the Executive Council by virtue of their positions, the following criteria shall

determine the representation of a Constituent Jamat on the Executive Council.”

- i) One councillor each from every Constituent Jamats whose population does not exceed 3000 persons.
- ii) Two councillors from each of the Constituent Jamats whose population exceeds 3000 persons.
- iii) Three councillors representing a Federation such as the Territorial Council.
- f) Clause 21 (d) – amend the last word to read “three”.
- g) Clause 21 (e) – the second sentence commencing “if the Chairman” to “the said Constituent Jamat” to be deleted.
- h) Clause 24 (b) to be amended to replace the word “countries” with the word “zones”.
- i) Clause 25 to be amended as follows:-
- x) Delete the words “or of the Constituent Jamats” at the end of the first sentence.
- xx) Delete the words “or of the Constituent Jamats” from the second sentence.
- xxx) Delete the word “countries” and replace with the word “zones”.

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Around Africa

(.....from page 33)

- 3) Create three geographical regions as follows:
- Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi
 - Kenya, Uganda, Zaire, Mozambique and Zambia
 - Indian Ocean Islands.

The Constitution of the Federation should be amended to replace the post of Vice-Chairman with that of three Vice Chairmen, one from each region.

This scenario will create an effective network for liaison between Constituent Jamats and the Federation. An additional benefit that will accrue is that the Executive Councillors can be made active liaison officers under the guidance of the Regional Vice Chairman.

In order to cater for this change, Clause 30 will have to be split and the heading thereto appropriately amended.

Following proposed:

a) VICE CHAIRMAN

- 30 (a) There shall be three Vice Chairmen elected at every Conference, one each from three zones created thus
- Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi
 - Kenya, Uganda, Zaire, Mozambique, etc.
 - India Ocean Islands.

b) If the office of any of the Vice Chairman becomes vacant owing to incapacity, resignation, death or otherwise, the Chairman shall in consultation with the Constituent Jamats of the particular zone, fill the position for the balance of the term, subject to rectification by the Executive Council.

c) Present Clause 30(b) to become clause 30(c) save for amending Vice Chairman to read as Vice Chairmen.

HONORARY TREASURER

In the event of the office of the honorary Treasurer becoming vacant, the Chairman shall fill the said position subject to ratification by the Executive Council.

“RESOLVED that clause 3 of the constitution be and is hereby amended by incorporation of clause 3 (k) as follows:-

3(k) The Federation/and or its members and/or its officers shall not involve in political matters”.

Federation Samachar

DATELINE NAIROBI

from Munir Chagpar

Ladies Host Sakina day

A group of youths among the ladies organized a half day Sakina Day program. The day was dedicated to Bibi Sakina and the activities were in connection to Karbala. A poetry competition was held for under and over 15 year olds. For the former category the poem title was 'Bibi Sakina' and for the latter category, 'Mothers of Karbala'. The winners of the prizes in the juniors were Fatemah Alidina and Zahra Jaffer while in the seniors, Zainab Kassam scooped the award.

On the day itself a demonstration on Namaaz was held - to finely remind the people of this daily ritual and an awareness of the religious duties upon every Muslim as taught in Karbala was also highlighted. A panel on Hijab was held where different issues pertaining to the current Hijab trend and other matters were discussed. A speech on the Wisdom of the Aged was also given in the mother tongue, Gujarati.

Madrassah Students Stage Kosovo Demo

Students of the Upper Graduation Class in the Haydari Madrassah drafted protest letters to President Bill Clinton and President Slobodan Milosevich in reaction to the present NATO aggression that is leading to the intensification of the Serbian atrocities on the people of Kosovo. The letter to the US President said that NATO was partly responsible for the displacement of the Kosovars and should make adequate arrangements for their return to their homelands as soon as the war is over. The letter to the Yugoslav President blamed him for genocide.

These letters were sent to many Jamaats over East Africa and some in North America. Among the people to sign this mass literary demonstration were members of different Jamaats, outsiders to the Jamaats who felt the need to protest in this manner and others whose best interest were with the Kosovars

In addition to that, the same students published a Kosovo Alert fact file - a pamphlet style newsletter informing the public on the current refugee status and atrocities committed by Serbian people against the Muslims. This campaign has served to raise further awareness to the atrocities committed.

Bhanji Recites in Nairobi

Mulla Muslim Bhanji from Dodoma recited the Muharram Majalises in Nairobi. His sermons began with a fifteen minute English lecture followed by an Urdu Majalis. His topic for the English lectures were primarily the basics of Muharram practices which included Mataam, Ziyarat, Marthia, Nauha and Tazia. His Urdu Majalis evolved around general Islamic principles.

The ladies were graced with the presence of Zakira Fatemah Sayyeda Bakari who not only recited during the first 12 days of Muharram but also stayed for Ashre - Zainabiyya A question and answer session was held with Mulla Muslim Bhanji and was well attended by the community members. Among the things discussed were distance of the youth from community affairs and the generation gap. On the same note Maulana Feeroz Haider spent the next 10 days from 13th of Muharram reciting Majalises after Maghrebain prayers which were well attended. During Ashre-Zainabiyya, Br. Shams Kanani recited. His lectures were well received especially by the younger generation because his medium of communication was English and very simple Urdu. He also held a session with the youths to discuss their role in today's world. He stressed the need for the young to read and be aware of the affairs around them to be able to defend Islam well.

Nakuru Jamat in perspective

It was in 1936 that the first Khoja settlers arrived in Nakuru, Kenya. Marhum Anverali Dattoo, with his family was on his way to Mombasa from Kampala when on reaching Nakuru, he grew an affinity with the place and decided to call it a day. Since then the family has lived here comfortably and established our name in the local society.

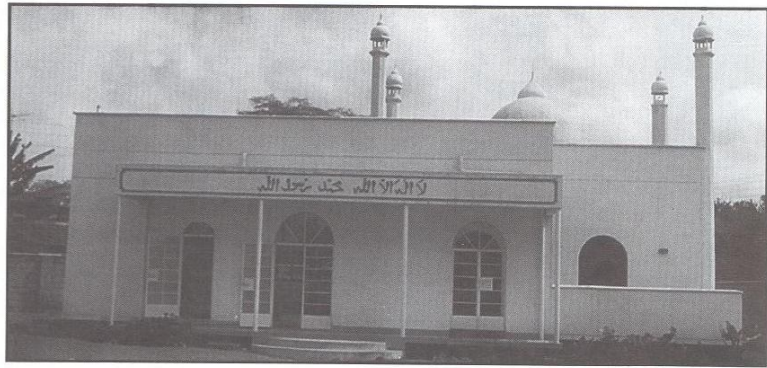
Since the early days Marhum was very well known for his affection towards the community at large by being very hospitable to our brothers who passed by Nakuru on their way to Kampala or Mombasa by rail. He often served breakfast to our brothers in the train on its early morning schedule.

As the years went by the family grew and established a Mehfil at their home which was later named Mehfile-Shohda-e-Karbela. Regular majlises were held to preserve the identity of our faith.

It was in the early seventies that other families started to come in for settlement. The coming of Alhaj Husseinbahi Jaffer and his family added flavour to the majlises and the community started to have more gatherings with the increase of families.

On 26th January, 1981 the first official Jamat was registered and the population then included seventy-one people. Br. Mumtaz Kassam was the first Chairman to be elected and he, with his committee ran the Jamat for one year after which the Jamat became dormant for the next ten years. One of the reasons for this dormancy was the rapid decrease in the population of our people there.

The Jamat was revived again on the night of Idd-e-Zehra on 6th September, 1992 when Br. Hassan Fazal was



The Nakuru Mosque

elected as the Chairman. Necessity gave rise to the revival of the Jamat as a plot had been identified for the purpose of constructing a complex for our community members.

Br. Hassan and his committee worked tirelessly for seven years, having been re-elected in the process, to complete the present establishment which includes a Mosque, Imambada, an Aalim's Residence, a Musaffirkhana and two other flats for income generating purposes. These are located on a one acre plot which is large enough to accommodate communal development projects for many years to come. The K.S.I. Supreme Council of Africa and the World Federation provided good support to the Nakuru Jamat to ensure work was successfully accomplished.

Currently the Jamaat has a membership of around seventy with all families involved in running successful businesses. The Jamat organizes regular Madressa classes for our children and the results have been very encouraging. Being a small town, the community is very closely knit in its social and welfare affairs which is a great attribute to the success of the Jamat.

Considering the strategic location and good business environment in

Nakuru, the Jamat is hoping that more members of our community will move to Nakuru especially now that the complex is ready and operational. The Jamat has expressed hope to consolidate its activities in future and to continue with its good work under the new leadership of Br. Murtaza Janmohamed.

Nakuru, the fifth largest city in Kenya, is situated at the base of the Great Rift Valley with a breathtaking landscape around it. Its population is about 500,000 with the population of Asians including the Muslims and Hindus being about 3000.

The town offers good economic prospects to our businessmen, many of who have prospered after putting in modest initial investments. Educational facilities are also good with an option of choosing a local or overseas system of education. There are private and public schools and there is also an Islamic school built and run by our community members on a private level. The town also offers good medical facilities while for recreational purposes there are ample of sporting options and other social activities.

In the next issue we will Insha'allah cover Mauritius Jamaat.

Editor

TYPE	SIZE OF THE TIN (mm)	PACKAGINGS X CARTON	PACKAGINGS X FULL CONTAINER
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250 ML



50 ML



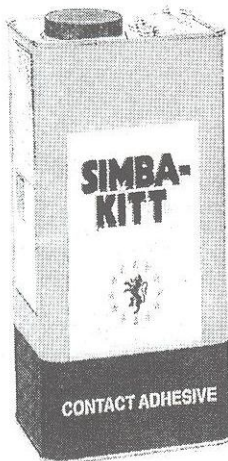
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750 ML



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These instructions are only general directions which have to be adapted to the different materials to be glued.



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SIMBA-KITT se recommande en particulier pour le collage:

des matériaux destinés à amortir les sons, des plaques acoustiques (à l'exception de celles en Styropor), des carreaux en plastique et des revêtements des murs sur des fonds absorbants.

Des combinaisons de bois et de matériaux similaires avec des feuilles pressées et des feuilles en plastique, ainsi que mélangé au métal, au verre, à la porcelaine, au feutre, au PVC-dur, etc.

Des placages sur les coins et les bordures, ainsi que la réparation des meubles en bois. Il est tout spécialement indiqué pour le collage des cuirs et des caoutchoucs dans l'industrie des chaussures.

Instructions d'emploi:

Les matériaux devant être collés, devront être absolument propres et secs, sans poussière ni graisse.

Les parties qui doivent être collées, doivent préalablement être enduites de l'adhésif special SIMBA-KITT à l'aide d'une brosse. Après un séchage de 10 à 60 minutes environ (les parties recouvertes d'adhésif doivent être sèches au toucher), les parties qui doivent être collées sont assemblées fortement. Lorsqu'il s'agit de travaux de collage importants, il est recommandé de les presser à froid pour quelques secondes ou, enfin de frapper les coins avec un marteau.

Les travaux collés atteignent immédiatement une haute durabilité, en permettant de les travailler aussitôt.

Instructions spéciales:

SIMBA-KITT ne doit pas être utilisé à températures au-dessous de + 10° C.

Lorsqu'il s'épaissit sous l'action du froid on le rend utilisable de nouveau en l'exposant à l'action de la chaleur.

SIMBA-KITT ne se détériore pas et tous les travaux collés résistent très bien aux effets du froid et de la chaleur.

Ces instructions ne sont que indications générales qui doivent être adaptées selon les matériaux à coller.

Around Africa

Propagation efforts spread in Arusha.....

In Arusha there are a number of Shia institutions alongside the Jamat which carry out regular programmes of propagation, the oldest being the branch of Bilal Muslim Mission which has developed into a Shia Centre housing a mosque, classes, halls for lectures and teachers flats. The Ahlul Bait Centre (ABC) is another institution which is a residential hauza for boys offering religious courses. Then there is the Tanzania Ithna Ashery Community (TIC) which offers religious courses for boys and girls and has a well arranged library of books, audio and video cassettes for public use. Another institution, the Darul Ifhaam wa Tafheem managed by Haji Abbas Mohamed Hussein confines itself to distribute religious books and assist mosques in and around Arusha.

All these institutions are emphatically trying to propagate the right path with evident results. The publications of the Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania are in increasing demand and have apparently been making impact. These publications supplement the efforts of the various institutions.

Muharram programmes arranged by these centres drew an increased attendance this year. The Shia Centre, Arusha had a good number of participants in their exclusive Majalis programmes for women and similarly Ansarul Imamiya had good attendances of males after Zohrain and of female after Asr Prayers. Similarly the Tanzania Ithna Ashery Community had a good attendance of males after Maghribain where prominent Sunni and Shia Ulemas addressed the gathering.

The annual public procession arranged by the Arusha Jamaat was particularly impressive. Among the participants were all Shia Institutions in Arusha along with members of Moshi Jamaat. This multi-racial participation with Nauha Mersia in Kiswahili and Urdu had a wide and desirable impact on the public. The procession ended in the Mosque compound where a brief public majlis and Nauha in Kiswahili were recited.

Federation Samachar

From the desk of the Bilal Muslim Mission Shia Centre in Arusha...

The Arusha Bilal Muslim Mission Shia Centre has continued to consolidate its activities to spread the true faith. The Centre has vied to offer religious as well as practical training and on 26th June, 1999 it organised a grand Majlis cum Exhibition to celebrate Eide-e-Zahra.

To boost its practical training, the Centre has improved its kitchen facilities and a small oven is to be built to start bakery classes. The Centre also provides stitching cum embroidery classes for senior students.

In recent months the Centre received many requests from returning Hujjaj, who went for pilgrimage this year, for slaughtering goats. This helped to feed many Shia families in the month of June.

Meanwhile a preparatory class has been started to take upto fifty fresh girl students for basic training. The final selection for admission into next year's formal classes is expected to be made at the end of this year. To upgrade teaching standards at the Centre, the Bilal Muslim Mission has provided Arabic lectures on video and audio tapes to the Centre.

A four-man delegation visited the Centre on a fact-finding mission on 11 May, 1999. Ghazanfar Abdulrazak of Ahlulbait Islamic Foundation of Kuwait, Doctor Abdul Kadir of Uganda, Sheikh Baizawi and Seyyid Sheriff of Lamu, Kenya were welcomed and briefed of the Centre's main activities.

The President of Imam-e-Zamana Mission of Hyderabad, India, Alhaj S.A.A. Zaidi and his Joint Treasurer, Janab Mohamed Raza Kamdar also visited the Centre on 11 April, 1999. Useful discussions were held with a healthy exchange of views particularly on income generating projects and welfare cases.

Commenting on his visit, President Zaidi said, "we were very highly impressed to see the organisation of the community and the activities of the Bilal Muslim Mission."

The Centre received a notable donation of six large beautiful carpets for its Mosque from Seyyid Murtaza Kashmiri, the representative of Ayatullah Uzimah Seyyid Seestani. Seyyid Kashmiri visited the Centre late last year. The arrangement for delivery of the carpets from Dubai to Arusha was kindly arranged by Alhaj Gulamali Esmail Virjee who has been a good supporter of the Centre.



The visiting Imam E Zamana Mission delegation which visited the Centre in April, 1999.



The delegation from Kuwait which visited the Centre in May, 1999.

Zanzibar hosts memorable 57th Supreme Council Session

For the first time in the history of the Africa Federation, the proceedings of the opening night of the 57th Supreme Council Meeting on 2nd April, 1999 (15th Zilhajj 1419 A.H.) were conducted in Kiswahili in the presence of various Government dignitaries including the President of Zanzibar, His Excellency Dr. Salmin Amour, former Tanzania President, Ali Hassan Mwinyi and various ministers, deputy ministers including the Chief Kadhi of Zanzibar. Also present was the NASIMCO Chairman, Ghulambhai Sajan.

The venue for the opening was the Bwawani Hotel hall located just by the sea and the occasion was relayed live by Zanzibar Television and other networks. The occasion commenced with recitation of the Holy Qur'an and its translation. This was followed by an address from the host, Mohamedraza Hassan, President of Kuwwatul Islam Jamaat of Zanzibar. In his address Raza thanked the Africa Federation for hosting its annual meeting in Zanzibar which he said was a pride to the small community there. He said that the Zanzibar Government has been supportive to the activities of our community and this was attested by the very presence of the Zanzibar President to grace the community's annual meeting. Raza then outlined the history of the Khojas in Zanzibar from 1882 and spoke of how our forefathers worked and dedicated their lives for the upliftment of our Community and how indirectly they helped the local population.

The Chairman of the Africa Federation, Mohamedbhai Dhirani briefly explained how the Supreme Council meets at different venues each year. He also expressed pleasure that the Supreme Council Session was held in Zanzibar again after a long lapse of 47 years. The last meeting was held in Zanzibar in 1952.

Going down memory lane, Mohamedbhai mused to the period about 150 years ago when the first



The Zanzibar President, Dr. Salmin Amour and Africa Federation Chairman, Mohamedbhai Dhirani, pictured with former President Ali Hassan Mwinyi, host Jamaat President, Mohamedraza Hassan with invitees and office bearers.

community migrants arrived in Zanzibar from India by travelling in dhows. He said that with the passage of time, the community has created strong links with the island. On the community mosque, he said this was built over 100 years ago because members had confidence about the economic, political and social stability of the island and expressed appreciation that good ties with the Government have continued to this day.

He said that the faith that the community has in the Government encouraged many of its past members to build and buy properties. He said 200 of these houses were donated by deceased members for Wakf purposes to finance charitable projects and to generate funds for Islamic purposes. He said these houses were then nationalised following which 31 have been released. While thanking the Government for releasing these, he appealed to the President to consider returning the remaining properties so that they could be used once again for charitable purposes as per the wishes of the deceased who once owned them.

After the Chairman's address, the President of Zanzibar, His Excellency Dr. Salmin Amour thanked the Africa Federation for hosting the meeting in Zanzibar for the second time. He said Zanzibar offered a freedom of worship with no interference at Islamic sectarian level or in the affairs of non-Muslims.

Dr. Salmin then accentuated on the stable situation in Zanzibar, saying the island offers a good scope to prospective businessmen. He invited businessmen to venture in Zanzibar assuring that such investments would receive full backing by the Government.

After Dr. Salmin's address, the Chief Kadhi recited a dua following which a photograph session was organised with the President. The Master of Ceremonies was Aunali Khalfan who eased through the night with his articulate Kiswahili.

Minutes of the 56th Session of the Supreme Council which was held in Dar es Salaam in April, 1998 were tabled in the afternoon prior to the official opening ceremony.

After the official opening ceremony, delegates once again congregated at the Bwawani Hotel Conference room. Following recitation of Dua-e-Wahdat and a formal introduction by the Master of Ceremony, Aunali Khalfan, there was a brief presentation from the Chairman of Moshi Jamaat, Aliraza Karim to the Chairman of the host, Kuwwatul Islam Jamaat of Zanzibar, Mohamedraza Hassan.

The Hon. Secretary of Kuwwatul Islamic Jamaat, Amin Ahmed Siwjee then welcomed all Councillors and Invitees to the Session. He thanked the Africa Federation for accepting

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Around Africa

(...from page 39)

their Jamaat's invitation to host the 57th Session and expressed hope that the Federation will help assist the Jamaat in its objectives of establishing madressas and health clinics in old buildings which need finance to be refurbished.

Siwjee said that the Zanzibar Jamaat was at its best in the year 1964 when it was made up with 6000 members, most of whom then emigrated to the mainland or to overseas countries. He said Zanzibar then boasted of the best educational facilities in East Africa and because of the foresight of our elders and community leaders, many members armed with religious and secular knowledge were able to successfully establish footholds in different parts of the world.

