



10 Days in Iran



Pictured In Qum, from left to right, Maulana (Dr.) Shabbir Maisami, Alhaj Habib J. Mulji, Hujjatul Islam Seyyid Jawad Gulpaegani, Alhaj Ahmed Bhalloo and Alhaj Maalim Ahmed Issa Hasham.

Federation Samachar

Volume 27, No. 2
Rajab 1413 A.H., January, 1993

A publication of the Federation of Khoja
Shia Ithna Asheri Jamaats of Africa.

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Inside-Special Feature on our Late Marja

THE Chairman of the Africa Federation, Alhaj Habib Jafferli Mulji made a special ten-day visit to Iran at the end of November, 1992 to pay homage to our Marja-e-Taqleed, Aya'tullah Al-Ozema Seyyed Muhammad Ridha Gulpaegani and convey salaams from our Community members domiciled in Africa.

In Iran, Alhaj Habibbhai was joined by Alhaj Ahmed Bhalloo, President of the North American Shia Ithn-asheri Muslim Communities Organisation (NASIMCO) which like the Africa Federation, is also a member of the World Federation.

The two regional leaders were received by the Marja in Qum on 19 November, 1992 (23 Jamadi-ul - Avval, 1413). Inspite of his

advanced age, the Marja appeared very alert and well engaged in the affairs of the marajiat. He was well informed about the various regional federations of the Khojas, particularly the Africa Federation.

The Marja is a busy personality who has many visitors daily from different parts of the world. Alhaj Habibbhai and Ahmedbhai were however promptly received according to a prior appointment and had an exclusive audience for about 30 minutes.

During their visit the two regional leaders were accompanied by Alhaj Maalim Ahmed Issa Hasham of Dar es salaam who speaks fluent Farsi and happened to be in Iran for

[continued on page 6]



.....WHILE THE HEART BEATS

THE ESSENCE OF KHUMS IJAZAS

The community has for the past half century had the blessing and the good fortune of a common Taqleed of one Marja successively from As-Seyyed Burujardi, then As-Seyyed Muhsin Hakim to As-Seyyed Al-Khui and now Ayatullah Al-ozema Seyyed Muhammad Ridha Gulpaegani.

Unity, brotherhood and a sense of common identity and belonging have hence been consolidated through the community observing religious occasions like Idd and performing ritual ceremonies on common dates.

Issues pertaining to matrimony, divorce, iddat, guardianship over children also apply commonly to both the husband and wife and similarly details of rituals and other obligations in the Hajj being common, the entire performance is in unison among the Hujjaj of the community. These are only a few examples.

True communal living obviates the need for segregated and fragmented congregations in observance of religious occasions or in performance of A'maals and wajibaat. Otherwise duplication of and rivalry in ceremonies would become a common feature to be endured with unpredictable results - - like Management committees of Jamaats lacking a common stand and loyalty!

There is another blessing and a good fortune derived from a common taqleed of one Marja. This is in the form of a centralised authority vested in the community for collection and administration of khums.

There was a time when a number of individuals in the community, as also immigrant ulémas regardless of their position, relation, experience or standing within the community would be seen moving around with Ijazas of various scope, competing in soliciting and collecting khums and rivalling in attainment of personal glory from their 'benevolence' at the expense of the money of Saheb-ul-Asr.

Because these Ijaza-holders were not obliged to be accountable to the 'source' i.e. the community on the administration of khums, their projects, beneficiaries, transactions and priorities were influenced by their personal discretion, acumen and by limited or erroneous sight or knowledge of realities.

These weaknesses did not permit transparency. On the contrary they represented a power in the name of religion capable of undermining the loyalty of members to their jamaats and the authority of jamaats over their members.

A small glorification was enough to entice the Imam's money to establish and provide for a rival jamaat in opposition to the main jamaat in a town.

This unhealthy situation was however remedied when Marhoom Al-haj Ebrahimbhai Sheriff, as the Chairman of the Africa Federation, succeeded through perseverance and co-ordination with the Marja of the time in establishing a tradition which reflected wisdom and foresight in the interest of the community.

According to the new tradition, a formal Ijaza is held by the Chairman of the Africa Federation which, though in his personal name, importantly remained effective only while he continued to be in office.

This tradition which still continues and will hopefully continue in the years to come, enables collection and utilization of khums to be centrally controlled, planned and executed according to the priorities and merits at the entire community level regionwise with utilisations being accounted for.

Since this tradition commenced, a confidence was generated to prompt payments direct to the community though local jamaats where none was forthcoming before. Hence this blessed tradition has since been emulated by the World Federation and other regional federations with great success and to the satisfaction of the Marja.

Now that the Tradition has proved its worthiness in the interest of the entire community, we are confident that no one will have the heart while it beats to directly or indirectly, knowingly or unknowingly constitute a cause or lend himself as a means for the tradition to be undermined and thus fling the community back to where it was 30 years ago.