The migration, he said, left a vacuum in the Jamaat which today has 200 members including children. Finally he invited community members to establish businesses in Zanzibar in consideration of prevalent opportunities.

The Chairman of the Africa Federation, Mohamedbhai Dhirani then delivered his key-note address in Gujarati. He first thanked various personalities and committees for exemplary services rendered during the year and formally asserted against the killings of respected Ayatollahs and their families in Iraq. He said that the Supreme Council had written a formal protest letter to the United Nations calling for its involvement to address the situation. He also recounted deaths of prominent members of the community who passed away in the preceding year.

On restructuring, he called on the community at large to minutely study the recommendations and proposals of the Restructuring Committee as these involve radical changes which would affect all Jamaats.

The Chairman then revisited the trip to India in November, 1998 when he led a delegation of 23 people to Hyderabad, Bangalore, Mysore, Alipur, Aurangabad and Mumbai where the Jamaat marked its 100th anniversary in a grand way. He said in

(continued on page 41)

Federation Samachar



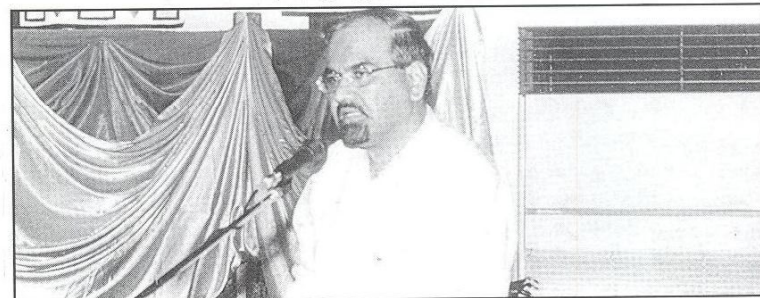
In appreciation, Moshi Jamaat Chairman, Aliraza Karim hands over a photo frame to the host Jamaat Chairman, Mohamedraza Hassan.



The Chairman, Mohamedbhai Dhirani delivers his key-note address.



Host Jamaat Chairman, Mohamedraza Hassan addresses the opening night attendance.



The Master of Ceremonies, Aunali Khalfan pictured where he often was—behind the mike. As Chairman of the Central Health Board (CHB) he also presented the CHB annual report.



Host Jamaat Secretary, Amin Ahmed Siwjee welcoming one and all to the Session.

Around Africa



On the final day, a visit to the cemetery.

(...from page 40)

all Jamaats fruitful discussions were held with problems and progress being noted. He said in Mahuva, the delegation had the opportunity to participate in Samu Lagna (Mass Marriage) ceremony held to mark the visit of the Africa Federation wherein 20 couples tied the nuptial knot.

Once again the Chairman emphasised on the importance of education to the community. He explained that community members are currently experiencing difficult economic times and the only true safeguard against such economic vagaries is for youths to take up serious education.

He called on parents to take more interest in the education of their offspring and said that a number of local universities have emerged thereby providing an opportunity to save costs as compared to overseas education. He touched on the subject of looking into education insurance to enable long-term planning and also called upon youths to pursue Vocational Education courses which are now catered for by the Higher Education Board. He also recommended Dar es Salaam Jamaat to seriously look into the possibility of establishing a girls college in Dar es Salaam.

The Chairman then outlined the importance of the media and said that the *Federation Samachar* is now playing a crucial role in keeping the community well knit by spreading the news of activities and views of brethren from around the world. He expressed pleasure on the launching of the North American Edition of the *Federation Samachar* and said this would increase circulation. He also made reference to

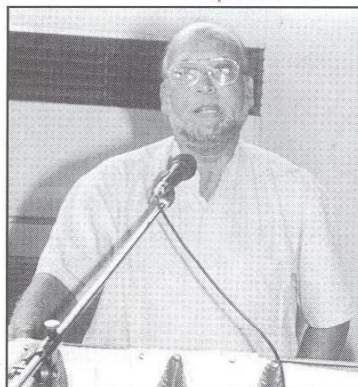
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Federation Samachar



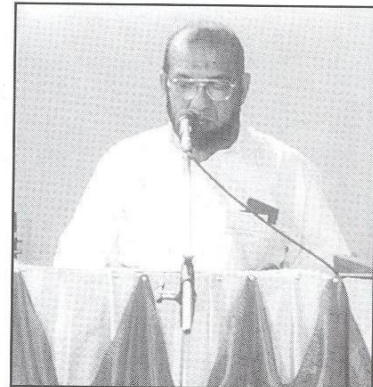
NASIMCO Chairman, Ghulamabbas Sajjan addresses the meeting.



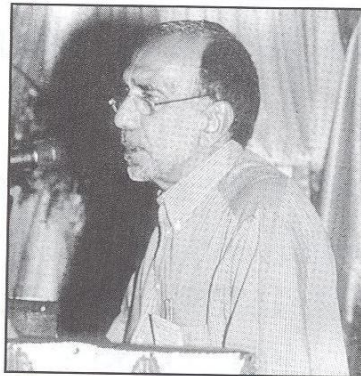
The Chairman of Re-Union Jamaat, Raza Aly Janmohamed takes to the mike.



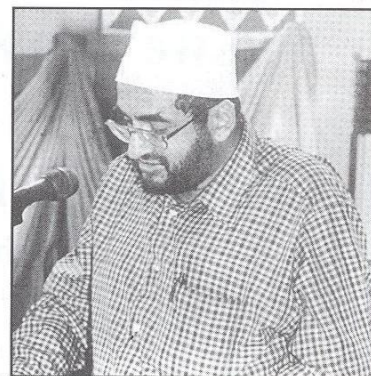
Retired Major General Syed Zaidi of the Imam Zamana Mission introducing their Mission's activities in Hyderabad.



The Vice Chairman of the Regional Council of Indian Ocean, Madagascar, Roshanbhai Jamil speaks of activities there.



The Chairman of the Education Board, Asger Manji presenting the Education Board paper.



The Finance Chairman of the Al-Hussein Project in Leicester, Zulfikar Rajani providing details of the project.

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Hearing a majlis recited by Mulla Anu of Mombasa

(...from page 41)

the fact that the *Samachar* can now be easily read over the Internet in any part of the world.

Mohamedbhai then mentioned about relations with the World Federation, saying that these have now normalised and expressed hope that both, the World and the Africa Federation, will now have a united front to counter the challenges that face the community. He said unity in a small community like ours is of paramount importance irrespective of past differences.

The Chairman also announced the appointment of Zulfikar Khimji to handle matrimonial cases in the community. He said he had been assured that the matrimonial committee would be discreet in its activities with the objective of catalysing marriages for those experiencing difficulties in seeking suitable spouses.

On the millennium publicity, the Chairman said there is a lot of media hype but the Islamic date would coincide with the 23rd night of Ramadhan 1420 A.H. He cautioned Jamaats that observances of this holy night should not be marked with any lesser ebullience than in previous years.

The Chairman also emphasised on the need to maintain good health and outlined the progress made by the Central Health Board in providing information and guidance on rampant diseases and on facilities for obtaining treatment in and out of Africa.

Finally he thanked the community at large for their moral support at the time when he had to undertake surgery in India.

The Chairman of NASIMCO,

(continued on page 44)

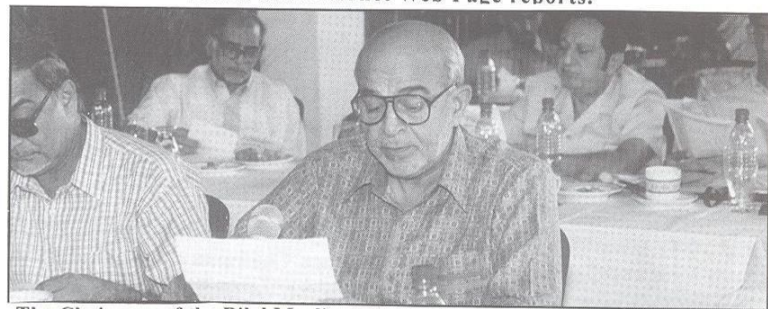
Federation Samachar



Dr. Sadiq Rahim of West London University offers an appreciation of service plaque to the Africa Federation Chairman, Mohamedbhai Dhirani. He also offered 17 scholarships.



The Federation Samachar Editor, Munir Daya delivering the Editorial Board and Internet Web Page reports.



The Chairman of the Bilal Muslim Mission, Pyaralibhai Shivji outlining the Mission's activities



The Chairman of the Setwel Board, Roshanbhai Fazal updates the congregation on the current situation.

Around Africa

(...from page 43)

Ghulambhai Sajan outlined the history of NASIMCO saying that it was established in 1980 when he was the first President. He said that twenty North American Jamaats are under the umbrella of NASIMCO.

He said the formation of NASIMCO had been inspired by the success of first, the Africa Federation and then the World Federation. He said the Islamic revolution in Iran also egged on their efforts to form a regional organisation to have a common front against external hostilities.

To avoid monotony during meetings he suggested that brainstorming sessions by way of workshops be held. These workshops could then come up with action plans that can be formulated to be implemented by the Executive.

Ghulambhai also said that NASIMCO can offer concrete guidance to those members wishing to settle in Canada but said the applications would have to be forwarded through the Africa Federation. He said new immigrants in Canada from Africa can be helped to counter normal problems encountered during the early days. He also indicated that there is a possibility of NASIMCO being able to help in accomodating some Somali refugees.

The Vice Chairman of the Regional Council of Indian Ocean, Madagascar, Roshanbhai Jamil thanked the Zanzibar Jamaat for hosting the event. In appreciation, he then donated US\$ 2000 towards reconstruction and renovation costs involved in the Hujjat Jamaat of Zanzibar. Roshanbhai also outlined the historic ties between Zanzibar and Madagascar dating back to 124 years ago when Sheriffbhai Jiwa Surti took occupation of a shop belonging to Nasser Noormohamed in Nosibay, Madagascar. Sheriffbhai subsequently became a prominent businessman in Madagascar.

The Chairman of Re Union Jamaat, Razabhai Aly Janmohamed explained about the Shia population in Re Union where he said the Jamaat consists of 1500 members. He explained how the Jamaat undertakes its tabligh activities and on how education among youths is encouraged. He also explained about the active sports section

Federation Samachar

Council levy raised to One US Dollar per person.....

in the Jamaat there and invited teams from other Jamaats to participate in the Football festival to be hosted by their Jamaat on 23 July, 1999. He also talked on economic issues and offered to provide valuable information to those wishing to settle in Re Union. He donated US\$ 300 from their Jamaat towards the renovation costs of Hujjat Jamaat of Zanzibar.

The President of Ahlul Bait Organisation of New Zealand, Mohamed Raza Rashid then addressed the session. He along with his colleague, Khalil Waljee, were the first representatives ever from New Zealand to participate in a Supreme Council meeting.

Brother Rashid expressed hope that their presence would consolidate bonds between the Africa and New Zealand Jamaats. He said that New Zealand is a place with a small population of some 3.8 million. There are about 20,000 Muslims and some 3000 Shias.

He then explained the activities of the Ahlul Bait Foundation in New Zealand and provided details of the ambitious Islamic Centre project (see pertinent article under the Muslim World News of this issue).

Then the President of Imam Zamana, Hyderabad, Retired Major General Syed Zaidi introduced the activities of their mission in Hyderabad.

From Leicester Jamaat, UK the Finance Chairman of the Al-Hussein Project, Zulfikar Rajani outlined the history of the Jamaat prior to explaining the nature of the proposed project. He said Leicester Jamaat had grown from the days it conducted activities in a small residential flat. He said that the population of the Jamaat had increased from 100 members to about the present 600 members. He then provided details of the Al-Hussein Projects (covered under the Muslim News section of this issue).

Then Dr. Sadiq Rahim addressed the

gathering emphasising on education. He also offered a plaque by his Institute in Dar es Salaam, the West London University, to the Chairman, Mohamedbhai Dhirani for his selfless services. He also offered 17 scholarships for aspiring students to go for education in his college.

The Chairman of Hujjat Jamaat, Abbas Sheriff appealed for funds to renovate the Imambada and in response to requests of merging with the Kuwwatul Jamaat, he expressed hope a compromise could be reached.

Following observations, the Chairmen of all the Boards presented their reports which were followed by tabligh reports by the Secretariat, Tabligh Committee and Jamaats.

The following resolution was received by Moshi Jamaat:

"Be it and is hereby resolved that **"THE COUNCIL LEVY BE RAISED TO AT LEAST ONE US DOLLAR PER ANNUM PER SOUL OF MEMBER JAMAATS."** This resolution was passed unanimously.

The meeting ended at 2.05 a.m. and the Chairman thanked the host Jamaat for the excellent facilities availed. He also commended the untiring efforts of the Ithna asheri Union Volunteer Corps (IUVV) of Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar for their work and pledged Shs. 100,000/- to each from his vote of expenses. He also thanked the Organising Committee for a job well done.

The following morning the host Jamaat Chairman, Mohamedraza Hassan hosted a site seeing tour of Zanzibar which began with a visit to the cemetery and was followed by a tour of the Sultan's Palace overlooking the Indian Ocean. After lunch at his residence, prior to which a short majlis was organised, delegates, invitees and their families were then taken to the exotic Kibweni Beach. The 57th Session was memorable and good time management enabled proceedings to be completed in two days.

Extracts of observations made by delegates, councillors and invitees during the session

Razabhai Aly Janmohamed - Re-Union

He appealed that the proceedings of the meeting be conducted in Gujarati. He opined that there are about 25000 of us in Africa of whom about 8000 in Madagascar and Re-Union Island, Bujumbura and Congo Belgium do not speak or understand English. He said this amounted to about 30% of our population in Africa not being able to understand English.

In a memo to the *Samachar's* Editorial Board, he questioned on how there could be unity in a community which lacked proper communication. His answer - conduct proceedings in only Gujarati.

Zulfikarbhai Khimji, Nairobi

Thanked the Chairman for officially nominating him as a matrimonial matchmaker. He decried the lack of interest among youths in community forums and wondered why ladies are not present in Jamaat management committees at local, regional or international level.

Sister Alidina, Nairobi

Requested for more ladies seats to be allocated when the issue of restructuring is considered for final implementation.

Roshanbhai Jamil, Madagascar

On behalf of the Madagascar Jamaat offered to host the next Council meeting in Madagascar.

Habibbhai Mulji, ex-Chairman of the Federation, Dar es Salaam

Commenting on the proposed restructuring, he cautioned that large Jamaats will have to sacrifice with regard to their voting blocks. He also enquired on the status of the Rawji Trust which caters for educational needs. To this Anverbhai Rajpar said that the Trust could assist and invited Office Bearers of the Africa Federation to participate in the Dubai JIBA Meeting in July, 1999 where all three representatives of the Rawji Trust were expected to attend.

Federation Samachar

Shabbir Kanji, Nairobi

Enquired on whether the 17 scholarships pledged by Dr. Sadiq were available to all constituent Jamaats. He was replied in the affirmative.

Mohamedbhai Jaffer Kara, Dar es Salaam

Wondered how the acquisition of the Al-Muntazir Complex related to the Central Health Board's (CHB) emphasis that it would engender good health. The CHB Chairman replied that the Complex availed facilities for physical fitness.

Husseinbhai Peera, Dar es Salaam

Questioned about the *modus operandi* of the HIV test prior to Nikah. The CHB Chairman, Aunali Khalfan said a protocol was adopted in 1998, a copy of which has been sent to all Jamaats.

Ashikbhai Rashid, Nairobi

When discussing the *Federation Samachar* paper opined that the Editor should have the authority he has now to present his views as an Editor.

Liakatbhai Chandoo, Dar es Salaam

Suggested that prize puzzles be included in the *Federation Samachar* to generate further interest among youths.

Gulamabbasbhai Dharsee, Dar es Salaam

Asked whether the Bilal Muslim

Mission could take over the Kilwa Mosque so as to extend its activities there. BMM Chairman, Pyaralibhai Shivji responded that the Mission's resources are limited to undertake this. The Chairman, Mohamedbhai Dhirani suggested that our brothers from there should get together and combine resources and then operate under the umbrella of the Bilal Muslim Mission.

Asafbhai Gulamhusein, Mombasa

He questioned why the Sports Council had not been given authority to nominate the Best Sportsman of the year, as done by the Education Board.

The Chairman, Mohamedbhai Dhirani concurred and said that changes are forthcoming in the Bye Laws.

Hassanbhai Jaffer, Mombasa

When referring to the Secretariat's tabligh report, suggested that a professional Education advisor be employed to inspect all tabligh activities covering all constituent Jamaats and to supervise the performance of local volunteers.

Shabbir Somji, Dar es Salaam

Sought clarification on whether the Jaffery Education Trust is functional. The Education Board Chairman, Asger Manji said that action to revive the Trust had been taken with future scholarship loans to be paid through this account.

Foundation stone laid at Morogoro cemetery



Members of Morogoro Jamaat on 2nd May, 1999 (15th Muharram 1420 A.H.) during the laying of a foundation stone at the cemetery for a building wherein majalis will be recited. Moshi resident alim, Sheikh Akram Hussein Taheri who was posted to Morogoro during last Muharram raised a sum of more than TShs. two million for the proposed building.

Tanga Jamaat extends help to the less fortunate

To commemorate the martyrdom of Imam Husein (a.s.), the grandson of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.), sixteen members of the Khoja Shia Ithnasheri Jamaat of Tanga distributed foodstuff worth over Tanzania Shillings 300,000/- to patients at the Bomba Regional Hospital.

On 27th April, 1999 distribution was also extended to the needy at the Maskini Camp and to the children of Mwanzange. The foodstuff handed out included bread, milk, mineral water, bottle juices, cakes, biscuits and sweets for the children.

Dar Tabligh Sub Committee produces 'Understanding Namaz'

The Tabligh Sub Committee of the Dar es Salaam Jamat has produced an explicit audio cassette called 'Understanding Namaz' with an objective of enabling people to concentrate more on their prayers by understanding the philosophy and meaning of our Wajib daily prayers.

This cassette, of which there is a Gujarati and English version, is ideal for children and adults, though some children may need to be guided through the cassette by their parents.

The cassette commences with an explanation of the call to prayers (Adhan), elaborates on each action of the ablution (wudhoo) and then goes on to explain step by step actions of our prayers with also the meaning of what one recites.

This audio cassette may not be grasped in one hearing, especially because various additional recommended duas are suggested (with translations) for supplicants to recite between performing wudhoo to the time of finishing one's prayers. Nevertheless this audio cassette is quite easy to understand and is a must for anyone who wishes to pray seriously.

Muharram in Mauritius

Mauritius, with a small Shia population has again this year religiously observed the Ayyame aza, the holy twelve days of Muharram as has been the tradition for the past nearly forty years.

Followers and friends of Ahlul Bait (A.S) are found in every nook and corner of this world. So it is not surprising that in far distant countries like Mauritius, Reunion and other countries of the Indian Ocean, the events of Karbala are commemorated with great zeal and faith though the number of Shias are less. The mourning of the tragedy of Karbala every year proves the strong link between Imam Husain (A.S) and us, his followers and weepers.

In Mauritius this year, Maulana Syed Akhtar Hasan Rizvi recited Waez during the twelve days in the Shia Imambada. As usual, the takreers of Maulana Rizvi were again appreciated in this part of the world and he also gave a few speeches which were aired by local radio stations. Maulana also gave a special speech on the National Television for the occasion. As every year, on the eve of Ashura, a Julooos was taken out in the streets of Port Louis and was attended by a large crowd of our Ehle Sunnat brothers and sisters.

While the Jamaat actively commemorated the month with different activities, the Ahle Bait (A.S) Propagation Organisation prepared pamphlets which were distributed to all Mo'mineen during the twelve days. These pamphlets were also posted world-wide through E-Mails to Mo'mineen. In this way even the Aamaale Ashura was prepared and forwarded. The Organisation also prepared a marsia programme which was broadcast on the radio on the day of Ashura. The programme was performed by Al Haj Husain Haji Ismail Maklai, Al Haj Hasan Abbas Adamjee and Shabbir Husein Rajani. Articles relating to the event were also published in local newspapers. Furthermore the Organisation took the initiative of having the main buildings of the locality decorated with black banners carrying slogans related to the martyrdom of Imam Husain (A.S).

Again this year, the Ahle Bait (A.S) Propagation Organisation organised an Essay Competition on the theme "The mission of Janabe Zainab (S.A) – the sister of Imam Husain (A.S) – after the events of Karbala".

Samachar's North American Edition launched

The first North American Edition of the *Federation Samachar* was released in March, 1999 and copies were made available to delegates who attended the Zanzibar Supreme Council Meeting. The inaugural issue carried an attractive picture of the new mosque in Tamatavo, Madagascar with special messages from the Chairman of the Africa Federation, Mohamedbhai Dhirani, the Chairman of NASIMCO, Ghulambhai Sajan and the Editor of *Federation Samachar*, Munir Daya. 1000 copies of this preliminary issue were printed and according to the feedback received, the demand was very high in North American Jamaats, particularly in Toronto which currently enjoys a stronger distribution outlet.

The objective of printing a special North American Edition is to save high postage costs for despatching copies to North America from Dar es Salaam. Printing in North America will also increase circulation as copies will be made available to readers promptly.

The North American Edition is being undertaken through the joint co-operation of the Africa Federation and NASIMCO, whose President Ghulam Sajan has assured that copies of each issue will be expediently sent to all North American Jamaats. The representatives of the *Samachar's* Toronto team are Baqir Alloo, Ghulam Sajan and Nazmul Damji. At the time of going to press the second issue was in the final stage of being printed.

HUSEIN DAY IN ZANZIBAR

by Nisar Sheraly, Toronto

When pondering into the past, I sometimes remember how we commemorated Husein Day in the Old Fort, on the waterfront, Forodhani in Zanzibar after the Isha prayers during the month of Safar.

In the cool evening island breeze the whole fort would be full of people, some sitting on chairs and others sitting on the grass and the VIPs sitting under the canopy, shamiyana. The volunteers from our community led by Maalim Jivraj and dressed appropriately in black would be distributing programmes and ushering people to their seating areas. The zikiri procession from various mosques would make their way into the fort and Yusuf Himid and Salum Abed from Sauti ya Unguja, Radio Zanzibar would be conducting their final voice checks for a live transmission.

A young member of our community Murtaza Bandali who started to read the Quran in public at the age of fifteen, would then ascend the stairs of the dais which seemed to be two storey high. Alternately it would be our own Amir Abdulrasul Alaya who would recite verses from the Quran. Murtaza's recitation was in a heartwarming voice, the envy of a lot of youths. God gave him the baraka of a beautiful voice.

The translation and commentary in Kiswahili was usually done by Sheikh Abdulla Saleh el-Farsi, the Chief Kadhi of Zanzibar. The Chief Magistrate of Zanzibar, al Haj Husein Alarakhia Rahim, a zakir from our community would deliver a speech in English in a commanding yet humble manner followed by al Haj Ahmed Lakha, in Gujarati that had left us always wondering as to how he could muster and master the language with such ease and proficiency at breakneck speed without even consulting his notes.

Usually the Zakir who recited majlis

in the Juni masjid, Kuwwatul Islam Jamaat, would relate the events of Kerbala in Urdu. After which Prince Seyyid Abdulla, the heir apparent, would deliver a message from Seyyid Khalifa bin Haroub, the Sultan of Zanzibar who, rumours were, would tune in to hear the proceedings of Husein Day. Since the message was in Arabic, the Royal lingua, Maalim Jaffer Rahim, an active member of our community who was also the Scout Commissioner of Zanzibar, would translate it in Kiswahili. The British Resident, the representative of the King/Queen, dressed in white with a white feather hat, would take off the hat as a mark of respect to the Imam and deliver his message, invariably to congratulate the organizers, our Jamat, and would punctuate with his own understanding of the message of Imam Husein.

At this stage the various Presidents of our Juni Masjid Jamats namely Alhaj M.D. Kermalli, Husein Nazarali Tabora, M.A Saleh, Master Khakoo, Mohamedali Ismail Pope and others whom I may have regretfully forgotten to name, would be thanked. The Mayor of Zanzibar, Rustom Sidhwa, a Parsee with pince nez and a person who always admired Imam Husein would deliver his message and later on it was Mayor Mtoro Rayhani, while Gulamhusein Ismail on behalf of all the Muslims would deliver in English with a Gujarati tone and intonation.

There were times when I would doze off and wake up when almost done. However, no one could sleep when it was Sheikh Ameri Tajo's turn. His rendition of the events of Kerbala evoked the sympathy of the listeners and I remember as we were returning home, the Africans imitating him when he talked about how Yazid's army mercilessly set fire to the tents of Ahlul Bayt with his heart searing cry of 'moto', 'moto', fire, fire as the children

in Kerbala cried with trepidation. The gathering would then be served with cold almond milk, *sharbati ya maziwa*, which was caringly prepared by Golo Saleh, Asker Jafu, Mamsen Kokoni and Jaffer Haji Ali Chandoo with other volunteers and young apprentices like Mamad Biremi. The huge blocks of ice would be a donation from Sapurji Rasool Karkhana which at times had problems in the sweltering heat for ice to set. Miraculously the ice would arrive on time on hamali carts that would leave a trail of melting ice. The discipline was just tremendous as everyone waited for his turn to be served. The universal heart-rendering message of Imam Husein would be carried by Zanzibaris in their hearts until the next Husein Day.

Bujumbura Jamat welcomes new office-bearers

The Khoja Shia Ithna Asheri Jamat of Bujumbura, Burundi held its elections on 10 June, 1999 with the following being elected into office:

President: Mohamedraza H.J. Jaffer
Vice President: Salim M. Somji
Hon. Secretary: Sajjadali Roshanali Rajabali
Hon. Treasurer and Trustee: Syed Enayet Hussayn

Committee Members:
Aunally Jetha
Shabbir Rajabali
Mohamed Abdul
Nazir Raza Hussain
Mehdianvar Roshanali R.A.

Chairlady: Mrs. Gulshanbai A.H.
Asst. Chairlady: Mrs. Nazneenbai M.D.

Joint Asst. Chairlady: Mrs. Hamidabai H.R.

Revisiting Chehlum in Zanzibar

by Mohsin Alidina and Abdulrazak Fazal

It is the time of *Chehlum* of Imam Husain A.S. It marks the culmination of the mourning period for the valiant band that laid down their lives at Karbala to save Islam. Many mourners descend on Zanzibar from mainland Tanzania, Kenya, UK, USA, Canada, Gulf States and elsewhere. Some for the first time. Others on their annual pilgrimage so to speak. They spend two full days in *azadari*. Almost non-stop.

What is it that pulls so many people to Zanzibar during *Chehlum*? It is certainly the atmosphere there. The memories of those old days come flooding the moment one talks of *Chehlum* in Zanzibar. For ten nights before *Chehlum*, there used to be *Ashrae Muharram* (ten days of Muharram) repeated at Saleh Hassan cum Baker Taki Walji's (Master Baker) place (now the Annexe to Narrow Street Hotel, Kiponda). The *Baraza ya Master Baker* and *Baraza ya Imamwaro* were the main sitting areas for the large audience that listened to *majlis* intoned by Raza Rashid Panju.

On *Chehlum* night, the atmosphere is emotionally charged. It is black everywhere, for there is hardly anyone without at least a black shirt on. All the *alams* are draped in black and so are the *mehmils*.

The day preceding the eve of *Chehlum* witnesses a hive of activities at Taziakhana. The revered figure of Kassamali Mammu Walli Dharsi (Bha Kassamali), the staunchest of devotees, busy directing preparations for the *julus* at night is notable. It is the scene of threading flowers, applying scent and sharpening *zanjeer* blades as flags, *alams*, *jhulos* (small *tabuts*) and *mehmils* also take shape.

The *Chehlum* night activity starts with the sad recital *Arbainke sogwaro alwida, akhri majlis hai yaro alwida* by Murtaza Abdulrasul Bandali at the Imambara followed by *majlis*. After that at around eleven o'clock commences the *julus* from the Imambara compound with Abdulla Mohamedali Premji (Toti) way in *Federation Samachar*



The young also enthusiastically participate in Azadari

front, just behind the placard and banner bearers, carrying the unique and sizeable *alam*. The *alam* symbolizes Zanzibar *Julus*. Then come little girls in a long stretching row carrying *jhulos* and chanting *Sayade abrarka aaj hai chaliswa, Zehrake dildarka aaj hai chaliswa*. Also the *Zuljanah*, draped in black velvet unlike the blood spotted white piece on the occasion of *Ashura*, and adorned with arrows, armour and sword, is brought out by Gulamhusain (Golo) Saleh Allarakhia, Raza Karim Box and Husain Ali Dawood.

The black *alams*, *mehmils* and *tabuts* are in evidence everywhere, with also groups of *Chupki Julus*, *Matami Julus* and *Saf*. Towards the end is the *zanjeer* matam with *azadars* vehemently beating their breasts with *zanjeer* and bleeding profusely, and chanting *Chutke kaidse ayi hai Zainab, majai hai Zainab* under the baton of Jaffer Rajabali Jaffer (Kibete). The Cosmopolitan Zanzibar public -the Africans, Arabs, Asians and Europeans line up the route to witness the *julus*. The atmosphere is awash with doleful *nauha* chants and the beating of the breast, and the public watches in respectful silence. There is *sabil* of *sharbat* in every corner and everyone is offered to drink it in memory of the martyred Imam.

The first stop of *julus* is Matemni or Matam Bahrani which held *majlises* in Arabic or Kiswahili for Shias hailing from Bahrain, and the reciter

is Seyyid Abbas whose Kiswahili idiolect was well known. Matemni was a small unobtrusive *mehfil* near the imposing Ruwehy building, but inside it was all *azadari*. Alas today it is closed down and the only trace is the plaque outside indicating its history.

The *julus* moves on to its next stop which is Mehfile Abbas situated in the vicinity of the Bohora Mosque and Ismaili Jamaatkhana. The Mehfile Abbas has a long history. It was a carpeted *majlis* hall with chandeliers hanging and the replica of Hazrat Abbas' musoleum occupying the pride of place. Its *Chai-Khana* was a famous institution and as school boys we would not miss it for anything. We would rush there during recess and Gulamhussein (Golo) Ismail Dharamsi, that famous Zanzibar Cricketer and the chief volunteer, would ensure that we were served fast to get back to school in time. Sometimes we were late and caned, but the next day it was Mehfile Abbas again for *chai na toss*. The *mehfil* still operates but today it is sadly desolate and bereft, lacking the huge audience that once crammed every inch of it.

The *julus* does not go up to the hall but stops on the road at the main gate where Husain Allarakhia Rahim gives a brief but emotional rendition of the suffering of *Ahlul Bait* after Karbala, their imprisonment in Damascus and the subsequent release after the death

(continued on page 49)

Around Africa/Health

(..from page 48)

of the orphaned, beloved daughter of Imam Husain, Bibi Sakina whose plight shook Yazid's throne. The climax of the narration is the description of arrival of the decimated *kafila* to Karbala where Imam Zainul Abideen narrates the woeful tale of the tragedy of Karbala and its aftermath. It is then Jaffer Hassanali Mulla Raza's heart-rending *Kabre Husain alvida*, *Ahle watan alvida* as tears, loud wails and *Wa Husaina* fill the air.

The procession then moves through one of the narrowest streets. From the nearby houses women peer at the *julus* from windows and balconies. It ends at Kiwanjani or Mehfile Shahe Khorasan served by generations of Abdulla Saleh family, with the old man, Mohamed Jaffer Khaki (Mammu Jafu) seen sitting on the bench. Inside the mehfil are placed the replicas of *zarihs* of Imam Husain and Imam Raza. It is then *majlis*, *saf* and *kalio pau nyaz*. It is late at night and some return home but for others the night continues. There are *majlises* here and there well into the wee hours of the morning.

In the morning there is again a *julus* procession but this time to Mehfile Bibi Zainab run by the Mulla Safia clan in a far corner of Malindi / Funguni. When it reaches the *mehfil*, Mohamed Ebrahim Jivraj renders *Zainab meri behna, dukhia meri behna, tum fatheha sharbat pe dilana meri behna* in a poignant voice as *azadars* climb up the stairs to the *mehfil* for *majlis* and *matam*.

The *julus* then reassembles to move towards Mehfile Bibi Fatima, in another corner of Malindi, where Mulla Bibi Zara of Agha Seyyed Husain family held sway. Eventually the *julus* disperses at Taziakhana from where it had begun. By then it is noon and after the namaz the *azadars* gather at Mehfile Ali Makam for *majlis*, *matam*, *ziarate Arbain* and *nyaz*.

The day wears on but it is far from over. The biggest procession gathers at the Imambara from where chanting in unison *Chehlumko katlagahme jab aye mubtila, sadate Karbala* the *azadars* move on to *kabrastan* at Mchangani by the side of Sauti Ya Unguja, Rahaleo. Here the drooping

Pan masala causes cancer

The *pan masala* pouch could be deadlier than previously considered. Researchers now say that combined with tobacco it can not only lead to cancer but damage other organs as well. Apart from the traditional harmful ingredients, popular brands have been found to contain toxic metals like lead, cadmium and nickel. Some brands even have small wood pieces in them.

The effects of *pan masala* consumption do not take long to show. In a study published in the *National Medical Journal of India*, the researcher says that symptoms of oral cancer were seen within two to three years of starting this habit. A study of 36 patients with oral cancer symptoms found that 18 of them consumed *pan masala*. These patients were below 30 years and had taken to the chewing habit two to three years prior to diagnosis. Those using traditional mixtures of tobacco took at least 20 years to develop symptoms of cancer.

The study by the Indian Council of Medical Research has analysed several previous studies. A significant highlight of this study is that *pan masala* affects other organs as well. In experiments conducted on rats, *pan masala* was found to result in damages to the liver, decrease in the relative weights of the gonads and the brain as well as increase in sperm head abnormalities. The mice also suffered damages to the chromosomes, the gene-carrying material in the body.

Chromosomal damages were found in those chewing *pan masala* even without tobacco. Ten chewers of *pan masala* and five of *pan masala* mixed with tobacco were studied. Those chosen for the study were non-smokers and teetotalers to rule out any association with smokers and boozers.

The study also drew conclusions from a large-scale study on the effects of using Mainpuri tobacco, which has ingredients quite similar to tobacco-based *pan masala*. In this study, cancer occurrence data for 31 months were analysed in a population of over a million. This study reported that Mainpuri tobacco was the most important factor for oral cancer. This is another indication of the harmful effects of *pan masala*: if Mainpuri tobacco has harmful effects on human health, it can be concluded that chewing tobacco-based *pan masala* would be equally harmful.

sun and gradual spread of the evening adds to the poignancy of the situation as relatives sit on the graves of their dear and near ones to recite *fateha* while *majlis* and *matam* is resounded on microphone. The Janmohamed Rawji *kabrastan* accomodated hundreds of graves of Khoja Ithnaashries, a few of whom had migrated to Zanzibar from the shores of Cutch and Kathiawad as far back as late eighteenth century.

It is time for the return leg of the procession to Imambara. The devotees replying *nauha* in unison. The sun has set in Zanzibar and the *julus* is approaching the Imambara when the powerfully voiced Mohamedhusain Hassanali Ahmed (Khokoni) recites *Kehtethe Zainulaba, leke alam aya hun, utho Rasule Khuda, leke alam aya hun*, and the emotions of the devotees are raised at fever pitch. After a brief *majlis* the devotees burst into spontaneous *Ya Husain* followed by a couple of hours of non-stop *saf* under the direction of Jaffer Ali Chandoo right there in the Imambara compound.

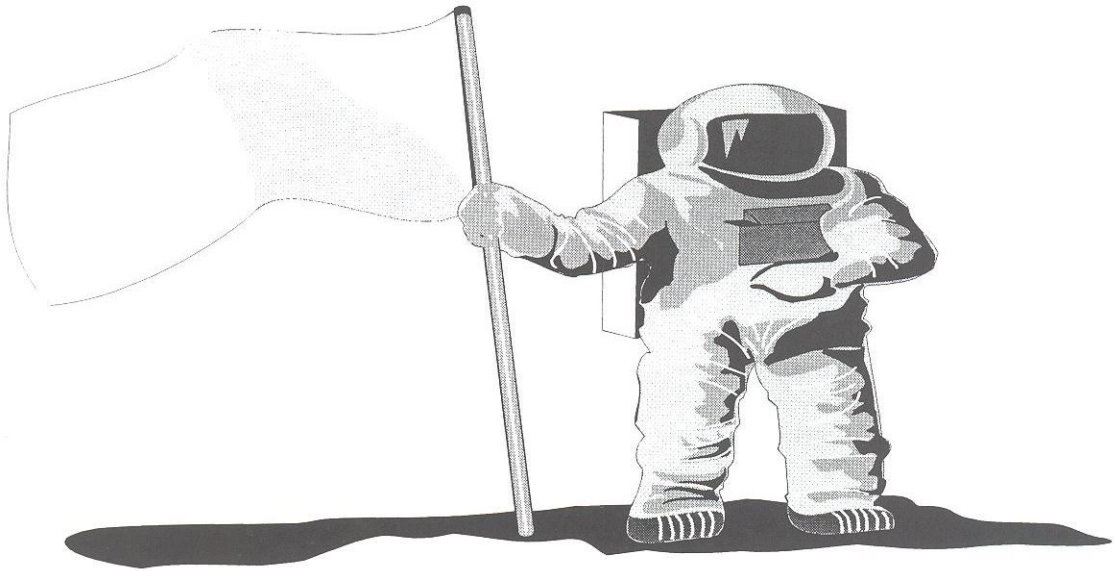
It is the night of *Shame Watan* and

tears flow abundantly. The *majlis* is short followed by a small procession from Imambara to Taziakhana. The *Chehlum* is over and the devotees return home, but the mournful precedings keep lingering in the mind and a few more tears are shed. Ah for those days of *Chehlum* in Zanzibar !

Most of these continue today but the past is mere nostalgia. The huge Imambara evokes memories of those days when it was always full. Now but for a few devotees the place is hauntingly empty. But the most soul-tearing scene is the dilapidated, fallen ruin of Mehfile Bibi Zainab. Its memory is haunting, a majestic place humming with activity is now a silent ruin. The visitor cannot but bewail the glorious past of the place.

Also Mehfile Bibi Fatima where ladies frequented all the time no more remains a sacred place. Its days of splendour are gone and today it bears a forlorn look. The old *kabrastan* is a residential site and the *julus* to *kabrastan* is now in trucks and buses to Mwanakwerekwe. But even then, for *Chehlum*, it is anytime Zanzibar!