Let us pray that Allah (S.W.T.) reward in abundance all those who were responsible for the establishment and continuation of the tradition and grant tafwiq to all so as to inspire wisdom and foresight to ensure that individuals' self-importance is subordinated to the lasting interest of the community, when even greater and worthier things have been sacrificed by those who have left us but their remembrance is a fragrance that lingers to inspire.

EDITORS

Readers' Felicitations TO OUR LATE MARJA

Saint of a great repute
And an outstanding scholar who endured the
Yoke of the Baa'thist criminals without
Yielding to their pressure, thus ensuring
Islam's supremacy, quashing evil
Designs of the Communist paganism.

A doyen sage whose
Benevolence and steadfastness in the face
Of the ordeal that befell him
Underlined the unwavering
Life long commitment to protect the

Quality of the centuries old
Academic institute for the training of
Students of Islam, founded by the great
Sheikh Toosi and nourished by the
Impeccable ulama to his last breath as the
Mentor in service of his 'Master of the Age'

Ending his noble mission without fail
Leaving behind inextinguishable lights of his
teachings.

Killed by the intense grief inflicted by the
Heinous regime which is
Obsessed in the
Unceasing spread of
Infidelity and injustice in order to
Extend its oppressive grip over Islamic Lands.

'Reader'

Salaams to the Seyyid

Salaams be on you Ya Seyyid
From all who did your taqlid
You guided us from ignorance
You gave us the light of knowledge
You promised us never to fall asleep
To guide Ummah, awake you would keep
You disappeared suddenly from us
For Allah wanted you to leave us
We promise never to forget your message

Or to let Islam drown in ignorance.
Ya Seyyid, you stood up alone
Against the great tortures of the world
You followed the example of
Imam Hassan in his silence
Ya Muhammad, accept his sacrifice
For you and God were his life
He was the light of guidance for us
He was the spiritual father to us
We promise never to forget his message
Or to let Islam drown in ignorance.

You endured falsehood in patience
It was difficult to make a livelihood
They tortured you in all possible means
To communicate, you weren't allowed and
You were made to walk over dead bodies
For you lived your life for the sake of Allah
You spent your life like a burning candle
To give light to others you were able to
We promise never to forget your message
Or to let Islam drown in ignorance.

To Seyyid Khui

O Seyyid Khui, we pray to God
To grant you a place in heaven.

Salaams to the well recognised personality
who acted upon Imam Hassan's peace treaty
He is not among those who are alive
To reach his aim he did strive.

He lived his life for the sake of others
For the Muslim Ummah he was the Father
Like him in the world would hardly be another.

He was silent over the tortures
Surprised by his action, were many creatures
He had all the support from his family and
Never was he bothered by any calamity

He saw relatives killed but was tacit
The world asks today why was he silent?
He knew his role was like Imam Hassan
In Iraq now was his pitiful turn.

Zishaan--Fatima H. Karim
Moshi, Tanzania.



USA Nationwide Directory Updated

Our community members in the USA are now more accessible, thanks to the Fourth revised edition of the Nationwide Directory of the Khoja Shia Ithna-Asheri Muslim Communities in the United States of America.

The Directory has been substantially changed from the previous issue and now includes work telephones and numbers of all our members' households in America.

With cellular phones in cars, many of our business people and travellers do not leave home without the Directory.

The first issue which was printed in March 1986 has been revised and updated consistently every two years. Compiled and produced by Gulamabbas Dhala who is the current Honorary Secretary of Los Angeles Jamaat, the Directory has been published by the Los Angeles Jamaat to consolidate the bonds of communal brotherhood and to enhance cultural and religious values within our community.

Copies can be obtained from Los Angeles Jamaat, P.O.Box 34309, Los Angeles, CA, 90034, at a minimum donation of \$10 or 5 Sterling pounds.

Financial Ease in India

We are informed by Alhaj Roshanali Haji Dawood Nasser of Bombay that the Government of India has to some extent liberalized Foreign exchange regulations there.

Reportedly under the new Regulations, 40% of money received in Foreign Currency in India is converted into Indian Rupees at the spot buying rate of the Reserve Bank of India and the balance 60% is converted at the on-going market rate.

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It is further reported that if a non-resident Indian National having a Non-Resident External (NRE) Account in India, deposits into or remits Foreign Currency for credit of his NRE Account, his Bank will credit him in Rupees for the entire amount at the on-going official Market rate and not the spot buying rate of the Reserve Bank of India.

This information may be particularly useful to those parents who have or intend to have educational commitments for their children to study in India.

Action for Muslims Cause now required in China

Muslims in China belong to various nationalities and inhabit some main regions in the country. Their main concentration is in Eastern Turkinstan which was occupied by Mao Tse-tung's troops in 1949, whereafter the name of this province was altered to 'Sinkiang' which means the 'new region.'

Sinkiang is the largest province in China with an area of 1.5 million square kilometres. The language of the province, which borders Pakistan, Nepal and Uzbekistan is very close to Turkish.

In the past, Muslims in this area endured extensive persecution and mass deportations and killings and it is for this reason that the number of emigrants from this area now living in different parts of the world is estimated at about 10 million people.