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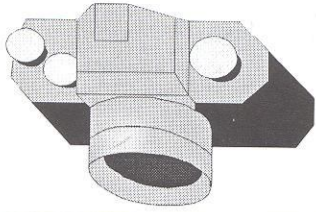
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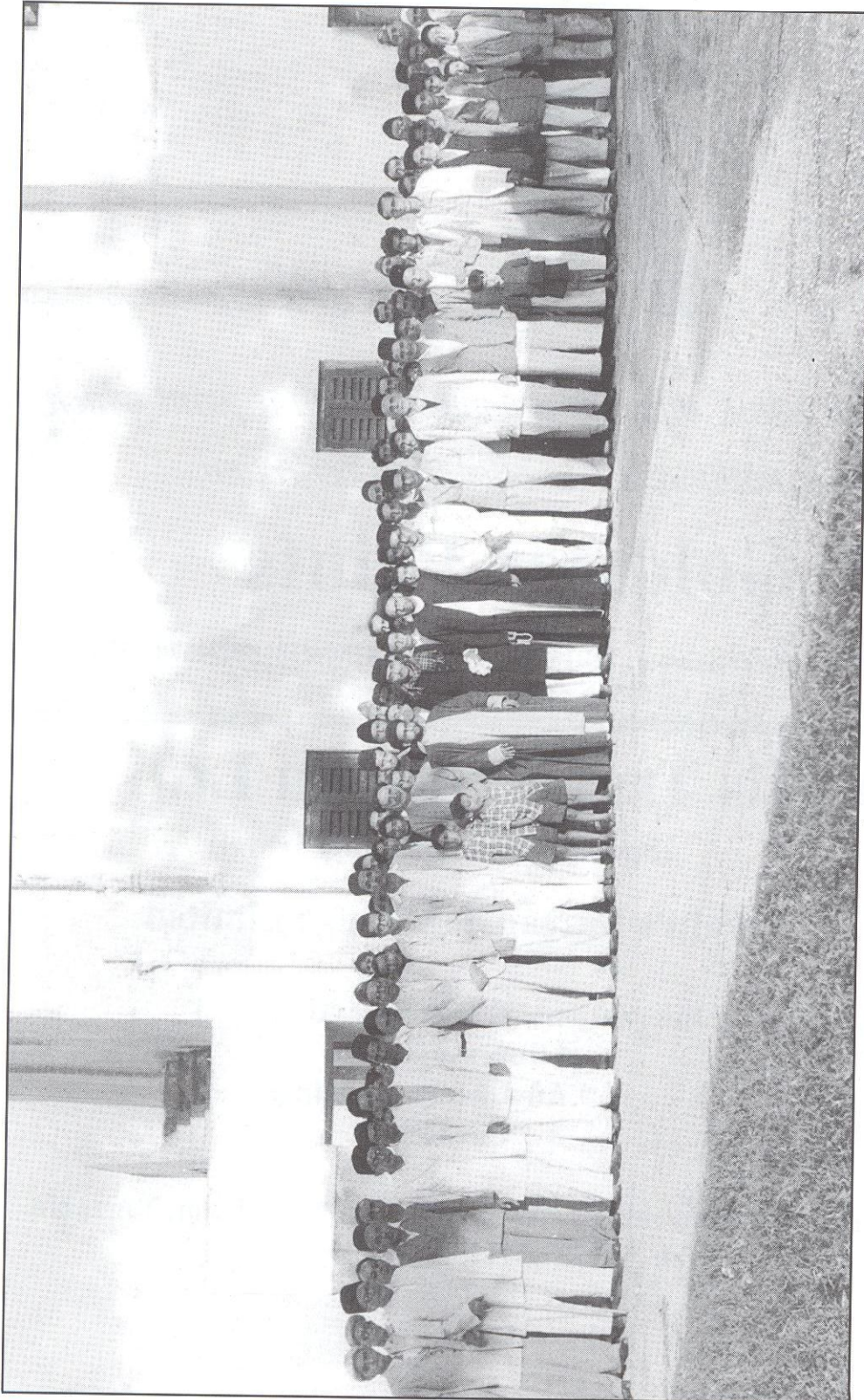
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DOWN MEMORY LANE



The two Zanzibar Jamaats pose for a group photograph in 1954 when visiting preacher, Rashid Turabi visited Zanzibar. During the recent Zanzibar Supreme Council Session the President of Hujjat Jamaat, Abbas Sheriff issued a statement expressing willingness to unite with the K u w w a t u l Jamaat.

Thereafter the Chairman of the Federation, Mohamedbhai Dhirani along with Past Federation Chairman, Habibbhai Mulji and Yusuf bhai Dattoo have had sessions with the Presidents of the two Jamaats.

The community at large hopes that the required modalities will be charted out and there will ultimately be a breakthrough leading to unity.

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Women

JUST A HOUSEWIFE?

"Are you a housewife?"... "Yes."

"You aren't working?"... "I am."

"You're a working woman?"

"How can I not be with a home and two children?"

"You're just a housewife?" she asks.

"Right now I'm in the kitchen...and while I'm holding up my shoulders to keep the receiver pressed to my ears, I'm cooking lunch"

"Did you ever work outside the house - in an office?" she rephrases her question.

"Yes I did...before."

"See, I knew you were not just a housewife. You didn't sound like one," she sounds pleased.

"How do housewives sound?" I'm curious. "Boring," she says cheerfully.

The above is a normal conversation whereby many working women question a woman working in the house. Why that oft-repeated four letter word 'just'? 'Just' sounds a bit unjust a prefix for a housewife. Any housewife knows there's more to it than 'just'. Much more.

Running a home smoothly sometimes demands more from a woman than what one experiences at any level of any professional career. While you're focused in a job situation, the spectrum of responsibilities and tasks at the home front is multi-dimensional with several angles leading in different directions till they all merge together to make a unified pattern. Forget or ignore the simplest of chores and see your carefully planned system and schedule falling apart.

A homemaker is primarily a mother, wife and a housekeeper - in that order. Some combine other talents too, like keeping spending under control - all in a day's work. How can all these roles of a woman at home be dismissed with just a 'just'? Can anyone come up with the courage to say, "Oh! You're just a mother?"

There are no casual leaves, and no off days and it's not a 9 to 5 job. Rather it's a 26 hour (there are 24 hours in a day, remember?) job with unusual on-job frustrations and rewards.

Does location change the concepts of work and working? What really does a 'working woman' mean? Does it mean a woman is working if she is sitting on a swivel chair behind a computer, and not working if she is changing the baby's diaper? Working in or outside the house is a choice. Even so, what's wrong anyway in being a housewife - 'just a housewife'.

FOR WOMEN, SOME *FATWA*

(Sent by Gulamabbas Dhala, Los Angeles)

(Reproduced from "THE BULLETIN" published by the Ahlul-Beyt Mosque of Pomona (LA Area), California July/August issue. Vol. 2 No.4)

*(Answers to questions relevant to Muslim women by one of Islam's highest authority, the late Ayatullah Imam Al Khui'i. *We have made the translation accurately and completely from the Arabic text published in An-Noor Magazine vol. 5, No. 59, 1996, pages 58 & 59.)*

Q. Is it permissible for a woman to sleep in the same room shared by two men, one she cannot marry and one she can according to Sharia'a?
A. It is permissible. There is no objection. God knows best. **(Surely this would only be allowable where there is no likelihood of lust or temptation towards the opposite sex. Editor.)**

Q. Is it permissible for a man to kiss his wife in front of other women on their wedding night?
A. It is unobjectionable in itself.

Q. Is it permissible for a woman who accompanies her husband to Europe to remove her hijab (Islamic coverings)?
A. In case she is obliged to travel it is permissible, otherwise not. **(Does this not mean that she is only allowed to remove the hijab if she is threatened by circumstances? Editor)**

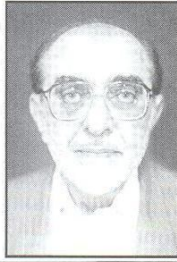
Q. Is a woman who bears deformed babies permitted to take contraceptive pills against her husband's wishes?
A. Yes. She is permitted to take contraceptive pills to avoid pregnancy, even against her husband's wishes, but she is not permitted to do something that would render her incapable of child bearing permanently.

Q. Is a woman permitted to work as a radio or television announcer if it does not violate her hijab?
A. It is unobjectionable in itself.

Q. Is a woman permitted to work in a place where she talks with men as her work requires?
A. Permitted, so long as she maintains her "hijab."

Q. Is it permitted for a woman to be photographed without "hijab" for using the photo in a passport?
A. It is preferable that a man whom she cannot marry (according to Sharia) takes her photograph, but if that is not possible then someone else is permitted.

Q. Is a woman permitted to cut her hair up to the ear lobe? Would that be taking a man's appearance, in which case isn't that forbidden?
A. It is permitted and such a thing would not be considered as taking the looks of a man.



CASE FOR SURVIVAL

The Challenge facing the Community in North America

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

By Hassan Ali M. Jaffer, Mombasa

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

"It is necessary to describe briefly how these last groups drew apart, even though the agony of the whole episode is still remembered in East Africa; the searing knife of separation cut asunder families and even marriages. In 1840 and afterwards, conditions began to arise which made sorting out and definition of Khoja groups inevitable. In 1842 the Ismaili imam left Iran to dwell in India. He and his successors lived in Bombay area until Sultan Mohammed Shah made his headquarters in Europe. These imams of course knew their own traditions and those of the Irani Ithna-Asheri as well. They were prepared to accept a great deal of the latter as their own, but matters of Hindu background would strike them strange and alien to their proposed re-shaping of the community. Since they were now present among the Khoja, it was likely that certain matters about their own exact position would not long remain unspecified. Another contributing factor to the division of Khojas was the atmosphere of British India. Comprehensive and tolerant as the raj was for the coexistence of all kinds of inconsistent elements, pressure for normalization of the disparate arose. For example, a census asked a man's religion, and judges presiding over disputes in the courts had to decide under which type of law, Hindu or "Mussalman", cases of inheritance were to be heard.

"Within the Khoja community itself were people who wanted increased use of communal resources for education, welfare, modernisation, and the liberation of women, but it was not until some time after H.H. Sultan Mohamed Shah, Aga Khan III, had mounted the 'gadi' that it was acknowledged that these needs were urgent. Furthermore

there were genuine theological differences of opinion that in the end found trained supporters and loyal propagators. Mulla Qadir Husain was one of these. He left his place of study at Kerbala in 1873 to go to Bombay and remained there until 1900, carrying out a long campaign on behalf of the Shia Ithna-asheri views. Some Khojas who had met him in Iraq and studied under him in Bombay kept in touch with him when they later went back to Zanzibar. These included a certain Dewji Jamal who was later cast out of the Khoja Jamatkhana (house of congregation) when he visited Bombay from Zanzibar in 1877. Another of Mulla's pupil was Abdulla Saleh Sachedina who spent many years in Zanzibar. Gujarati publications emanating from this group found wide publicity in East Africa.

"After his visit to Europe, H.H. Sultan Mohammad Shah, Aga Khan III, visited East Africa in 1899 and decided to clear up certain affairs of his family and community. While he was in East Africa on another visit (1905), a case concerning family property was brought against him. At various East African centers he gathered together more closely those people who wished to follow him and told those who could not conform to leave. In after years he was able to say that he had no resentment against honest seceders. The Ismaili groups organised themselves under the direction of the Aga Khans in a process of evolution which too years to complete. The Ithna-asheri Khoja were few, bewildered, and without much outside help or direction. They had been "out-casted" to use their own quaint English phrase; they met at each other's houses and carried out such rites and observances as they considered Ithna-asheri. They followed the methods they knew of ritual cleansing, fasting, prayer, alms giving and tithing. In the naming of Imams

they mentioned twelve; they referred to the eighth as Ali Raza and the twelfth as "Mehdi Sahebuzzaman", and they spoke of the fourteen 'masumin' (infallible ones). In Muharram they commemorated the tragedy of Kerbala in detail, holding majlis (session for prayer and study) day by day. They carried out procession with 'tazia' (a wooden structure commemorating the martyrs), lit the Muharram fire, and joined in marthiya, the lamentation with its beating of breasts and calling on the name of Hussein.

"Eventually the group began to develop leaders and to build mosques, cemeteries, and meeting places. Teachers began to arrive from Najaf and Kerbala, and those who learned something, taught others. The 'madrasat-ul-waeeezin' (Preachers College) at Lucknow became aware of the East African situation through the efforts of Haji Muhammad Jaffer Sheriff Dewji, the grandson of the Zanzibari friend of Mulla Qadir Husain and they began to send relay of preachers. Haji Muhammad Jaffer Sheriff was himself a scholar and went on many preaching tour. This was doubly valuable in that, unlike many of the men from Lucknow, he was fluent in Gujarati which was understood by most of the community and in the case of most of the womenfolk was the only language available."

In another paper entitled "Some East African Ithna-Asheri Jamaats (1840-1967)" Seyyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi of Daressalaam and Prof. Noel Q. King, of the University of California, Santa Cruz, U.S.A., make following observations:

"Two members of the Khoja 'jamaat' at Bombay who were excommunicated in 1877 removed themselves to

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Analysis

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Zanzibar. For Haji Dewji Jamal it was a return, for Alarakhiya Walli it was a new beginning. With help from Bombay in 1880 they erected Quwwatul Islam mosque and then its 'imambara'. The major contributions to the latter came from Haji Ali Nathu and Muhammad Walli Dharsi.

"Haji Dewji Jamal requested the 'mujtahid' (Chief Scholar) Sheikh Zainul-Abedeem Mazinbdarani of Kerbala, in Iraq, who had sent Mulla Qadir Husain to Bombay, to send a highly qualified priest for Zanzibar. Thus Syed Abdul Husain Marashi Shustari came to the island some time before 1885."

In a further comment on the state of affairs prevalent then, the authors have following observations:

"It is necessary to say something of the Ithna-asheri, Ismaili separation at Zanzibar. In 1899 His Highness the late Aga Khan III visited Zanzibar and issued a 'farman' (command) to his followers defining their position as Ismailis and his as Imam. Up till this time there had been little definition in the situation. Khoja had been members of the same 'Jamatkhana' (house of congregation. Most people recited the 'dua' (the prayers) in Gujrati. Those who wanted to pray the 'salat' (the set Shia liturgy in Arabic) had facilities for that. There had been much social intercourse and inter-marrying, but from 1905 onwards the separation between Ismaili and and Ithna-asheri became strict. The effects of all this were most apparent at Zanzibar but there were repercussions in other places, as we shall see."

Synthia Salvadori, writing in her informative book "Through Open Door - A view of Asian cultures in Kenya" (Kenway Publications- revised edition 1989) comments on the conversion of the Khoja Shia Ithna-Asheri in the following words. (Page 247/8)

"The vast majority of the Kenya Ithna-Asheri community are, however of a much more recent vintage. They originated as dissidents from the Khoja Ismaili community in Cutch and Kathiawar. In the latter half of the 19th

century there was a violent rift which sundered the Ismailis. For once it was Shia schism, which did not arise from dispute about the succession to the leadership, but one that arose from matters of policy, both religious and secular.

"After the Aga Khan I moved his headquarters to Bombay in 1845, into the midst of his Khoja followers, he set about reorganising the community. He issued a series of 'Farmans'. Since the Aga Khan was infallible, these edicts should not have been disputed. But they were. Not all Khoja Ismailis appreciated the increased control their leader was exerting. Some members began to question his financial policies and to query what was happening to the large sums he was collecting from his community (each member was supposed to contribute 20% of the income to the Aga Khan). They also questioned the policy of westernisation, which the Aga Khan was promulgating and which was accelerated after his first trip to Europe, in 1898.

"The Ithna-asheries took advantage of this dissension to put forth their version of Shi'ism as an alternative, presenting it as a purer, true form of Islam that the heavily Hinduized Khoja Ismaili version. Mulla Qadir Husaain was the leader of the Ithnasheri missionary movement among the Ismailis, and for the last quarter of the 19th century he resided in Bombay, propounding and preaching the Ithnaasheri faith to the wavering Ismailis.

"Mulla Qadir Husain did not arrive upon the Bombay scene accidentally. He was himself and Indian and had gone to Iraq for religious studies. He was sent back to India specifically to give moral and spiritual support to the dissident Ismailis.

"Several Khoja Ismailis of Zanzibar were also attracted by his teachings. One was Dewji Jamal, a leading Zanzibar-based East African trader. Dewji Jamal was outspokenly against the Aga Khan's 'farmans' and financial practices. For his criticism he was 'outcasted' from the Ismaili community while on a visit to Bombay in 1877. He returned to Zanzibar as a convert to the Ithnasheri faith, and

there he built the first Khoja Ithnasheri Mosque in East Africa, the Quwwatul Islam - 'Islam Strength.'

"In Bombay the tension between the Ismaili community began to rise. In 1866 there had been a vitriolic court case. It had been brought against the Aga Khan by a group of his disillusioned flock and it concerned the community finances. The decision handed down by the British Judge was that the offerings given to the Aga Khan belonged to him in his own right as hereditary Imam - and not to the community. Not everyone was happy with that decision and resentment smoldered. The Aga Khan then announced in a 'Farman' in 1899, that all those Ismailis who did not wish to follow his edicts should no longer consider themselves Ismailis but should leave the community. He made it clear that he would in no way compromise his position. The 1866 decision was reiterated in a similar, and equally notorious, court case in 1905. The remaining dissidents saw that there was no hope of a change from within the Community. they left, the Aga Khan declared them 'outcasted' and the split in the Ismaili community was official and final.

"Most of the Ismailis who were already in Kenya opted to follow the Aga Khan and there were very few conversions of Ismailis in Kenya. However, Dewji Jamal had by then gathered a following, and he provided an entree into East Africa for a flood (albeit a small one) of new Ithnasheri converts from the outcasted Ismailis of Cutch and Kathiawar.

"Not all disillusioned Ismailis have gone over to Ithnashirism (sic). A few in Kenya have converted to Ahmadiyyaism; now more are becoming simply Sunnis, affiliated to one community or other by social ties such as marriage.

"In Pakistan disillusioned Khoja Ismailis formed a Khoja Sunnat Jamat in 1958, but there has been no such antipathy in Kenya in recent years, only some sporadic pamphleteering. After two reformists Ismailis were physically beaten (one in Mombasa,

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Analysis

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and one in Nairobi) and the offending pamphlets burned in bonfire, reformist activity was dampened, although not entirely quenched.”

In his highly researched study of the life of Quaide Azam Mohamed Ali Jinnah, the founding father of Pakistan, Stanley Walpert, in his book: “Jinnah of Pakistan” (Oxford University Press) has following comments about the Khoja Community and the religion of Mohamed Ali Jinnah.

“Jinnah (in Arabic, “wing” as of a bird or army) was born a Shi’ite Muslim Khoja (Khwaja, “noble”). Disciples of the Isma’ili Aga Khan, thousands of Khojas fled Persian persecution to Western India, among other regions, between the tenth and sixteenth centuries. The exact date of the flight of Jinnah’s ancestors is unknown, but as a minority community within Islam, itself a religious minority in India, the Khojas of South Asia remained doubly conscious of their separateness and cultural difference, helping perhaps to account for the “aloofness” so often noted as a characteristic quality of Jinnah and his family. Khojas, like other mercantile communities the world over, however, traveled extensively, were quick to assimilate new ideas, and adjusted with relative ease to strange environments. They developed linguistic skills and sharp intelligence, often acquiring considerable wealth. Mahatma Gandhi’s Hindu merchant (bania) family, by remarkable coincidence, settled barely thirty miles to the north of Jinnah’s grandparents, in the state of Rajkot. Thus the parents of the Fathers of both India and Pakistan shared a single mother tongue, Gujarati, though that never helped their brilliant offspring to communicate.” (P.4)

Commenting on the faith of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Stanley Walpert writes:

“Though religion never played an important role in Jinnah’s life - except for its political significance - he left the Aga Khan’s “Sevener” Khoja community at this stage of his maturation, opting instead to join the less hierarchially structured Isna-Asheri
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sect of “Twelver” Khojas, who acknowledged no leader. One of Jinnah’s most admired friends, Justice Badrudin Tayabji (1844-1906) first Muslim high court judge and third president of the Indian National Congress was Isna Ashari.” (P.18)

There is a general belief that the word “Khoja” is a derivation from the Persian word “Khwaja”. This is at times disputed as it is believed that the word “Khoja” in reality is derived from the Gujarati and Hindi word “KHOJ” meaning ‘search’. In a preface to the English translation of the memoirs of Mulla Qadir Husain Sahib, the Trustees of the publishers, Peermohamed Ebrahim Trust of Karachi comment: “The book of his autobiography is rightly named “HIDAYAT PRAKASH” – light of guidance – for all the seekers of truth, especially for Khojas as the word is a derivative of “Khoj” meaning search.”

Stanley Walpert makes an interesting, if somewhat confusing statement, when he states, “Disciples of Agakhan, thousands of Khoja fled Persian persecution to Western India, among other regions, between the tenth and sixteenth centuries.” This runs contrary to the accepted belief that Khojas were in fact Indian converts to Islam from ancestral Hinduism. Does this confusion stem from the use of the word “Khoja” by the Armenian cross country traders living in Iran during the reign of the Safavid King, Shah Abbas II, contemporary of the second Moghul Emperor of Delhi, Humayun.

Here, I recall an incident, which might help to throw some interesting light on this question. In 1974, on a visit to Isfahan, the former capital of Iran, we were taken in a conducted tour to visit a small but highly well kept Armenian Museum located not too far from “Chehel Sutoon”. On the walls of the museum were a series of portraits, hand painted in the style of the Irani miniature art. At the bottom of each portrait, neatly inscribed in English letters were the names of the individuals, which began with a prefix “Khoja” so, and so. I was naturally fascinated to observe this. Our guide explained that the portraits represent Armenian traders during the reign of Shah Abbas II, who traded across the sea with In-

dia. Because of their important status as international traders, they were addressed with the honorific title of “Khoja”. In my curiosity, I sought out a museum orderly and explained to him that since I was a “Khoja” of Indian origin, I was keen to know more about the Armenian “Khoja” and would like to meet the curator of the Museum. Either the official could not understand English properly or I could not convey my thoughts sufficiently in Farsi, the man walked out in a huff muttering something to himself, as if I had uttered something sacrilegious in introducing myself as a Khoja of Indian origin!

Being in a tourist group, there was no opportunity to visit the Museum again to pursue my interest. Visitors to Isfahan may be well advised to visit this impressive Armenian Museum and probably explore more about the sixteenth century Armenian Khoja! To speculate that the Khojas of India could in some way trace back their origin to Armenian or Persian ancestry appears a far-fetched suggestion.

While reviewing the history of the origin of the Khoja Shia Ithna-Asheri Muslim Community and their separation from the Aga Khani Ismaili sect, the following comments contained in the Preface to the English translation of the “MEMOIRS OF MULLA QADIR HUSAIN SAHIB” published in 1972, by Peermohamed Ebrahim Trust of Karachi, Pakistan, would make interesting reading.

“Memoirs of Mulla Qadir Husain Sahib originally written in Urdu were translated in Gujarati language by late Fazalbai Jan Mohamed Master in Zanzibar, in 1909 A.D., reprinted in 1960 by “APNI DUNIYA” in Bombay. It is not a complete autobiography but an autobiography of the later half of his life which was totally dedicated to the preaching work.

“The book of his autobiography is rightly called “HIDAYAT PRAKASH” - light of guidance – for all the seekers of truth, especially for Khojas, as the word is derivative of “Khoj”, meaning search.

(to be continued in the next issue)

The silly addiction to predictions

Quite a few addictions plague the people of the world. "Drinking" is one, which claims a large number of people as its addicts. "Smoking" is another, which is no less powerful than "drinking" when judged by the number of its victims. As a matter of fact, in a considerable number of cases, the two co-exist and thrive together.

"Drug-addiction" is still another, which seems to be mostly confined to students and the youth but there are also many elders who either indulge in it directly by way of consumption or indirectly by way of drug-trafficking.

"Gambling" is the fourth one, which holds it sway over a vast number of people. All these addictions, nevertheless, bring rebuke and ruin.

The addiction with which I am, however, concerned in this short write-up is one which has hundreds of people as its addicts, who appear to have gone crazy about knowing their future, and insanely keep running after some soothsayers to get their future predicted.

Whether a person is a V.I.P. or an ordinary soul, an intellectual or an illiterate person, rich or poor, old or young, he has an uncontrollable and uncanny desire to know what his future holds for him; and wants these soothsayers to probe into his future and lay it bare before him. It does however appear that it is the V.I.Ps, more than ordinary persons, the intellectuals, more than the illiterate, the rich, more than the poor, who keep indulging in such an exercise without any hitch or hesitation, and notwithstanding the fact that they are living in an age of science, supersonics, satellites, and sputniks, where there is no room whatsoever for such absurd and abominable activities. This sort of addiction can very aptly be termed or characterised as "prediction-addiction".

Every Sunday, newspaper readers who

are addicted to predictions minutely peruse their future for the following week, under the 12 Zodiac signs. How avidly the "prediction-addicts" go through these predictions is no more a secret. If these predictions happen to be rosy, they are immensely delighted, and scan them again with still greater eagerness. If, however, they turn out to be bleak, they pull a morose face and feel upset and disturbed. So foolishly they pin their faith on these predictions!

I, too, sometimes go through such predictions, not because I have any faith in them but just out of sheer curiosity. Sometimes, these predictions, inter alia, warn me against an accident; sometimes against heavy expenditure, and sometimes they predict a long journey for me. But I have never seen any one of these predictions coming true. None can pry into his future. It is only the Almighty who knows what the future holds for us.

What, however, intrigues me and against which I want to raise my voice vehemently and vociferously is the conduct of some reputed personalities who, knowing what is right and what is wrong, hanker after such soothsayers and waste not only a lot of money but also their valuable time to know their future. These soothsayers are sweet-tongued and know the knack of extracting the maximum amount of money and securing favours from their credulous 'victims'.

"Heaven from all creatures hides the book of fate," says Shakespeare. And surely the Holy Qur'an, our noble guide to life, declares "That which God has written on thy forehead, thou wilt come to it." These are words of great wisdom, indeed; and are steeped deep in sanctity. When interpreted collectively, three vital truths come to the fore.

One, we cannot know our future, or what fate holds for us, because the

Almighty has decreed to keep it hidden and concealed from us. Two, when the soothsayers cannot know their own future, it is preposterous to believe that they know ours. And three, whatever is destined for us, we shall certainly get it. There is great rationale behind this divine decree. If our future is bright and we know about it, we would be utterly careless. And if we were to have a foreknowledge of our bleak future, we would be constantly morose and melancholic. It will be, accordingly, an exercise in utter futility to try to have knowledge of things to come. It will also be paranoiac to run after certain soothsayers for this purpose. Such persons are parasites on our polity.

Man is, nevertheless, the architect of his own destiny, the maker of his own fate or future. The mould of his future is accordingly in his own hands. What a sensible thing it will, therefore, be if every "prediction-addict" stoutly shuns all these soothsayers, chooses a mould of his future and works hard to achieve the end he has set his heart on. Always keep in mind Ruskin's following words of great wisdom: "Though you may have known clever men who were indolent; you never knew a great man who was so; and when I hear a young man spoken of as giving promise of great genius, the first question I ask about him always is: Does he work?"

Ultimately Islam teaches us to live straight lives in adherence to moral values and tells us to be content with what Allah (SWT) provides for us. It encourages us to strive and progress while we grow but at all times it reminds us to be prepared for misfortunes as trials and death, as our final destiny. Let us therefore not be frivolous to waste time on what other mere human beings have to say about what is going to happen to us or our lives. Instead let us pray to Allah (SWT) to protect us at all times and don't we have so many duas to give us just the very protection we need?

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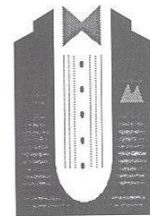
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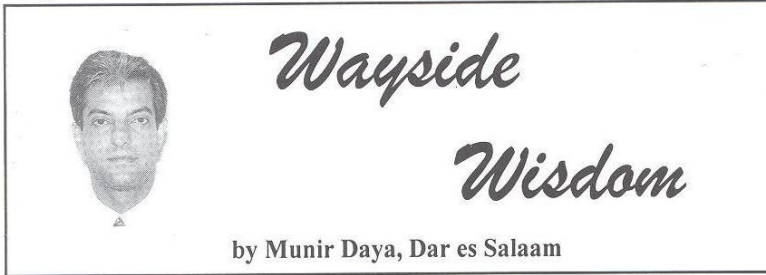
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The paradox of speed until death takes over

At the turn of the millennium, the world is become faster. Human beings are yearning to do more in lesser time and many even complain that 24 hours a day is just not enough for one to put in a full day's work.

Speed in physics, is a function of distance over time: miles per hour, metres per second. More speed, less travel time. Yet what we yearn more often is the feeling of speed, not so much the actual speed. Flying at six hundred miles an hour in a commercial airliner hardly gives any feeling of speed, except for a slight pressing into one's seat on takeoff, and at the fierce application of brakes and a reversal of engines on landing.

The experience of speed is a neurophysiological condition. It releases into our brain a cascade of naturally occurring chemicals and hormones. This imparts a high, the sort a youngster feels on gathering speed cycling downhill. "Speed is the form of ecstasy the technical revolution has bestowed on man," writes Milan Kundera in his novel *Slowness*.

Right from ancient times well into the nineteenth century, the top velocity has been restricted to the gallop of a horse. Only in the last two centuries speeds have escalated and now nothing seems fast enough. Speed records of all types — on road, rails, water, air, and space (the astronauts of *Apollo 10* achieving a speed of 24, 791 miles per hour) are being set and shattered. Often the most touted selling point in an upcoming car is the speed it can reach from zero in the fewest seconds.

Other machines are getting faster, too, with every upgrade. Machines not only go faster with each generation but also

move from generation to generation at a brisker pace. Take personal computers. Their speed now doubles in a few years (or months?) and in Tanzania we are already working with the plus 400MHz units.

In wars too, battles have mostly gone in favour of the swifter side. War is now so fast, any city anywhere can be hit in seconds. Indeed its speed is such that human beings are getting displaced by computers. Soon it could be pilotless planes delivering missiles, guided from the air or by someone sitting far away.

And we confront a world of instant and direct contact between every point on the globe. The world's business takes place at the speed of light, the speed offered by the fibre-optic cable. A million transactions a minute now pulse through the world's major Stock Exchanges where the old-style trader shouting from the trading floor or talking into his headset is giving way to someone sitting before the small screen. The press of a key could send international markets into a tizzy or plunge a particular country into penury.

Images on TV are being flashed faster and faster. Sometimes they are flashed so fast they cross the threshold of perception, leaving just a sensory glimmer in the viewer's brain. The producers of TV programmes make out that it's the viewer who's in a hurry. Any little let-up in action, and he starts switching channels on his remote.

Then there is the Internet which brings the world newspapers and news into your home. E--mails, Web phones, ICQ's etc. are instant successes because they save time.

Speed, it seems, has become the ultimate luxury good. VIPs like being driven fast, their way cleared by sirens and armed escorts and the very rich in some countries even move in helicopters.

Is living life at such a brisk pace good? Certainly Islam teaches us to live constructive and moral lives and despises situations where people waste their time in vain talk or petty activities. For this reason Islam prohibits vices that people indulge in with the excuse that they are simply "passing their time", because we are expected to spend time constructively.

However spending time constructively does not necessarily call one to breeze through life. The irony of a fast life is that it often leads to burn-out and develops stress. Under stress many humans resort to illicit short-term pleasures like gambling, womanising drinking alcohol, dancing and the like, all of which ultimately cause more harm than good.

While it is good to do things in a hurry, the current mounting seduction for speed is worrying. We should partially resist this hyperactive culture by engaging in slower activities like reading. For example, don't we have many among us who are at death's door yet are totally blank about the philosophy of Islam. Their life has been limited to attending religious functions, performing daily *wajibats* and reciting duas (very often without understanding) and yes, keeping pace with the speedy secular world. Doing all this is good but we all need to spend time to understand our very own existence so that we mould our lives to positive living and ultimate death.

What's the big hurry? Where are we going with our high-speed chase? Whence this urge towards speed? Perhaps the motor of speed lies buried not in the engine or the microprocessor but within each one of us. We are forever dividing more and more space by less and less time, waging our own "time wars". But we cannot escape time. Alas, time stays, we go. No matter how quickly you move, death drives the fastest car on the highway; it eventually overtakes everybody. Ultimately death takes over.

The First Mosques in Iran

By Seyyed Kamal Seyyed Javadi.

Early mosques in Iran were mainly built in places of fire temples in Gorgan, Ray, Qom, Estakhr, Shiraz and Neishabour regions. The arrival of Islam in Iran left numerous effects on the country and particularly on cities of early Sassanian era which were protected by long fences and water filled ditches dug all around them.

At the center of these cities as seen in the city of Estakhr, a fire temple (Zoroastrian place of worship) had been built which was later changed to correspond with Islamic architecture.

Since mosques were the first buildings to be constructed in those cities, they soon found their lofty places in the general plans of the cities.

In the cities which were later built, the best point at the center of the city was usually devoted to the mosque. The mosques were located next to the seats of governments, which were the residence of the rulers of the cities. Then the fertile lands of the city were divided equally between the Islamic army and local tribesmen residing there.

The division of the land was subject to special order concerning the separation of roads in terms of their length and width. In pursuant of the plan of Islamic towns, Bazaar was usually located adjacent to the mosque, as told by Moqaddasi about the city of Sarakhs.

In the plan of the cities, mosques were the first buildings built by Muslims. For this reason, mosques were the main centers of Islamic cities, either old or new. The mosques retained their main structure which was the same as the Masjid al-Nabi (Prophet's Mosque) in Medina. This example was followed in other mosques built in other countries.

The victorious army of Islam used the mosques as military camps and garrisons. The first mosque built in Ctesiphon where the famous palace of Sassanian King Khosrow with its huge arch known as Taq Kisra was located, was among these mosques. The commander of the Islam army Saad ibn Abi Vaqqas performed his thanks giving prayers at this mosque and recited the following verses from the Holy Quran: "*How many were the gardens and springs they left behind, and corn fields and noble buildings, and wealth (and conveniences of life), wherein they had*

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taken such delight. Thus (was their end)! And we made other people inherit (those things)."

Some historians in their books have mentioned by name some of the early mosques built in Iran. But their reports are an overall account of the mosques without elaborating on their plans. Therefore, there is no information available on plans, architecture and construction process of the mosques. Furthermore, these mosques have been destroyed without leaving behind any signs.

In certain geography and history books, there are reports on the building of early mosques in Iran. These reports give us some ideas about the overall features of those mosques.

Among these mosques, mention can be made of Jame' Mosques of Gorgan, Neishabour, Qom, Ray, Estakhr and Shiraz.

Mosques of Gorgan.

Gorgan is the name of a vast region between Khorassan and Tabarestan and of an old town which was totally destroyed at the time of the Mongol attack on Iran.

The remnants of the town are now located three kilometers from the town of Gonbad Qaboos. Later a new town with the same name was set up in place of the old town in this region.

Yaqubi in his book 'Al-Baldan' and other geographers such as Abu Dalf have made mention of this town.

Describing the city in 952 in his travel book, Abu Dalf says: "It is a big town located on the coast of a big sea. Sea Olive, pomegranates, orange, palm and bamboo are produced in the town."

Yaqut Hamavi and Ibrahim Sahmi in 1035, the author of 'History of Gorgan', have offered much information on the city and its mosques in their books.

The following is an account of the mosques built during the rule of the Omayyid dynasty, as quoted by Sahmi. Abolqassem Sahmi quotes Savir ibn Maqren, a man from Medina and resident of Kufa, as saying that he was the first person to step into Gorgan and conquer it during the caliphate of Omar ibn Khattab.

Then in 716, Abu Khalid Yazid ibn Mohleb ibn Abi Safareh, a ruler appointed by Soleyman ibn Abd al-Malik, occupied the town after the death of his father.

It is said that Yazid ibn Mohleb could not stay in the city more than one year because after the death of Soleyman ibn Abd al-Malik, his successor Omar ibn Abdulaziz deposed Yazid ibn Mohleb. It is also said that Yazid ibn Mohleb was killed in the Arabic month of Safar, 720.

After occupying the city, Yazid ibn Mohleb built several castles around the city and laid the foundations of 40 mosques, each named after a tribe. He also built another mosque and put his name on it.

Some of those mosques were located inside and some outside the city. The mosques were famous until the time of the author, Abolqassem Sahmi. Then, Abolqassem Sahmi mentions the mosques as follows:

1. Bajile mosque in Hojaj quarter, opposite to animal skin bazaar, at the juncture of Al ibn Dhahir.
2. Mahareb mosque in Barid quarters
3. Qoreish mosque, next to the house of Abdullah ibn Issa.
4. Hamra mosque known as the Ibn Abi Rafe mosque which was located in a quarter now called Khamanjan quarters
5. Bani Assad mosque in Mahrez quarters. It is also called Ishaq Vaza Vali mosque
6. Ashireh mosque known as Attar mosque
7. Mavali mosque in quarters with the same name.
8. Khath'am mosque known as Davood ibn Abdullah mosque
9. Hamedan mosque located in the Hamedan gate
10. Bani Zabehe mosque, the superintendent of which was Affan ibn Sayyar, the judge of Gorgan
11. Azod mosque which is known as Abdok or Abdol Karim Faqih, located near the Khan Abdok gate. Today, the mosque is called Ibn Khattab mosque.
12. Ibn Ajal mosque
13. Tim ibn Taghlebe mosque
14. Bani Qays ibn Tha'labeh, known as Shoja Mohtaseb mosque

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15. Hazr Miyan mosque in Hazr Miyan quarters
16. Bani Sanan mosque which is the same as Abi Tayebah mosque. Today, the mosque is known as Abdolvase ibn Abi Tayebah mosque.
17. Afna al-Arab mosque which is known today as the Basrian mosque.
18. Bani Zahal mosque which is also known as Lebas Forush-ha mosque
19. Morad mosque which is also known as Sarajha mosque
20. Nakhleh mosque in Kafash-ha (shoe makers) quarters
21. Ghaza'eh mosque in Marzban quarters
22. Bani Tamim mosque which belongs to Shia Muslims
23. Abdolqais mosque
24. Zafar mosque

Jame' mosque of Neishabour

Since Neishabour had been a developed city before the arrival of Islam in Iran, historians have referred to the city and its Jame' mosque in their books.

It is said that Tahmoureth the Third founded the city which was later destroyed by Alexander of Macedonia. Later on, the Sassanian king Shapour reconstructed the city and this is why his name was given to the city.

The city assumed an Islamic face and became the centre of science and learning when Ahnaf ibn Qays Tamimi conquered Khorassan.

Yaqt Hamavi has spoken in detail of the city, but Estakhri has put emphasis on the Jame' mosque. He says "Neishabour is a metropolis located in a sandy land and its Jame' mosque is located at the center of the city known as Moeskar quarters. The seat of government of the city is at the square called Husseinin square and the prison of the city is close to the seat of the government. Both the prison and the Jame' mosque are one parasang (6km) away each on either side of the seat of government.

On the construction of the first mosque in the city, Hamdoyeh bin Na'im, author of 'The History of Neishabour' says: "When Abdullah ibn Amer conquered Neishabour, he ordered that the fire temple of the city be destroyed and Jame' mosque be built on its site."

The mosque had no minaret until Ibn Molhab entered the city and built a minaret for the mosque. Moqaddasi offers more information about the mosque: "The Jame' (mosque) is at the center of the city near Bazaar. Parts of the mosque and its pulpit,

built on wooden legs, belong to the time of Abu Moslem and the rest to the time of Amr ibn Layth which have been built on brick columns.

There are three porticos all around the mosque's courtyard. The mosque has 11 gates and black and white marble columns. The walls and ceiling of the mosque have been ornamented and Neishabour is really a great city."

These general descriptions provide some information on the early status of the mosque. As mentioned before, Estakhri says that the mosque was located at the center of the city at a quarters known as Mo'sekar. The seat of the government and the prisons were one parasang (6km) away from the mosque.