In October each year, Muslims of this province sorrowfully mark the anniversary of the forceful occupation of their country by the Chinese which led to the obliteration of their heritage, destruction of their holy places and the murdering of their prominent scholars.

The Chinese do not publish statistics of the

TEHRAN VISIT

[from cover page]

Ziyarat. The Marja was sentient to the visit and reciprocated by conveying salaams and duas to our Community. He also emphasised on the need for continuous tabligh in Africa.

After meeting the Marja, the two leaders had an exclusive session with his son, Hujjatul Islam Agha Seyyed Jawad who assists the Marja in daily administration and communications. In between his long session during which views and information were exchanged and notes taken, the visitors had lunch offered by the family of the Marja.

The cordial discussions that were held have helped to establish close and warm contact on a personal level with the Marja and his son Seyyed Jawad.

During the run of conversation, some important Mas'ala on the affairs of the Africa Federation, such as the higher education for female students overseas, were forwarded by the Chairman for discussion.

Prior arrangement was also made for the two regional leaders to have an audience with the Rahbar-e-Muazzam, Ayatullah Seyyed Ali Khamenei in Tehran on 16 November, 1992 (20 Jamadi-ul-Awwal, 1413).

The former Iranian President, who previously visited Tanzania, showed keen interest about the Community in Africa when Alhaj Habibbhai explained to him of our old and long settlement. He wished the Community well in its religious and worldly endeavours.

During the visit, Alhaj Habibbhai also paid a visit to the Islamic Propagation Organisation, International Relations Department and discussed issues of tabligh and scholarship for higher education in Iranian Universities with Hujjatul Islam, Aga Aliasgher Owahadi.

The Chairman also visited the Ministry of Foreign Affairs where he met Hujjatul Islam Aga Mohamed Sharif Mahdawi, the Director of Africa Desk who was

formerly the Iranian Ambassador to Kenya.

On the recommendation of the Ministry, a newspaper reporter interviewed Alhaj Habibbhai. Some questions dwelt on the history, national loyalty and patriotism of the Khoja Shia Community in the African countries which their forefathers had adopted as home and the Chairman answered these questions at length. He also pointed out the different tabligh activities undertaken by different Organisations of the Community.

Among the Institutions which Alhaj Habibbhai could visit were the modern Computer Centre established by our Marja, Ayatullah Gulpaegani and the Madinatul Ilm which is a large complex established by our late Marja Ayatullah Al-Khui, which consists of a Hawza and residential flats for teachers and students.

As his visit included a programme of Ziyarat to Mashhad and because his stay in Iran was brief, Alhaj Habibbhai could not avail himself of some offers of reception and hospitality from other Institutions but he welcomed the opportunity to meet and discuss Community affairs with Alhaj Mustafa Gokal and Alhaj Mohamed Hussein Kanji in Tehran.

Alhaj Habibbhai was seen off at Tehran Airport by a Ministry official who had also come to receive him on arrival. Alhaj Ahmedbhai [who was accompanied by his wife] proceeded to Pakistan.

Alhaj Habibbhai returned to Dar es salaam on 24 November, 1992 after a night's stop-over at Dubai, U.A.E where he was invited by the President of the Jamaat, Alhaj Mustafa Dhanji to meet the management Committee. During this meeting the Community was discussed in a global context.

The prompt visit by the two leaders to the Marja is commendable especially because it has helped to enlighten our Marja on the extent of our Communal activities and the seriousness with which religious affairs are handled and organised.

Muslims imprison religion into Mosques and in turn often become prisoners to the power of Kufr.

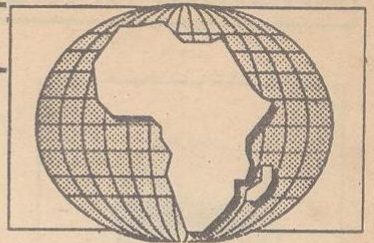
Money appears to be our primary objective. As a result, whilst we trust in God, we have faith in dollars.

Politicians and theologians use the power of words to sway their audience.

From Habib, Tanga.

AROUND AFRICA

ELECTION ROUND-UP



NAKURU :

The following were elected into office when the Nakuru Jamaat of Kenya held their elections in September, 1992 :



Saleem Parpia



Hassan Fazal



Murtaza Janmohamed

Hassan Y. Fazal
Murtaza A. Janmohamed
Mohamed H. Jaffer
Anverbhai A. Dato
Huseinbhai A. Jaffer

Chairman
Hon. Secretary
Hon. Treasurer
Member
Member

MWANZA :



Gulam Bhanji



Hussein Pirbhai

The following were elected into office when the Mwanza Jamaat of Tanzania held their elections in September, 1992 :