Hamdoyeh bin Na'im says that the first mosque in the city was built after the inhabitants of Neishabour had embraced Islam and when Muslims destroyed a fire temple located at the center of the city and built a Jame' mosque in its place. At the beginning, the mosque was very simple and had no minaret.

The minaret of the mosque was later built in around 708 upon the order of the Ibn Molheb. Moqaddasi, too, has offered some information on the features of the mosque and its location.

He said that the mosque was at the center of the town next to the bazaar. Although he did not elaborate on the architectural features of the mosque, his account of the mosque shows that the pillars of the mosque covered with small pieces of wood and the platform of Qibla (the place towards which Muslims say their prayers) which housed the pulpit had been built by Abu Moslem Khorassani and that the mosque must have been rebuilt by Amr ibn Layth.

He also built brick columns in place of the wood columns of the mosque. There were three porticos at the back of the mosque and the mosque had 11 gates, with its ceiling being mostly made of wood.

Jame' mosque of Rey

Rey had since long been one of the developed and most populous cities of the country. Asma'i describes the city as "the bride of the world and booming center on the earth."

Moqaddasi says: "Ray is a great city with noble people and great personalities, a city with abundant fruits, wide market places, beautiful shops, sanitary public baths, and numerous schools. This city is a source of honour for the Muslim world in which a large number of famous scholars,

dignitaries, reciters of the Holy Quran, jurists and warriors live."

Estakhri says: "Ray is the largest of these cities. The city is 1.5 farsang long. Its buildings have been made of clay with bricks and plasters being used in some buildings. The first mosque built in the city was located at the entrance gate. Of course, Beladarzi says: "The last person to conquer the city through his steadfastness was Qortabe ibn Kaab ansari at the time when Abu Musa ruled Kufa. His soldiers stationed in Zabandi castle sometimes gathered together in a mosque built upon his order."

Belazari's account of the mosque implies that the mosque was located inside the castle although he has not said how the mosque had been built. According to Belazari, a grand Jame' mosque was built during the rule of Mehdi Abbasi over Rey.

He says: "Jafar ibn Mohammad told me that Mehdi arrived in Rey during the caliphate of Mansour. He had a mosque built by Ammar ibn Abi Khasib and put his name on the mosque along with the date of its building in 774".

The same story has been told by Ibn Faqih in his book 'Mokhtasa al-Baldan' and by Sheigh Robush in Nokhbat ad-Dahr fi Ajayeb al-Bar val Bahr.

The mosque is considered as one of the largest ever built in the city of Rey. According to Moqaddasi, the gates of the mosque were open on alternate days to Muslim worshipers who were followers of Hanafi and Shafei sects. On the castle that existed in front of the mosque, Ibn Rasteh says: "In front of the Jame' mosque, over a high mountain peak there is a castle. It is difficult to climb the mountain and reach the castle but when one reaches there he can see the whole part of the city of Rey".

Yaqt Hamavi, in his account of the mosque and its location, says: "I read in the history of the book of Abi Saad that when Mehdi arrived in Rey he built a mosque there. When they began to dig the ground to lay the foundation to the mosque, ruins of houses destroyed in the past by floods were unearthed. When Mehdi learned about the issue, he declared that every body who had a house in this site could sell it or receive a new house in return".

Hamavi then continues that Mehdi built the mosque at the foot of a mountain. The research conducted by Dr. Eric Schmidt substantiates this claim.

At any rate, the city of Rey had many

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mosques such as Jame' Roudah mosque, Jame' Jadid (New Jame') mosque, Jame' Toqrol mosque, Abdol Rahman Neishabouri mosque, Hanzaleh mosque, Shajareh mosque and Ghari mosque. Unfortunately, none of these mosques has survived and all of them have been destroyed in the course of time.

Research conducted recently, reveals the locations of some of these mosques such as Atiq mosque of Rey.

Jame' Atiq mosque of Qom

The city of Qom is among the old cities dating back to pre-Islamic era. The city was conquered by Abu Mussa Ashari. Of course, Yaqut Hamavi reminds that a new city was built in the place of Qom in 702.

In his book 'Al-Masalek val Mamalek', Estakhri has spoken of the city but without making any mention of its mosque.

Commenting on the construction of the first mosque in Qom, the author of the book, 'The History of Qom' says: "When Abdullah ibn Saad Ahari arrived in the city of Qom, he entered a mosque already built by his brother Ahvas Ashari in a place called Dezil. Dezil was the name of a fire temple belonging to the Zoroastrians which had been destroyed and replaced by a mosque. When Qom was among the realm of Hamzat ibn Yas' Ashari, he ordered that a large pulpit be built inside the mosque in 707. The mosque had a courtyard and several porticos, one facing the qibla and two being located on its both sides. This mosque is known as Imam Hassan Asgari (peace be upon him) and for this reason is of great significance.

Concerning the structure of the mosque, Safi ad-Din Husseini Qomi in his book 'Bayaz' says: "With fund from taxes collected from the people of the city, a platform was built in the Jame' mosque outside the city in the holy Fatima Masumeh (PBUH) at the garden beside the river, upon the order of Imam Hassan Asgari. It was known as Imam Hassan Asgari mosque. Unfortunately, the old building of the mosque was destroyed as a result of the overflowing of the river and numerous repairs to an extent that the modern day mosque is a newly established building except for its southern veranda which dates back to 1716.

The mosque seems to have been built in the same manner that the Jame' mosque of Neishabour had been built. In other words, the fire temple of the city was destroyed and the mosque was built on its site. Like the architecture of Masjid al-Nabi in Medina, this mosque has a portico in its front, a courtyard at the center and

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two platforms on both sides along with numerous porticos.

Jame' mosque of Estakhr

Estakhr is an olden town which was the capital of the Zoroastrians in the early days of the Sassanian dynasty. The town houses many historical sites dating back to the Achaemanian and Sassnian eras.

Estakhr was conquered by Abu Mussa Ashari and Othman ibn Abi al-Aas in 643. On the first Jame' mosque built in the city, Moqaddasi says: "Jame' (mosque) is located inside the bazaar. Like the Jame' mosque of Shaam (modern Damascus), this Jame' mosque has round columns on top of which stone statues of cow heads are located. It is said that it had been a fire temple in the past. The mosque is surrounded by market places on three sides and there is also a valley at the center of the city."

Moqaddasi's account of the mosque implies that the mosque had been located in the market place, that it had resembled the early mosques built in Shaam (modern Damascus), and that the mosque had been built at the site of a fire temple. It is also likely that the columns of the mosque had been the same columns built by the Persians in ancient times, because use of such columns with a stone cow head over it was quite ordinary in constructing fire temples and palaces in ancient Persia. Archaeologists have found many shapes for these columns. Eric Schmidt says that he has found many pieces of stones belonging to columns with two cow heads on its top in a place outside the site of Persepolis.

The pieces have been later returned to the they originally belonged to. This lends proof to Moqaddasi's account that the columns might have been used again. However, these ideas which run counter to Islamic beliefs cannot be accepted.

Jame' mosque of Shiraz

No doubt that Shiraz is among the cities built during the post-Islamic era and that it was used as a garrison of the Islamic army shortly after they conquered Iran. It later became a place for rulers of Fars Province.

Yaqut Hamavi says: "This city is among those cities designed and built during the post-Islamic era. On why the city has been named Shiraz, Baghdadi says that because of its similarity to the stomach of a lion (Shir in Persian) the city was named Shiraz."

It is said that the first mosque in the city was built upon the orders of Mohammad ibn Qassem. The mosque was later

reconstructed by Yaqub ibn Layth of Saffari dynasty in 894 when he came to the city to prepare for one of his battles.

Moqaddasi describes the city as follows: "Shiraz is the only city of the region to have a Jame' mosque. There is no such Jame' mosque in the remaining eight sections of the region. Its building had been based on columns which are like the columns of Masjid al-Aqsa. The Jame' mosque is located among several market places. It faces the carpet market place on one side and the hospital of the city is not far from the mosque."

In some versions of the book 'Ahsan al Tavarikh', it has been said: "The Jame' mosque has been developed substantially because of the gathering of religious scholars and reciters of Holy Quran there as well as local people for their daily congregational prayers... Its foundations are made of stones like those found in Palestine with round columns and half-circular arches like those in Jame' mosque of Shaam...".

While visiting the mosque, Ibn Batuteh says: "The grand mosque of the city is called Atiq mosque which is the largest and most beautiful of all in the city. The yard of the mosque is very large and paved with marble stones. At dusks, dignitaries of the city gathered together in the mosque to perform their evening prayers. The mosque has a gate known as Hassan which opens up to the bazaar."

All these accounts of the mosque imply that it had a beautiful building and was located beside the market place. It was located on stone foundations and had arches such as those used in mosques in Shaam. Classes of Quran recitation were set up at the mosque particularly at the time of evening prayers. It seems that the mosque had arches and vaults as described above.

One can conclude from the above-mentioned accounts that the plan and architecture of the mosque were like that of the Masjid al-Nabi and other mosques built in other Islamic towns, with one portico in front of the mosque for prayers, courtyard at the center and two porticos on both sides. It is to be noted that ornaments used in these mosques had been inspired by Islamic arts. For this reason, the cow-shaped capital of the Jame' mosque of Estakhr were unique and perhaps unacceptable examples, showing the fact that they must have belonged to other buildings replaced by the mosque later. It is an accepted principle that no statues should be used in mosques, as the mosque of the early days of Islam at the time of the Prophet (PBUH) and his close associates had no ornaments.

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Some Quranic words defy translation

It is religiously wrong for Muslims, and more so for Muslim preachers to accept and use "GOD" as the true translation in English for "Allah", "RELIGION" for "Din" and "WORSHIP" for "Ibada".

Such translations, whether in English or any other languages, convey narrow or shallow meanings of these Quranic words and therefore in combination reflect a misconception of the correct teachings which are so important in conveying the message of Islam comprehensively.

The use of such translations in their limited meanings therefore constitutes a subversion of the whole concept of the Islamic message which has been revealed to mankind. The impact of the message is sometimes weakened to an extent whereby the message can even be misunderstood.

Muslims had a similar problem imposed upon them during the time when the imperial nations like Britain and France were ruling over the majority of the Muslim countries. The attempt was made and almost succeeded in popularising "Mohamedanism" as a substitute word for Islam in English and French. Sadly, Muslims themselves saw no cause for objection to their also using the word. They would identify themselves as "Mohamedan" in their Wills, affidavits, complaints, passports and other documents.

Ofcourse, it was not difficult to discern the aim of the colonial

rulers. It was a crusade by the infiltration of minds through the influence of the "adorable" foreign languages of the rulers.

The word "Mohamedanism" was to signify and impress that the so-called Islam is a new and recent religion started by "one Muhammed who called himself a prophet". This was to counter the proclamation of Islam that its message was the same as was proclaimed by Prophet Ibrahim and others, even before the arrival of Prophet Muhammed.

However, with the independence of the Muslim countries from colonial rule, Muslims have been able also to liberate their mind. Today the entire world knows Islam by that name in whatever may be the language in which it is mentioned. But a complete liberation of mind has yet to come when the Quranic words: "Allah", "Din", and "Ibada" will also be used in other languages too because of their unique meaning.

It is only then, Islam would cease to be placed in equal footing with Christianity and Judaism in terms of its message for mankind and the hopeless advocacy of "religious pluralism" will also cease among the few over-ambitious Muslim scholars.

Any God other than Allah (s.w.t.) exists in human imagination.....

Now to conclude the discussion, let us examine briefly and attempt to explain the true

importance of the said Quranic words:

- Allah (s.w.t) is the only one Who exists with the attributes (sifaat) precisely as taught in Islam. Any God other than Allah(s.w.t.) exists in human imagination.

- "Din" is much more than "religion", as an ocean means much more than water. It is Law or a code of life for all mankind whose allegiance is only to Allah's Sovereignty. Otherwise "religion" is defined in other languages only as a belief or a system of doctrines of faith and worship.

- "Ibada" is not only worship. It is mainly the upholding of Din – a lawful conduct of every aspect of one's life as an individual and as a member of a family and society in obedience to Allah.

So, the submission (Islam) to Allah (s.w.t) in Din is the essence of Ibada.

It will be noted therefore that it is only through the inter-related meaning of the Quranic words Islam, Allah, Din and Ibada which convey and impress the message of Islam as being agreeable to the human nature and mind.

In relation to Islam therefore, let us make use of these words in all languages and they too will find their place in the vocabulary and dictionary of all human languages.

THE HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF MAJLIS AL-HUSSEIN

by Kamyar M. Hedayat

In the hot and crowded hall, muffled laments are released like sullen doves and tears roll amidst sobs like dew on the petals of trembling roses. All are focused on Imam Hussein (AS). All are thinking about the Master of the Martyrs. There is no past, there is no present, there is only now; there is no you, no I, only Imam Hussein(AS); there is no fear of death, there is no desire for this world, their is only liberation, freedom and love of truth, for this is the majlis of Imam Hussein (AS).

From the youngest of ages, we learn about the tragedy of Karbala, and wherever there are Shia, one can find people lamenting and participating in dirges for him. Some people have questioned the "true" Islamic nature of these acts. Some claim that it is an innovation, a grave sin in Islam. Others, consider this noble event to be "backwards", and others, still, believe that its purpose is just to make simple, emotional people cry.

In this article, Insha Allah, we will examine the historical roots of these observances, as well as the philosophy behind it. The main element of the commemoration of Karbala is the remembrance (thikr) of the suffering of the holy personages of that tragedy. From at least the time of Imam Jafar al-Sadeq (AS), this was done through a poetic account of the events. The first majlis, however, was held by Imam Hussein's sister, Seyyeda Zainab (AS) and his son, the fourth Imam, Zainul Abideen (AS). It took place on the fortieth day after the massacre at the very sight that it occurred. During their time and for many years thereafter, the political and social conditions did not allow for public recitation. Hence, the devout Shia held private ceremonies.

Public majlis has its origins in the year 963 AD/352 AH, nearly three hundred years after the tragedy of Karbala. It was instigated by Sultan Muizz al-Dowla, a Shia ruler who wanted to publicly protest his objections to

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the corrupt leadership of the Abbassid dynasty. He used the incident at Karbala as a metaphor for the corruption and deviation present in the umma in his day. The majlis of Imam Hussien (AS) became a rallying point for the Shia in addressing the injustices of the past as well as for demanding greater self-determination.

In the sixteenth century AD (ninth Islamic century), the Shiite Saffavid dynasty was established in Iran and Shiism was declared the state religion. This created a more conducive political and social condition for elaborate commemorations. In the city of Isfahan, which became the capital of this dynasty, various groups competed with each other for the most elaborate and emotional presentations. (Perhaps it is in this situation that such acts as chest-beating, forehead-cutting (ghameh) and self-flagellation came about, despite the reservation of the scholars regarding these activities). But what is the philosophy behind majlis? Is it really just a folk tradition carried too far? Should we abandon it all together?

If one examines the basis of majlis, one learns that it is actually at the heart of Islam and is one of its greatest and most sincere manifestations of love and piety for Allah (SWT), the Prophet (SAW) and his pure progeny. The philosophy of the majlis of Imam Hussein (AS) is based on the concept of free will, one of the issues which distinguishes the noble Shiite school of thought from the other schools of thought in Islam. This issue of pre-destination versus free will was itself magnified due to the tragedy of Karbala because of the questions which it raised in the minds of the umma.

Do not forget that the people who committed the atrocities against Imam Hussein (AS) were themselves Muslims who believed in *tawhid* and *maaad* and said their prayers and made their fasts. How could they behead the

person whom their own Prophet would place on his lap and kiss as a child, and not feel guilt? How could they justify having stripped naked and trampled with horses the body of the man called the "Chief of the Youths of Heaven"? After realising what they had done, how could they have not revolted against Yazid? The answer which appealed to the ruling elite was the idea that all things are predestined by Allah (SWT). This served to maintain the status quo. Because all is pre-destined, if the outcome of it is good, the action was good and if it were bad, then the action was bad. If Allah (SWT) does not want something to happen, it wont, and if it did, that means that He approves of it. People cannot rebel against the authorities because Allah (SWT) has predestined for them to be in authority and to rebel against them would be to rebel against the will of Allah (SWT). A little thought will quickly reveal the false nature of this argument. Allah (SWT) has stated "*And if We had pleased, We would have given to every soul its guidance, but the word from Me was just. I will certainly fill hell with the jinn and men together.*"(45:13).

Allah (SWT) decreed neither guidance nor misguidance to people. Rather, He has given us faculties of thought and sensation, Prophets, Imams and divine books to all to guide us. This is how He distinguishes between the faithful and the unfaithful. If all actions were predestined, then no one could be held accountable for their deeds, because they did not choose to do them. Yet, Allah has stated that some will go to hell because of their misguidance. If He made some people misguided by design and destined them to go to hell out of no choice of their own, then He would be punishing them not only for something they did not chose to do, but for something that He made them do. This would imply that Allah (SWT) would be an unjust God (Allah

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forbid), but that is an impossibility, for it is against the refined and glorious nature of Allah. As He has stated, "Surely Allah does not do injustice to the weight of an atom. . ." (4:40), and, "Surely Allah does not do any injustice to men, surely man does injustice to himself" (10:44) The justice of Allah (SWT) has always been one of the pillars of belief in Shiite Islam. Allah (SWT) is Just and no injustice can be attributed to Him.

From the time of Seyyeda Zainab (AS) and Imam Zainul Abideen (AS), the whole purpose of thikr was to recall the injustice done not only to Imam Hussein (AS), but the suffering endured by all the holy personages of the Ahl al-Bayt (AS). Majlis became a vehicle for expressing this vital and important concept of free will. As we had mentioned earlier, public majlis originated in the efforts of Shiites to assert their political rights and draw a connection between the tyranny and oppression suffered by Imam Hussein (AS) and that suffered by themselves. Having a similar situation requires acting in a similar manner. So, out of the majlis movement arouse a theatrical representation of the events at Karbala, called taziyyeh. This has been one of the greatest weapons of the Shia throughout the years for inspiring resistance against the oppressors and renewing our bonds of faith and faithfulness to Islam. The opinion of many of our great Islamic scholars has likewise supported the taziyyeh performances. Fazel Qommi, the great 19th century theologian stated about it, ". . .there is a time when it is among the greatest of religious works. And this which is merely to please Allah is a great jihad and Allah is such that if a person humbles himself in His cause, He does not exclude him from His blessing." The principles of taziyyeh are imitation (tamaththul) and resemblance (tashaboh). This is based on a well known hadith by the Prophet Mohammad (SAW) which states, "Whoever makes himself resemble a group is in the category of that group."

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By imitating Imam Hussein (AS) in the performance and by crying for him through sympathy and comprehension of his situation, one takes on the character of that pure and radiant personality. So much so, that to remember him and his companions is like having stood in their ranks and having sacrificed for Islam as they did.

Many people have asked what the purpose is of crying for people who lived and died so many years ago, suggesting we forget all about it and move on. To do this would be to forget about Islam. In fact, crying for Imam Hussein (AS) is so desirable, that it equates with the rewards of worship of Allah (SWT).

Imam al-Sadeq (AS) states, "*The sigh of the sorrowful for the wrong done to us is an act of worship*", and, "*Anyone who remembers us, or, if we are mentioned in his presence, and a tear as small as the wing of a gnat falls from his eye, God would forgive all his sins. . .*" Imam Hussein (AS), has himself said, "*I am the martyr of tears, no man of faith remembers me but that he weeps.*"

Why do the Imams (AS) assign such great merits to these acts that they become a mark of faith and an act of worship? You cannot truly weep for them unless you understand their generosity, courage, piety and sacrifice for Truth. To do this, you must study their words and actions, which by its very truth will instil a desire to put them into practice. Then, when you sigh for them, you will be remembering Allah (SWT) and His promise of the Just Kingdom to be established by Imam al-Mahdi (AS), thus increasing your faith and *sabr* during hardship. When you recall that Allah (SWT) in His mercy sent those guides and proofs of His religion to save us from deviation and the hell fire, then you shall shed tears for their monumental task and sacrifice for the guidance of all mankind. Recall how the Prophet (SAW) has said that one hour of contemplation is better than seventy years of worship and Allah (SWT) has stated, "*Therefore remember the benefits of Allah (SWT) that you may be successful*" (7:69)

Thus, it is not difficult to see how a

sigh for those purified and wise personalities is like an act of worship, for it is actually an act of contemplation of and remembrance of Allah (SWT), "*...and certainly the remembrance of Allah is the greatest.*" (29:45).

What about the promise of sins being forgiven? How is it possible that crying for the Ahlul Bayt would be rewarded with the forgiveness of sins and a palace in paradise when the same is not promised for other lesser acts (fariya)? My dear friends, know that you do not have to die on the battlefield to be a shahid. You do not need to hold a sword in your hand to be a mujahid in the path of Allah (SWT).

A shahid is literally someone who witnesses something, in this case, truth and tawhid. A person who witnesses to truth and calls people to it and struggles to understand the truth, apply the truth, live the truth and spread the truth, is a mujahid and shahid while he is alive and will die the death of a martyr, even if he passes away in his sleep in his bed. As we have mentioned above, to cry for the infallible leaders of the ark of salvation requires a total change in paradigm and a dedication to living and dying for truth and love. Perhaps that is why all the sins are forgiven when one cries for Imam Hussein (AS), because one has become of shahid of his struggle and sacrifice for Mohammadan (SAW) Islam over Yazidi Islam. And perhaps that is why the eighth Imam, al-Rida (A), has stated, "*If it would please you to have the reward of those who were martyred with Hossein, say whenever you remember him, Oh how I wish I were with them that I may have achieved great victory.*"

Another benefit of the the majlis of Imam Hussein (AS) also creates a continuity of experience between the Muslims and their leaders, making each generation feel as if they were with the Imams (AS) and the Prophet Mohammad (SAW). Consider how when you remember a deceased loved one it is as if they are alive and in your presence. By remembering the lives of those infallible ones, repeating their

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hadith and living their sunna, we enliven the spirit of connection between us and them. It gives us hope, it counsels us in times of difficulty, and provides a path of bravery, wisdom, generosity and patience on which to base our lives.

Imam Hussein (AS) made a decision to confront injustice and tyranny rather than be complacent to it. The victory of Karbala was not decided in the battlefield but in the hearts of the truth-seekers and lovers of Allah (SWT). The real battle was not over power but over justice and obedience to Allah (SWT) and His Prophet. That is also why those who have properly understood the message of Karbala and emulated Imam Hussein (AS) have succeeded against the greatest odds. Look at how in the last twenty years, under the guidance of Imam Khomeini (ra) the people of Iran were able to topple the CIA-backed Shah, armed only with the love of Imam Hussein (AS) and a desire for truth or martyrdom! It was this same message of Karbala which inspired the Islamic resistance in occupied south Lebanon.

One teenager sent the mighty US Marines running out of Beirut and a few thousand men have been an inexhaustible thorn in the eye of the Israeli military machine. To end, I quote the faqih, Seyyed Ali Yazdi who once wrote about Imam Hussein (A), *"Is it not sufficient to cause tears [to flow] that the Imams of the Shia faith are related to him, and he recognises them as his own? Is not the saying of the great one [Imam Hussein], 'I am killed so that they will weep' enough to provoke the Shia? Are not the words of Imam Jafar sufficient who said, 'Brother, dont you want to accompany Fatimeh in weeping for Hussein?' Are you content that you not show your agreement and sympathy with the Prophet of Allah and Imam Ali and Bibi Fatimeh and Imam Hassan and the other guiding leaders who are beloved of Allah, and show that you resemble and follow the Umayyads [by not crying for them]?"*

Federation Samachar

FROM THE NAHJUL BALAGHA:

In Sermon 149 of the Nahjul Balagha Imam Ali (AS) narrates the following which provides a good insight and guide for our lives:

Somebody requested Imam Ali (AS) to advise him how to lead a useful and sober life. Imam Ali thereupon advised him thus: "Do not be among those people who want to gain good returns without working hard for them, who have long hopes and keep on postponing repentance and penance, who talk like pious persons but run after vicious pleasures. Do not be among those who are not satisfied if they get more in life and are not content if their lot in life's pleasures is less (they are never satisfied), who never thank Allah for what they get and keep on constantly demanding increase in what is left with them; who advise others to such good deeds that they themselves refrain from; who appreciate good people but do not follow their ways of life; who hate bad and vicious people but follow their ways of life; who, on account of their excessive sins hate death but do not give up the sinful ways of life; who, if fallen ill, repent their ways of life and on regaining their health fearlessly readopt the same frivolous ways; who get despondent and lose all hopes, but on gaining health, become arrogant and careless; who, if faced with misfortunes, dangers or afflictions, turn to Allah and keep on beseeching Him for relief and when relieved or favoured with comfort and ease they are deceived by the comfortable conditions they find themselves in and forget Allah and forsake prayers; whose minds are allured by day dreams and forlorn hopes and who abhor to face realities of life; who fear for others the enormous repercussions of vices and sins but for their own deeds expect very high rewards or very light disciplinary actions. Riches make such people arrogant, rebellious and wicked, and poverty makes them despondent and lethargic. If they have to work, they work lazily and if they

put up a demand they do it stubbornly.

Under the influence of inordinate cravings, they commit sins in quick succession and keep on postponing repentance. Calamities and adversities make them give up the distinguished characteristics of Muslims (patience, hope in future and work for improvement of circumstances). They advise people with narration's of events and facts but do not take any lesson from them. They are good at preachings but bad at practice, therefore they always talk of lofty deeds but their actions belie their words. They are keen to acquire temporal pleasures but are careless and slow to achieve permanent (Divine) benefits. They think good for themselves the things which are actually injurious to them and regard harmful the things which really benefit them. They are afraid of death but waste their time and do not resort to good deeds before death overtakes them. The vices which they regard as enormous sins for others, they consider as minor shortcomings for themselves. Similarly, they attach great importance to their obedience to the orders of Allah and belittle similar actions in others. Therefore, they often criticize others and speak very highly of their own deeds. They are happy to spend their time in society of rich persons, wasting it in luxuries and vices but are averse to employing for useful purposes in company of the poor and pious people: They are quick and free to pass verdicts against others but they never pass a verdict against their own vicious deeds. They force others to obey them but they never obey Allah. They collect their dues carefully but never pay the dues they owe. They are not afraid of Allah but fear powerful men."

Current legal issues

English Version of *Al-Mustahdathat Minal Masaa'il Ash-Shari'a* according to the Edicts of Ayatullah al Uzama Syed Ali al-Husaini Sistani



ON HIRING A PERSON TO OFFER PRAYERS

After the death of a person, another person can be engaged to offer, on payment of wages, those prayers and other acts of worship which the dead person did not offer during his lifetime. And it is also in order if a person offers the services without taking payment for it.

A person can accept engagement to offer some Mustahab acts like Ziyarat, Umrah, Hajj, on behalf of living persons. Also he can perform some Mustahab acts, and dedicate their thawab to living or dead persons.

A person who is hired to offer the qadha prayers of a dead person, should be a Mujtahid, or should know the rules of the prayers correctly according to Taqleed, or should act according to precaution, provided that he knows fully on what occasions precaution is to be observed.

At the time for making niyyat, the hired person must specify the dead person, but it is not necessary that he should know his/her name. Hence, it is enough if he intends: "I am offering prayers for the person on whose behalf I am hired."

The hired person should act with the niyyat that he is acting to discharge the obligation of the dead person. It will not be enough if he performs and dedicates its thawab to the dead person.

One who hires a person, should be satisfied that the hired person will perform the act for which he is hired.

If it transpires that the person hired

for offering prayers for a dead person has not performed it, or has performed incorrectly, another person should be hired for the purpose.

If a person doubts whether or not the hired person has performed the act, and in spite of the hired person's assurance, he is not satisfied, he must hire another person. But if he doubts whether or not the hired person has performed it correctly, he should presume that it has been correct.

A person who has some excuse (for example, if he offers prayers with tayammum or in a sitting position) should never be hired for offering prayers for a dead person, even if the prayers of the dead person may have become qadha that way.

A man can be hired on behalf of a woman, and a woman can be hired on behalf of a man, and in the matter of offering prayers loudly or silently, the hired person should act according to his/her own obligation.

Observing order is not obligatory for the qadha prayers of a dead person, except in the case of prayers whose performance is prescribed in an order like, Zuhr and Asr prayers or Maghrib and Isha prayers of one day.

If it is agreed with the hired person that he will accomplish it in a particular manner, the hired person should follow the agreement. If nothing has been agreed, then he can perform according to his own obligation. And the recommended precaution is that between his own obligation and that of

the dead person, he should choose that which is nearer to precaution - for example if the obligation of the dead person was to say Tasbihat Arba'ah (recital of the third or fourth Rakat while standing) three times, and his own obligation is to say it once, he should recite three times.

If it is not agreed with the hired person how many Mustahab acts he will perform, he should perform as much as is usual.

If a person engages several people for offering the qadha prayers of a dead person, it is necessary that he should fix a time for each one of them.

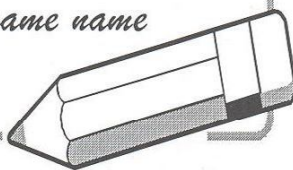
If, a hired person agrees to offer the prayers of a dead person within one year, but he dies before the year ends, another person should be hired to offer the uncompleted prayers. And if he feels that the hired person probably did not offer some prayers, even then, as an obligatory precaution, another person should be hired.

If a person hired for offering the prayers of a dead person, dies before offering all the prayers, and if he had taken wages for all the prayers, if the hirer has placed a condition that he would offer all the prayers himself, the hirer can take back the proportionate amount of wages for the remaining prayers. Or he can cancel the contract and pay an adequate sum. And if it was not agreed that the hired person would offer all the prayers himself, then the heirs of the deceased should pay from his estate, and engage another person to complete the task. And if there is nothing in the estate, it is not obligatory upon the heirs.

If the hired person dies before offering all the qadha prayers of the dead, and if he himself had some qadha of his own, if there is any residue from his estate after acting according to the above rule, someone should be hired to perform all his qadha if he has willed, and his heirs give permission. And if they do not permit, his one-third (thuluth) should be spent for the qadha prayers.

Your Questions Answered

by Maulana Sayed Saeed Akhtar Rizvi
from his book by the same name



Are we made of clay or dust?

Q. A Christian teacher said to me that if what the Holy Qur'an says about man (that he was created of clay) is true, then why do we not find any trace of dust or clay in the human body? He was referring to the verse, "And certainly We created man of clay...(Qur'an 15:26). Please enlighten me on this issue.

A. Water is made of oxygen and hydrogen. Why do we not see these gases in water? Of course when water disintegrates then each of its components goes its separate way and can then be seen. Likewise, when man's body disintegrates after death most of it turns into dust, thus proving that it was made of dust or clay.

The Bible too has the following statements in relation to this: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." (Genesis 2:7).

(God said to Adam)--"...till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shall thou return." (Genesis 3:19). This is normally spoken by Christian priests during funeral services.

Q. Why do we often call Allah (SWT) as "Khuda" while in His 99 names this has not been mentioned?

A. The 99 names are in Arabic language. Other languages have got their own words to refer to Allah (SWT). "Khuda" is a Persian word also used in Urdu and some other languages.

Q. At times I have been driven to despair. I have generally been depressed since I rarely get what I aspire for. Any way out of this?

A. I think the second part of your question is the clue to your problem. Remember that nobody can ever get all the he aspires for. Human ambition always remains high. Man's aspirations are limitless while the provisions of this world are limited. Naturally it results in dissatisfaction for most of the people. Its cure is found in the sayings of our Imams who have given us this advice: "In material things, do not look at those who are above you; rather look at those who are below you; while in spiritual things, you should look at those who are higher than you."

When you do look at those who are less fortunate than you, you become sincerely grateful to Allah (SWT) that He has given you so much more than many of your fellow human beings. And when you look at those who have attained a higher spiritual status, you will be inspired to reach nearer to them.

Contentment with what Allah (SWT) has given you is the key to satisfaction, the cure of depression and the only way to overcome worldly worries.

It is also important to remember Allah Ta'ala in all conditions --- in comfort and discomfort, in affluence and poverty, in health and in sickness. Allah (SWT) says in the Holy Qur'an: Those who believe and whose hearts are set at rest by the remembrance of Allah; now surely by Allah's remembrance are the hearts set at rest." (Qur'an, Sura 13, Verse 28).

Q. Dr. Jassim Husain writes in his book 'Occultation of the Twelfth Imam', that the view that Imam Mahdi's mother was a Byzantine princess is incorrect. He concludes

with proof that his mother was a Nubian slave girl! Do you agree with his deductions?

A. Jassim Husain is a good Muslim. But in this matter he has not understood the hadith correctly. Remember that merely being an Englishman does not make one competent to understand every book on philosophy, physics, chemistry or higher mathematics, just because they are written in English. The same is the case with Islamic subjects including hadith.

Our 8th Imam (AS) had no son until he was 46 years of age. Then Imam Muhammad Taqi (AS) was born from a Nubian slave girl. Not surprisingly, his complexion was not fair; so much so that his enemies used to spitefully call him "Aswad" (Black).

The other fact which Jasim Husain has overlooked is that, because of the political prominence and greatness of our 8th Imam (AS) not only the 9th Imam (AS) but even the 10th and 11th Imams (AS) were called "Ibnur-Rida" (the son of ar-Rida). By the same token, all of them could be called "Ibnun Nubiah" (son of the Nubian lady).

Keeping this background information in mind, the relevant parts of the hadith quoted by Jassim Husain refer to narrations by Kulayni (RA) not in the chapter concerning Sahibul Asr (AS) but in the one concerning "Indication and Declaration (of Imamate) about Abu Jafar (AS)" i.e. Imam Muhammad Taqi (AS).

It is a long hadith describing how the uncles and brothers of Imam Rida (AS) showed their annoyance saying that "There never was a dark-complexioned Imam among us." Then they, on their own, called some experts of physiognomy (al-Qiyafah--the art of judging someone's parentage by studying his features), although it was not recognised in Islam at all. But the Imam (AS) did not prevent them, in order to complete his evidence and proof against them. Those experts, who did not know anyone in the gathering, unanimously pointed to the 8th Imam(AS) as the father of the child.

" Ali ibn Jafar (the uncle of the 8th Imam AS) says: "Then I stood up and

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*Your
Questions
Answered*

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kissed the mouth of Abu Jafar (the 9th Imam AS) until his saliva entered my mouth; then I said to him: "I bear witness that you are my Imam in presence of Allah." Then ar-Rida (AS) wept and said: "O uncle! Did not you hear my father saying: "The Messenger of Allah (SWT) has said: "May my father be sacrificed for the son of the best of the slavegirls, the son of the Nubian girl, of pleasant mouth, of a chosen womb. (Woe on them, may Allah curse the low Abbasid and his progeny, the companion of mischief!!) And he will kill them for years and months and days; and he will humiliate them and make them drink a bitter cup; and he is the exiled fugitive whose father and grandfather will be (unjustly) killed; the man of occultation (about whom) it will be said: Did he die or perish? In which valley did he go?" Then the Imam AS said: "Will this happen, O uncle except through me?. I said: "You are right, may I be your ransom!"

The 8th Imam, Ali ar-Rida (AS) by narrating that hadith of the Prophet (SAW) wanted to show to his uncle that the Prophet had called the 12th Imam (AS) 'the son of the Nubian girl', and it was not to happen "except through me", because the 8th Imam did marry the Nubian girl who gave birth to the great-grandfather of the 12th Imam, and thus he would be the son of that Nubian mother, in the same way as he would be the son of Imam ar-Rida (AS).

The sentence, "will this happen, O uncle! except through me?" clearly shows that it was Imam Ali ar-Rida (AS) who was destined to marry a Nubian lady and not Imam Hasan Askari (AS).

Federation Samachar

An attempt on the Internet to fabricate the Quran?

According to information received from some readers over the Internet, an article informing Muslims on the attempt to fabricate Chapters of the Quran was carried in the "Hong Kong Muslim Herald" of Safar 1420 A.H.(May,1999). An excerpt follows:

Quote: As of late, the "(in)"famous American website AOL has gone on an offensive similar to that of Salman Rushdie's Satanic Verses.

The AOL being the most attended site has done so by attributing a number of fabricated Chapters to the Holy Quran, distorting the Holy Book through insertion of parts from the Bible as well.

The four fabricated Chapters are as follows:

1. "Al Tajassod" - The Incarnation consisting of 15 verses.
2. "Al-Iman" - The Faith - consisting of 10 verses.
3. "Al-Muslemoon" - The Muslims - consisting of 11 verses.
4. "Al-Wassaya" - The Recommendations - consisting of 16 verses.

(AOL)'s program starts with an English translation (of the authentic) verse 23 of the Quranic chapter "Al-Baqarah" that reads: "And if you are in doubt as to that which we have revealed to our servant, then produce a chapter like it and call on your witnesses besides Allah, if you are truthful."

Then come the feigned Verses - which the culprits have tried to introduce as truly Quranic - in grave contrast with the divine ones. The English translation of the fake chapter, "Al Tajassod" allegedly referring to the holy messenger of Allah - Jesus....."Quote ends".

The full transcript of the article can be obtained at either of the following two addresses:

bkhuda@yahoo.com or sheni110@yahoo.com

In a light vein....

GOOD-BYE MOTHER

A young man was walking through a supermarket to pick a few things when he noticed an old lady following him around. Thinking nothing of it, he ignored her and continued on.

Finally he went to the checkout line, but she got in front of him. "Pardon me," she said, "I'm sorry if my staring at you has made you feel uncomfortable. It's just that you look just like my son, who just died recently." "I'm very sorry," replied the young man, "Is there anything I can do for you?"

"Yes," she said, "As I'm leaving, can you say 'Good bye mother!' it would make me feel much better." "Sure," answered the young man. As the old woman was leaving, he called out, "Good bye mother!" and felt quite good about himself that he did a good deed and made someone feel happy. As he stepped up to the checkout counter, he saw that his total was almost three times his own bill. "How can that be?" he asked, "I only purchased a few things!" "Your mother said that you would pay for her," said the clerk.

Approaching the Qur'an, truly and completely

"A Book which has been sent down to you, full of blessings that you may ponder over its verses, and that men of understanding may take heed." [TMQ 38:29] With the loss of Islam as a way of life, came a loss of the correct approach to the Qur'an. The Qur'an came to be regarded as a book to be left at the very margins of life. Muslims came to accept that the Qur'an would only be brought for recitation, memorisation and for listening. As the Ummah increases in its awareness of Islam, there is now however a burning desire within true Muslims to regard the Qur'an in its true, complete sense and a dissatisfaction with anything less than that.

The purpose of the Qur'an

All true Muslims perceive man's necessity for a Message from Allah (swt) to guide them towards understanding Allah's (swt) commands. Devoid of this Message from Allah (swt) man would be left wandering aimlessly in the wilderness of his own whims and desires. As such, why the Qur'an was revealed will determine its purpose and the manner it should be approached. If this is not understood the Qur'an will not produce the desired effect in the life of the Islamic Ummah. There would be a grave danger that Muslims would inherit the Qur'an in the same manner that Greeks inherit Greek philosophy.