Gulam Bhanji	Chairman
Hussein Pirbhai	Vice Chairman
Saleem Parpia	Hon. Secretary
Shaheed Fazal	Hon. Jnt. Secretary
Rizwan Railey	Hon. Treasurer
Hussein Shariff	Member
Mehboob Abdulrasul	Member
Mehboob Rajbali	Member
Mohamed Dhalla	Member
Mohamedrafik Zavery	Member
Sibtain Meghjee	Member
Yusuf Manji	Member

NAIROBI :

The following were elected into office when the Nairobi Jamaat of Kenya held their elections in October, 1992 :

Zulfikar Khimji	Chairman
Akberali Karawalli	Vice Chairman
Hussein Lakha	Hon. Secretary
Shabbir Nanji	Asst. Secretary
Hasnain Khimji	Asst. Treasurer

DAR ES SALAAM :

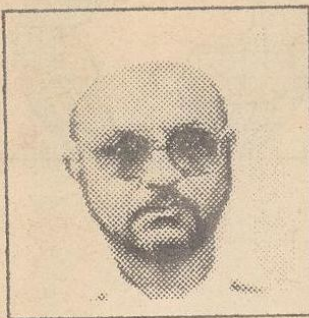


Aliraza Rajani

TANGA :

The following were elected into office when the Tanga Jamaat of Tanzania held their elections in October, 1992 :

Alhaj Gulamali Haji	Chairman
Shaukatali Dhirani	Vice Chairman
Mohamed Chandoo	Hon. Secretary
Shabbir Bhalloo	Hon. Jnt. Secretary
Anverali Fazal	Hon. Treasurer
Shaukathusein Ali	Hon. Jnt. Treasurer
Naushad Hassanali	Member
Sajjad Khakoo	Member



Hassanali Jaffer



Shaukat Jaffer

The following were elected into office when the Dar es salaam Jamaat of Tanzania held their elections in September, 1992 :

Aliraza Rajani	President
Hassanali Jaffer	Vice President
Shaukat Jaffer	Hon. Secretary
Mehboob Fazal	Hon. Jnt. Secretary
Mohamedtaki Rajwani	Hon. Treasurer
Roshan Fazal	Member
Mohamed Lalji	"
Mohamedraza Manji	"
Mohamedali Remtullah	"
Mohamed Manji	"
Abbas Manji	"
Mushtak Fazal	"

Wonder Baby in Chad

A baby born in Ndjamen, Chad recently drew public attention including that of the media and high ranking Government officials amongst whom were President Idris Dibli and Archbishop Charles Vandam.

On the baby's arm were two inscriptions of the name of the Holy Prophet Muhamad (s.a.w.) and whilst the local news agency, CAHDI, prominently featured the 'wonder' boy, television and newspapers carried his pictures.

The boy was also visited by a delegation of prominent clerics, headed by the Imam of N'Djamena mosque Sheikh Hasan Husein who wished to "make sure and verify for himself."

The large number of people visiting the baby prompted the Imam of the Capital's Mosque to move the infant and his parents, who were happy but also confused, to a hotel in a neighbourhood inhabited by an Islamic majority.

KISANGANI :

The following were elected into office when the Kisangani Jamaat of Zaire held their elections for the 1992-93 term :

Dewjee Habib Yousuf	President
Assaria Abdul	Hon. Secretary
Nazarali Amir	Hon. Treasurer
Visram Hussein	Member
Mamdani Akbar	Member

Mombasa miracle

According to reports in the Kenyan media, when lightning struck a village in Mombasa in mid December, 1992 the inscription - **La Illaha Muhamada Rasulilahi** was inscribed on the wall of one house.

Many people are reported to have visited the house to see the Arabic inscription and when the incident was first reported, many Muslims even closed their businesses to go and see the writing.

The lady house occupant reported that there was a loud noise accompanied by lightning before her 16year old daughter vociferously drew attention to the writing.

AROUND AFRICA

Council Appointments

The following appointments were recently made on the committees of the Supreme Council :-

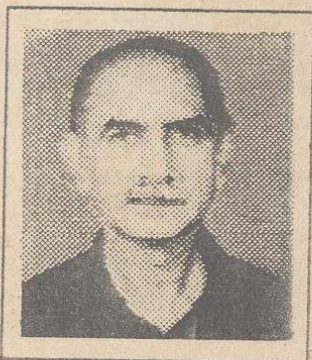
Tabligh Committee

1. Mohamed A. Nathani [Chairman]
2. Shabbir Dattoo
3. Mehboob J. Somji
4. Hassan R. Walli
5. Murtaza Jivraj
6. Mohamed Khalfan

Think Tank committee

1. Gulamabass Janmohamed [Chairman]
2. Mohamed Somji
3. Mohamedhusein Kermalli
4. Mustafa Chandoo
5. Murtaza Nanji

Meanwhile the Council Chairman, Alhaj Habib Mulji, in pursuance of Amendments to the Constitution adopted in the 18th Constitutional Conference, has made the following additional appointments:



Murtaza Nanji

Murtaza Abdulrasul Nanji (50) of Dar es salaam has been appointed as **Honorary assistant Secretary**. He has a diploma in education and has worked for 15 years as a school Master and English Department Head at the St. Joseph's Secondary School now known as the Forodhani Secondary School in Dar es salaam.

Subsequently he has worked for seven years as an Insurance Loss Adjustor and currently

operates an emporium in Dar es salaam.

His interests include reading, swimming and outdoor activities and though he has not had any social work experience prior to this appointment, he looks forward to fulfilling his job function effectively.

He is happily married with two daughters.



Ahmed Alloo

Ahmed Hussein Alloo (44) has been appointed as **Honorary assistant Treasurer**. He has studied upto Form VI and completed the Foundation Exams of the Association of Certified Accountants (A.C.C.A.). He currently is the Manager of Allied Printers and Traders.

His communal service dates back to 1973/4 when he served as Assistant Secretary of the Ithnaasheri Union and between 1978 and 1985 he served thrice more in the same capacity and also in the position of Assistant Honorary Secretary of Union Sports Club.

Simultaneously between 1973 and 1980 he also taught diniyat at the Hussein Society Boys Madressa in Dar es salaam.

His main interest is cricket and he has played for Union Sports Club for a number of seasons and has also umpired many matches organised by the Dar es salaam Cricket Association (DCA).

He is happily married with two children, a son and a daughter.

The two office bearers have been regularly attending meetings at the Secretariat and in this short time have very much become a part of the Council team.

AROUND AFRICA

Dubai hosts JIBA Conference

The 3rd JIBA International Conference was held at the Imperial Suite Hotel in Dubai on December 31, 1992 and January 1, 1993. Participants came from around the world and organisers reserved 50 suites for the Meet.

JIBA Chapters have now been formed in Toronto, Bombay, London, Paris, Dubai, Karachi and Dar es salaam. Formation of the Kenya and Uganda Chapters are in the pipeline.

In Europe, JIBA expects to establish Chapters in the main cities whilst in Kenya, formation was postponed to after the Country's General Elections.

Donation to Pemba Hospitals



The President of Dar es salaam Jamaat, Aliraza Rajani shakes hands with the President of Zanzibar, Dr. Salmin Amour at the Zanzibar State House after donating medicines worth Shs. 2.5 million to the Zanzibar Government for use in Pemba hospitals. The Dar delegation was joined by the Country's Junior Health Minister, Hon. Zakia Meghji.

Up the KILIMANJARO



SAJJAD [LEFT] AND MOHAMED [RIGHT] AT KINAPA GATE [6000 FT.]. Two Dar es salaam youths, Sajjad Vali and Mohamed Rafik recently ascended Mt. Kilimanjaro and Sajjad hoisted the Federation Flag at the Uhuru peak [which at 19,460 feet is the highest point in Africa]. Mohamed Rafik climbed to Gilman's Point [18,460 feet]. Both climbers reported that their physical endurance during the six day climb was tested to the limit. Sajjad has volunteered to accompany youth groups up the mountain. Those interested may contact him on :Tel. 36059.

Federation Samachar

Extract from our Marja-e-Taqleed, Ayatullah Al-Ozema Seyyed Muhammad Ridha Gulpaegani's Message condemning the desecration of the Babri Mosque in India.

✦ "MOSQUE HAS TO BE RESTORED" ✦

"The lamentable and dastardly attack on the Babri Mosque and its desecration has immersed the whole Islamic world in profound grief and pain.

The unprecedented crime indicates lawlessness and reflects the heedless minds of its perpetrators. They have obviously resorted to the dark era by violating all the accepted human values and insulting the good name of the people and the Government of India.

History will record this cowardly incident on its black page and the posterity will judge it as a shameful act of ignorance and religious bias. There seems to be no doubt now that the human rights and its high values have been trampled upon in India by the ignorant and mischievous elements.

Evidently, if the Government of India has not been able to resolve the crisis, then it is a rule which is unable to restore law and order in the country unless one is led to assume that the Government has purposely condoned the evil attack.

We know that the people of India have unequivocally condemned the outrage and have felt ashamed. Yet we would like to warn them of the dangerous repercussions if they do not rise to make amends and to redress the grievance of millions of Muslims by restoration of the Mosque, apologising to the Muslims and bringing the criminals to their senses by way of adequate punishment.

We express our deep disgust and condemnation at the outrageous crime and at the same time extend our sympathy to Muslims around the world.

On Wednesday, 14h Jamadi-ul-Thani 1413 Hijri, the great seminary of Islam in Qum will remain closed. And the perpetrators of tyranny will soon know to what they will turn."

MUHAMMAD RIDHA AL-GULPAEGANI

THE AFRICA FEDERATION ISSUED THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT:

"The entire community in Africa represented by this Federation is profoundly grieved and pained by the sacrilegious demolition of the Babri Mosque and denounces the act as hostile to Islam and the Islamic world.

The inaction of the Government of India to prevent the sacrilege is seen as its condonation and has harmed the international image of the country as a great nation and its credibility as regards its ideals.

We join the international Islamic Organisations in monitoring the action which the Government is taking to ensure justice and redress.