Allah (swt) informs humankind as to the purpose of the Qur'an in several verses, thus ensuring we approach it correctly. Allah (swt) says: "*Blessed is He who sent down the criterion (Furqan) to His servant that it may be an admonition to all creatures.*" [TMQ 25:1]

"This is the Book; in it is guidance (huda) sure without doubt to those who fear Allah." [TMQ 2:1]

"O humankind! There has come to you a direction (mau'izatun) from your Lord and a healing for the (diseases) in your hearts and for those who believe a Guidance (huda) and a Mercy (rahmah)." [TMQ 10:57]

Thus, the Qur'an was revealed to provide guidance and direction to our thinking, our emotions and our actions. The scope of subjects addressed by the Qur'an is both general and comprehensive and includes our friends, our brothers, our government, our enemies, our families and the world. We must then utilise the Qur'an

to mould and evaluate all these matters.

Mushrikoon and munafiqoon approach the Qur'an

At the time of the Prophet Muhammad (saw), the *mushrikoon* (disbelievers) and the *munafiqoon* (hypocrites) would approach the Qur'an in a manner that was not in harmony with its purpose. Therefore, they would never truly benefit of it. The disbelievers of Makkah would secretly listen to the recitation of the Qur'an by the Muslims. This was not to benefit from the verses in a manner concordant with its purpose. So, they would not be motivated by a desire to act upon them. Rather their approach was motivated by a whole host of motives, ranging from curiosity to fear. "*When you recite the Qur'an We put between you and those who believe not in the Hereafter a veil invisible.*"

"And We put coverings over their hearts (and minds) lest they should understand the Qur'an and deafness into their ears, when you commemorate your Lord and Him alone in the Qur'an they turn on their backs fleeing (from the Truth)."

"We know best why it is they listen when they listen to you; and when they meet in private conference. Behold the wicked say 'You follow none other than a man bewitched!'" [TMQ 17:45-47]

Others from Makkah would wait for the recitation of Qur'an and would pour scorn upon it, ridiculing Islam, the Qur'an, Prophet Muhammad (saw) and the Muslims. They would do this by reciting deeply offensive poetry in the fairs and in the market place. Nonetheless, they too would be keen

to hear the Qur'an to provide them with some basis for their poetic material. An-Nadr ibn Harith would listen to the Qur'an and then relate ancient tales of the Persians in public in an attempt to trivialise the verses of Allah (swt) which the Prophet (saw) had recited to the people. Ibn Hisham narrates that An-Nadr would always append his talk with questions cunningly enquiring if he did not outdo Muhammad (saw).

The *munafiqoon* would also be anxious to hear about the *ayaat* revealed in case they exposed them by name or deed, thus they would listen to the Qur'an. *The hypocrites are afraid lest a surah should be sent down about them showing them what is (really passing) in their hearts. Say: 'Mock but verily Allah will bring to light all that you fear (should be revealed).'*" [TMQ 9:64]

So, clearly it does matter how the Qur'an is approached. It is therefore not correct to be satisfied merely with only listening or reading it. Otherwise the attitudes of the disbelievers and the hypocrites would be considered acceptable.

The Qur'an itself espouses many virtues (*fadail ul-Qur'an*), such as the reward in its memorisation and recitation, not to mention the powerful effect it has upon the listener. However, some Muslims would then erroneously maintain that its many virtues omit the need to search for its purpose. They may say that it is sufficient to realise that the Qur'an is a universal book, for all humankind for all times, and that to dwell on how

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we should approach the Qur'an is unnecessary and will distract from seeking its virtues. They observe that people benefit from the Qur'an in different ways and as such no-one should interfere as this would be unreasonable, even un-Islamic.

The following are contemporary examples of where Muslims confuse virtues of the Qur'an with its purpose, and the dangerous implications thereof.

Qur'an is not just for consolation, memorisation and recitation

Some Muslims may feel that the purpose of the Qur'an is so that the ordeals of life may be borne with patience and dignity. Knowing full well that life for man is a struggle and full of disappointments, some may argue that Allah (swt) revealed the Qur'an solely so that when man is at his lowest point with respect to morale, he may be uplifted and rejuvenated when the verses of Allah (swt) are recited to him. We may find that the recitation of Qur'an will fill the houses of those who have recently been bereaved, yet little heed will be paid to the meaning.

Though the beautiful recitation of the Qur'an does have a unique effect upon man, it does not mean that the Qur'an was revealed solely for this effect. When this virtue is confused with the purpose, it leads to a dangerous situation. Such Muslims will have little cause during their lives to turn to the Qur'an in any form whatsoever, other than at times of severe strife or stress. And even at such times for a limited use.

Also, the sincere love of Islam drives many Muslims to take memorisation (*hifz*) and recitation (*qira'ah*) of Qur'an seriously. And rightly so, its recital and memorisation carry much reward from Allah (swt).

Accordingly, Muslims insist on sending their children to *madrassah* for this very purpose, and feel a great sense of accomplishment when their child completes the reading of Qur'an, or memorises its entire contents. Other Muslims may wish to excel in the

"Clearly it does matter how the Qur'an is approached. It is not correct to be satisfied merely with only listening or reading it. Otherwise the attitudes of the disbelievers and the hypocrites would be considered acceptable."

recitation of Qur'an, while others may choose to seek the reward of listening to a recitor (*qaari*).

The point here is that memorisation or recital of the Qur'an alone is simply insufficient for Muslims. For these must be accompanied by sound belief and complementary actions. Yassir ibn 'Amr (ra) narrates; 'I asked Sahl bin Hunaif, 'Did you hear the Prophet saying anything about Al-Khawarij?' He said, 'I heard him saying while pointing his hand towards Iraq, **"There will appear in it (i.e, Iraq) some people who will recite the Qur'an but it will not go beyond their throats, and they will go out from (leave) Islam as an arrow darts through the body."**'"

Approaching the Qur'an in its complete sense

Thus, it is unacceptable to overlook or deny the purpose of the Qur'an while seeking its virtues. Believing in the Qur'an is not enough, nor is its recitation and memorisation. The Islamic Ummah has declined because it did not use the Qur'an productively. Productive use of the Qur'an entails using it as a standard by which to judge all matters and to use it to determine how change will be produced. Subsequently, the Muslim will become a force of change opposing all that contradicts the verses of Allah (swt) he has recited.

"And this (He commands): Judge between them by what Allah has revealed and follow not their vain desires but beware of them lest they beguile you from any of that which Allah has sent down to you." [TMQ 5:49]

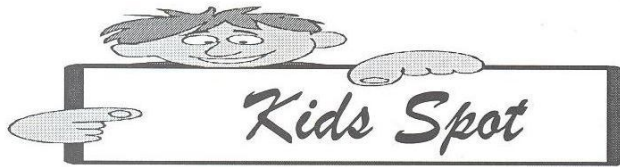
The Muslims have the Qur'an today in exactly the same form as was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (saw). The Qur'an is protected by

Allah (swt), its contents are pure and untampered with. However, if the Muslims approach it incorrectly then how can they expect to benefit from it? It would be little consolation for the believers to have the Qur'an preserved, only to have it then discarded, albeit in its preserved form. While it is true that the Qur'an addresses the individual, the address directs the individual to change himself, his family, his surroundings, this Ummah, the society within which he lives and indeed all societies i.e. the world. Islam gives the Muslims a yardstick by which to evaluate the political and economic matters as well as doctrinal and ritualistic matters.

The way forward

One of the many steps along the path to revival would be for Muslims to understand the Qur'an and its purpose correctly, thereby facilitating our return to our rightful place as leaders of humankind. The Qur'an should manifest in every aspect of the life of a true believer every day. He should read it every day, recite it, memorise it, act upon it and contemplate over its bounteous gifts. It should be the basis around which his thoughts and emotions are formed. The Qur'an must be his guide, creating a desire within him to ensure that his society and all societies live according to their true purpose. He will approach the Qur'an intending that the light of its guidance will not just illuminate his soul but the life of the entire world. Allah (swt) revealed, *"They only are the (true) believers whose hearts feel fear when Allah is mentioned, and when the revelations of Allah are recited unto them they increase their faith, and who trust in their Lord; Who establish worship and spend of what We have bestowed on them."* [TMQ 8:2,3]

Kids Spot



PELLING



ORDS

There are some words, no matter how many times you use them, you still have to look them up in the dictionary. Okay there is a spell-check function on a computer but it doesn't catch every mistake. Besides, isn't it better to know the spelling yourself?

Dear children, here is a rule that applies to thousands of hard-to-spell words by explaining when you have to double the last letter of a word in order to add an ending (or suffix) and when you don't.

When you add an ending to a word, look carefully at the last two letters of that word. If the word ends with a consonant preceded by a single vowel, then double that consonant and add the ending.

For instance: begin + ing = beginning

However, when a word ends in a consonant preceded by two vowels, do not double the consonant, just add the ending.

For instance: appear + ing = appearing

Finally, if a word ends in two consonants, do not double any consonants, just add the ending.

For instance: send + ing = sending

This spelling rule applies when the word is either one syllable or accented on the last syllable, and when the suffix you are adding starts with a vowel.

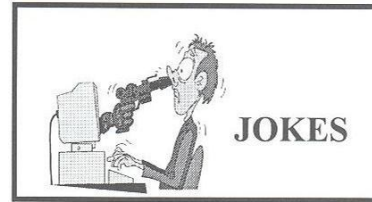
To test yourself, choose the correct spelling in each of the following:

1. a. occurence b. occurrence
2. a. trainning b. training
3. a. refering b. referring
4. a. controllable b. controlable
5. a. formated b. formatted
6. a. forgetable b. forgettable
7. a. submitted b. submitted
8. a. seemed b. seemmed
9. a. prefering b. preferring
10. a. insistted b. insisted
11. a. transfered b. transferred
12. a. accountting b. accounting

Solution:

1-b, 2-b, 3-b, 4-a, 5-b, 6-b, 7-a, 8-a, 9-b, 10-b, 11-b, 12-b.

Federation Samachar



Interview

Three guys go in for a job interview, all at the same office.

The first one goes in for his interview and the interviewer asks, "What's the first thing you see when you see me?"

The guy says, "That's not too hard, you've got no ears."

The interviewer says, "That's it, get out, you'll never be seen here again."

The second man takes his turn and is asked the same question. The applicant replies, "Uh, you've got no ears."

The interviewer throws the guy out, cursing and yelling that he'll never get a job with his company.

As the second guy is leaving, the second guy warns the third guy, "Listen man, whatever you do, don't say he hasn't got any ears. He's so touchy with the ear thing."

"Okay," said man number 3 on his way into the office.

Once inside he is told, "Name the first thing you notice when you look at me."

The guy answers, "That's easy, you wear contacts."

The interviewer was flabbergasted, "How on earth did you know that, son?"

The applicant answered, "Well, you can't wear glasses, you've got no ears!"

Treating a dead dog

A man took his dog to the Vet. He said, "Dr. I think my dog is dead." The Vet told him to put the dog on the table and then left the room. Soon he came back with a cat. The cat sniffed the dogs ears, his nose and then walked all over him. The Vet said "Yep, your dog is dead. That will be 5000/- and 3500/-." The man said, "What for?" The Vet said, "3500/- for the office visit and 5000/- for the cat scan."

Contrasting colours

Girl: "Why is the bride dressed in white?"

Mother: "White is the color of joy, and today is the most joyful day of her life."

Girl: "Then why is the groom wearing black?"



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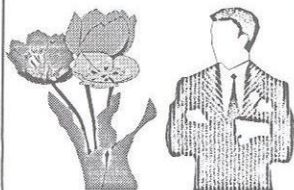


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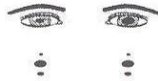
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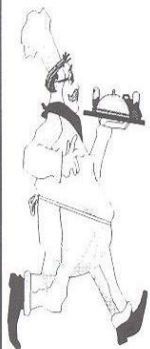
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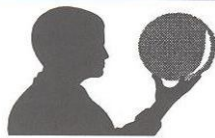
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The importance of daily prayers

The importance of daily prayers can be determined from the following quotes: And He (Allah) said (which means): Woe unto those performers of prayers (hypocrites) who are unmindful of their prayers (i.e., delay their prayer from its stated fixed time). [Al-Maa'oon, 107:4-5]

And He (Allah) said (which means): "O you who believe! Let not your properties or your children divert you from the remembrance of Allah. And whosoever does that, then they are the losers." [Al-Munafiqoon (The Hypocrites), 63:9]

The commentators of the Quran say: "The 'remembrance of Allah' mentioned in these Ayah means the five daily prayers. If anyone is so busy in buying and selling, or with his daily work of earning a livelihood, or with his children, that he cannot perform prayers on time, he will be among the losers."

The first thing, which will be judged among a man's deeds on the Day of Resurrection, is the Prayer. If this is in good order then he will succeed and prosper but if it is defective then he will fail and will be a loser. [Nasaa'i, Tirmidhi, Ibn Maajah]

Informing us about the inhabitants of Hell, Allah Most High says (which means): "(The people in Hell will be asked:) What has caused you to enter Hell? They will say: We were not among those who used to pray. Nor did we feed the poor. And we used to talk falsehood (all that which Allah hated) with vain-talkers. And we used to belie the Day of Recompense. Until there came to us that which is certain (i.e. death). So no Intercession of intercessors will benefit them" [Al-Muddaththir, 74:42-48]

The Prophet said (which means): "The covenant between them and us is prayer, so if anyone abandons it he has become a disbeliever."

And he also said (which means): "What lies between a man and disbelief is the abandonment of prayer."

And he said (which means): "If anyone abandons prayer deliberately then he has no claim upon Allah."

"The one who does not pray is a disbeliever" Hazrat Ali (AS)

And he said (which means): "I have been ordered to fight against the people until they testify that there is no one worthy of worship but Allah and that Muhammad (SAW) is the Messenger of Allah and until they perform the Prayers and pay the Zakah, and if they do so they will have gained protection from me for their lives and property, unless [they do acts that are punishable] in accordance with Islam, and their reckoning will be with Allah Most High."

And he, mentioning the prayer, said (which means): "If anyone keeps to it, it will be light, evidence and salvation for him on the Day of Resurrection. But if anyone does not keep to it, it will not be light, evidence and salvation for him on the Day of Resurrection."

According to one source it is narrated that: "The Companions of the Prophet did not consider the abandonment of any good deed to be disbelief except the abandonment of the Prayer."

When Hazrat Ali (AS) was asked about a woman who did not pray, he said: "The one who does not pray is a disbeliever."

Ibn Masood (R) said: "The one who abandons the prayer has no religion." Muhammad bin Nasr Al Mirwazie Ibn 'Abbas (R) said: "The one who leaves off a single prayer deliberately will find, when he meets Allah Most High, that He (T) is angry with him." [Muhammad bin Nasr Al-Mirwazi, Ibn Abdul-Barr]

Ibn Hazm said: "There is no greater sin after polytheism than delaying a prayer until its time has passed and killing a believer without a just cause."

Ibraheem Al-Nakhai said: "The one who has abandoned the prayer has become a disbeliever." Aboo Ayyub Al-Sakhtiyane said something similar to this. Ibn Hazm writes conclusively: "It has come from Umar, Abdur-Rahman bin Awf, Mu'aadh bin Jabal, Aboo Hurayrah and other companions that anyone who skips one obligatory prayer until its time has finished becomes an apostate. We find no difference of opinion among them on this point."

Al Mundhiri in AT-TARGHEEB WA AT-TARHEEB also mentioned this. Then he comments: "A group of Companions and those who came after them believed that an intentional decision to skip one prayer until its time is completely finished makes one an unbeliever."

Allah Most High says (which means): "Then there has succeeded them a generation which has given up prayers (i.e., made their prayers to be lost, either by not offering them at all or by not offering them perfectly or by not offering them in their proper fixed times, etc.) and have followed lusts. So they will be thrown in Hell. Except those who repent and believe in the Oneness of Allah and His Messenger (SAW), and act righteously." [Maryam, 19:59-60].

The Opinion page is open to readers who wish to pen in their thoughts on any Islamic or thought-provoking subject. Editor

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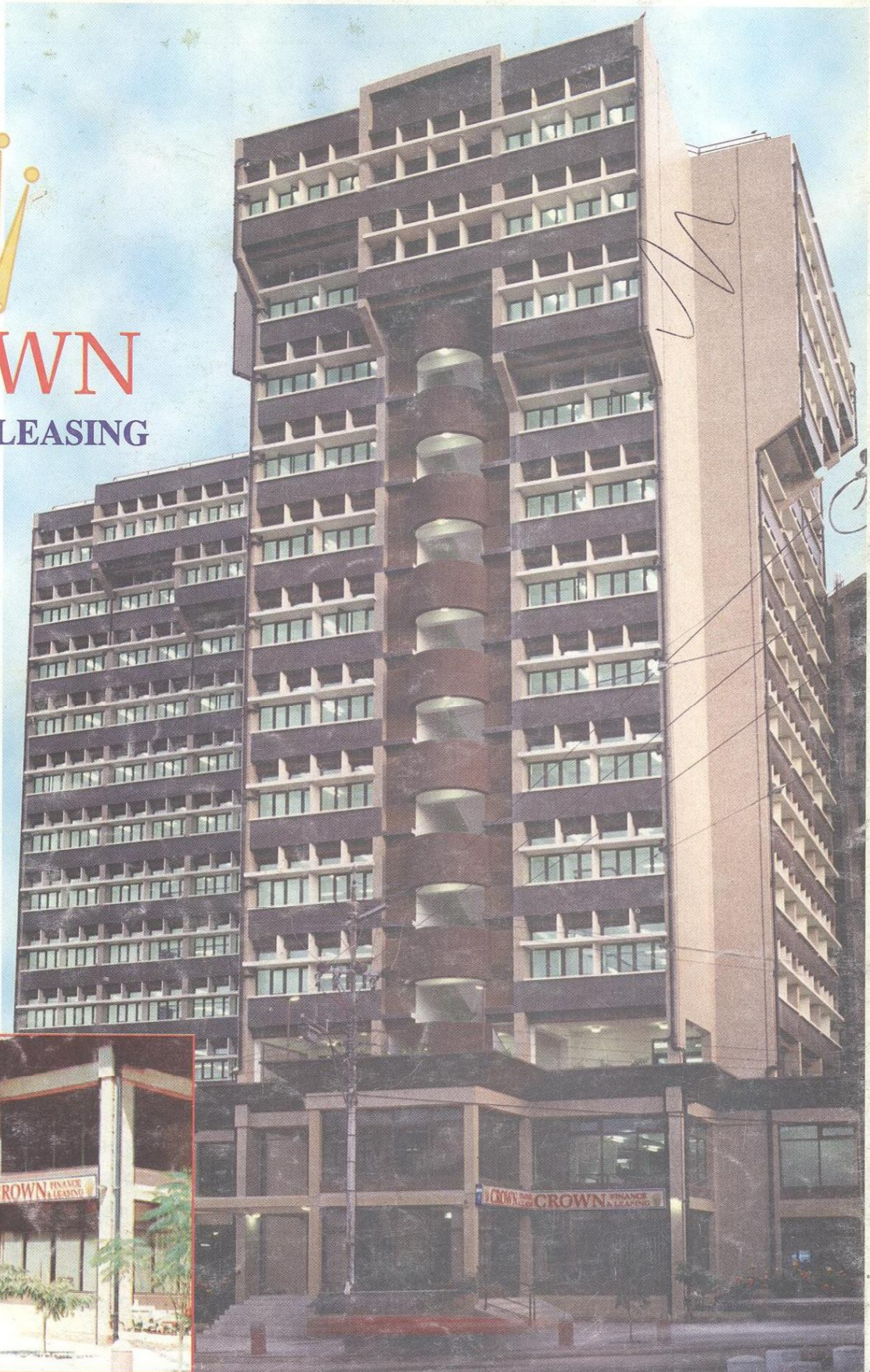
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