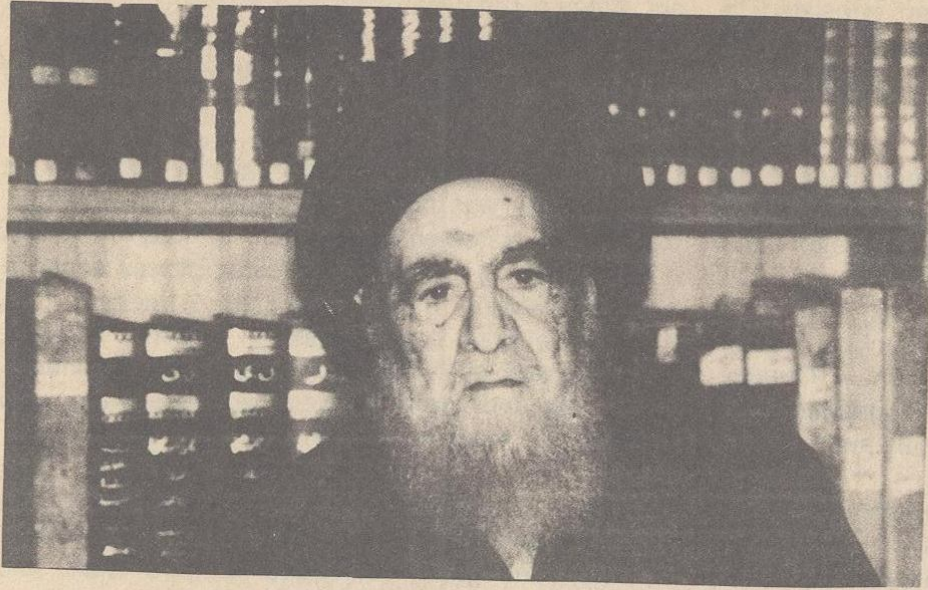
ALHAJ HABIB MULJI

SOCIOLOGY APPOINTMENT :

The following have been appointed on the Sociology Committee of the Supreme Council:

Roshan Fazal
Sadik M. Hasham
Hussein W. Datoo
Shakil E. Dharamsi

Chairman
Member
Member
Member



The following pages carry an indepth and explicit report on our late Marja-e-Taqleed, Ayatullah al - Udhama Syed Abul Qasim El Khui who passed away in August, 1992

LIFE OF OUR LATE MARJA-E-TAQLEED

Ayatullah al - Udhama Syed Abul Qasim El Khui was born in the town of Khoi in Azerbaijan. He was born on 15 Rajab 1317 (19, November 1899). Thus, according to the Islamic calendar, he was 95 when he died. According to the Christian calendar, he died at 92.

His father, Syed Ali Akbar Al-Khui emigrated to the holy city of Najaf in Iraq. Ayatullah joined him there when he was 13 years old. Najaf was the theological centre graduating thousands of Ulemas (religious scholars). He stayed, studied, taught and guided Muslims from here to his death.

Ayatullah studied under eminent scholars in the Islamic institutions in Najaf. He was academically and intellectually gifted and he showed his brilliance by always excelling to the top. Amongst the subjects he studied were Arabic, Logic, Oratory, Fundamentals of religion, Jurisprudence and Philosophy.

His post graduate studies were supervised by famous Ulemas of Jurisprudence and Fundamentals, who were world authorities in their own fields. Some of his most eminent tutors included Ayatullah Faht'ullah, Ayatullah Mahdi al-Mazandarani, Ayatullah Dhiya' uddin al-Iraqi, Ayatullah Mohammad Hussain al-Gharawi and Ayatullah Mohammed Hussain an-Na'aini.

He was ordained 'mujtahid' by the age of 25 years and became the Supreme Religious Authority, Marja-e-A'ala in June, 1970 after the death of the then Marja-e-

A'ala, Ayatullah Syed Mohsin al-Haqim. Until his demise he was thus a Marja-e-A'ala for 22 years.

The late Ayatullah provided the ultimate religious guidance to his several million Muqalideen around the world and established many religious institutions and Foundations under Trustees appointed by him.

These included religious schools, mosques, theology centres and 'charities' around the world. The Foundations have an Islamic Centre in New York, a cultural complex in India, a Centre in London and Swansea. There is also an on-going building project in Pakistan and a school project in Bangkok. The operations headquarter is in London from where the publishing of Al Noor magazine in English and Arabic recently commenced.

Being a selfless philanthropist, he gave financial assistance to religious institutions throughout the world. His patronage and charity has established and helps to run many religious institutions including mosques, religious schools, Imambaras, orphanages and theology centres. The taxes that he received from momineen around the world were used to perform spiritual and social duties that he considered best for the advancement of the community worldwide.

He was a famous teacher in Najaf and he trained and guided upto three generations of mujtahids who eventually carried the torch of Shia learning around the world. Indeed it is barely possible today to find a Shia scholar who has not been a direct student of Ayatullah al-Khui or a student of one of his ex-students.

His teachings and writings, disseminated by hundreds of students who have graduated under him and resulting in more than 90 authoritative books on

OUR LATE MARJA

different disciplines, will now remain as his great legacy. Some of his books have been translated in many languages, some have been reprinted over 20 times and his published lectures also run in volumes.

Students of the Najaf University of Theology combine their studying with teaching. The Late Ayatullah was thus a very experienced teacher in Islamic matters and died with over 75 years teaching experience.

The subjects covered in his books include Jurisprudence, Principles of Jurisprudence, Quranic Commentary, Quranic Studies, Biographies of Narrators of Tradition and Islamic Penal Law.

His lectures (on Fundamentals and Jurisprudence) for post graduate students have been written down by his best students. However the Late Ayatullah would first have to approve the written version of his lectures before authorising their publications. His published lectures run in volumes.

Some of his authoritative books include :

- 1] **Ajwad-ut Taqirrat -The Best of Regulations, Principles of Jurisprudence;**
- 2] **Al-Bayan -The Manifestation, Qur'anic Commentary;**
- 3] **Nafahatul-'Ijaz -The Fragrance of Miracles, Qur'anic Studies;**
- 4] **Mu'jam Rijalul Hadith -The Biographies of Narrators of Tradition;**
- 5] **Minhajus-Saliheen -The Path of the Righteous;**
- 6] **Manasikul-Haj -The Rights Pilgrimage, Jurisprudence;**
- 7] **Risalah Fil Libaas al-Mashkook -Treatise on Ritually Suspected Attire, Jurisprudence;**
- 8] **Tawdhehul-Masa'il -The Illucidation of Religious Problems;**
- 9] **Mabani Takmilatul Minhaj -The Fundamentals of Complete Version of the Right Path;**
- 10] **At-Taliqa Alal Urwatul Wuthka -Commentary on the Steadfast Handle, Jurisprudence.**

The humility of our late Marja can be vouched upon by community members who visited him. He lived in a simple house with a very modest lifestyle. He also regularly responded to the hundreds of religious questions he received from around the world thereby enlightening the young and old on Islam.

The Grand Ayatullah had a great love for his Muqallideen and greatly sympathised for those in need. He often expressed his satisfaction at the unity and brotherhood in our global community through our religious organisations and often prayed for us.

His achievements could have been even more had he not suffered great hardship and humiliation from the ruling regime in Iraq. He lived amidst the worst of tragedies and refused to leave Najaf when all the other Ayatullahs had to leave Iraq.

During Iraq's war with Iran and Iraq's recent invasion of Kuwait, he was pressurised, albeit unsuccessfully, to make a statement in support of Iraq. After the popular uprising in Iraq in 1991, Iraqi forces attacked his house killing those who tried to defend him. Ayatullah el-Khui was arrested in a horrid manner, having to walk over the dead bodies of his defenders. His family and many religious scholars were also arrested with many, including his son, still in prison.

He persevered to all this for the sake of preserving true Islam and to this effect has said : "History tells us of many who gave their blood to save Islam and entrench its roots. Today, the tree of Islam needs fresh sacrifice, and I offer my blood. It shall be a matter of pride for me if my blood shall serve Islam, the teachings of Qur'an, and shall cut off the hands of those who perpetrate evil.

I shall consider myself most fortunate if my offer were accepted by Hadhrat Baqiyyatullah (A.S.), may our souls be his ransom. Infact to remain alive while strange events take place, and while confirmed enemies of Islam encroach upon the freedom and the value of Muslims, is tantamount to dying, perhaps worse than mere dying."

The Late Ayatullah was only released because of global appeals seeking his release. However he remained under house arrest in Najaf, without his family, until he died. The destruction of holy shrines, massacre of innocent civilians and the continuous moves by the regime against muslims greatly affected his health. He underwent a succesful pace-maker implant in Baghdad on 23 July, 1992 and just when his condition seemed to be improving, he suddenly died at his home on the afternoon of 8 August, 1992.

The funeral was publicly set for the next morning but the regime's forces took the dead body very early in the morning and silently buried him in the presence of only three of his family members. On hearing this, people protested and some radio stations reported that the regime's forces fired at the protestors, killing hundreds and wounding many. He was buried near the shrine of our first Imam, Hazrat Ali (A.S) in the courtyard of Masjid-e-Al-Khazara, in Najaf, where he used to conduct his classes.

Ayatullah Al-Khui's death robbed the world of a grand personality. He leaves behind four sons and five daughters.

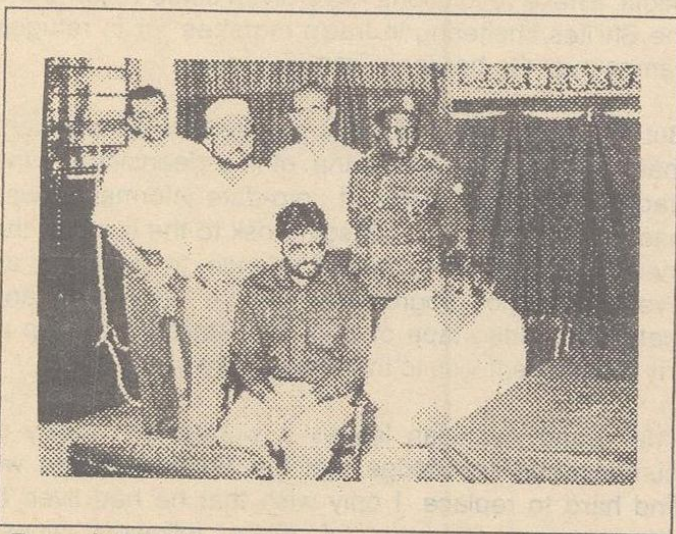
The World Mourned

Muslims all over the world held commemorative gatherings eulogizing the late Ayatullah al - Udhama Syed Abul Qasim El Khui's death. In many countries like Iran, Afghanistan, Kuwait, Bahrain, Pakistan, India East Africa, Europe and America, where substantial Muslim minorities live, Islamic centres and mosques were venues for the commemoration services.

Public expressions of bereavement and sense of loss were clearly manifest with different speakers and poets narrating qualities of the late Supreme Religious Authority. The Africa Federation directed all constituent Jamaats to arrange for appropriate religious ceremonies including Namaz-e-Wahshat and closing of business and economic activities on Monday, 10th August, 1992 for Qur'an-Khani and Ziarat. The Federation declared a ten day mourning with recitation of Sura-e-ya-Seen for 40 days.

Jamaats were also directed to send condolences to the family of the Ayatullah and the Dar-es Salaam and Kenya Jamaats were asked to accept condolences at their respective offices. Amongst the numerous visitors who signed the condolence book were Tanzania President, Ali Hassan Mwinyi and former Tanzania CCM Vice Chairman, Rashidi Kawawa.

A biography of the Grand Ayatullah was published in Tanzanian, Kenyan and Madagascar Newspapers and the Chairman of the Federation, Alhaj Habib J. Mulji, sent condolences on behalf of the entire Community in Africa, to Seyyed Muhammed Taqi Al-Khui in Najaf,



Tanzania President Ali Hassan Mwinyi signs the condolence book in presence of Dar Jamaat leaders.

Iraq with a copy to Seyyid Abdul Majid Al-Khui in London. Condolences were also sent to Al- Khui Foundation in London. It was deemed appropriate to send condolences to all other Marja in Iraq and Iran and this was addressed to Ayatullah Seyyed Mohamed Reza Gulpaegani in Qum, Iran on behalf of all Marja. The Chairman also made a consolation telephone to Seyyid Abdul Majid Al-Khui in London.

Because proper funeral rites were not accorded to the deceased by the Iraqi authorities, the faithful throughout the world held symbolic funeral processions, where portraits of the deceased Ayatullah were hoisted.

In Tehran and Qum in Iran, Lebanon, Afghanistan, Syria, India, Pakistan, Bahrain, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and U.A.E such symbolic funeral processions, where tens of thousands of people took part, were staged.

A report we received from Bombay by Alhaj Roshanali Haji Dawood Nasser, the President of the K.S.I. Jame Masjid, Madrasa and Imambara Trust says that in addition to Fatehakhani and Majalis, a mammoth mourning procession was held in which about ten thousand Shias participated, including about a thousand ladies. Similar processions but on a smaller scale were held in different parts of India.

The Prime Minister of Kashmir declared that all Kashmiris were in a state of mourning whilst Shia Muslims in India and Pakistan generally observed a 40-day mourning.

At official level, the governments in Iran and Lebanon observed a 3-day mourning. In Iran there were about fifty memorial services held in a week. In Kuwait, such services were held in Mosques and Husainiyyas and were attended by ordinary people and government officials.

In many countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and the Americas memorial services and popular processions took place. In countries where Shia Muslims form a minority, public expressions of mourning were common place. In New York and London, the faithful converged to pay homage at the Imam Al-Khoei Islamic Centres and at mosques.

Islamic Centres and Institutions in London held a symbolic funeral procession from the heart of London, Marble Arch towards the Imam al-Khoei Islamic Centre in North West London, a route of about 7km. Some three thousand Ulema, men, women and children participated. Eulogy speeches in Arabic, English, Farsi and Urdu were made.

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Hundreds of condolence and sympathy messages have been sent from different parts of the world to Al-Khoei Foundation in London. Among these were messages from Grand Ayatullah as-Sayyid Mohammad Ridha Al-Gulpaigani, Ayatullah as-Sayyid Khamanei, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, Special U.N. Envoy, King Husain of Jordan and Cardinal Hume, Primate of the U.K. Catholic Church.

At a gathering to mark the 40th, organised by the Al-Khui Foundation in London, Sheikh Mohammed Mahdi Shamseddin, Deputy President of the Supreme Council of Shia Muslims of Lebanon and a former student of Ayatollah Khui, addressed the gathering. Excerpts from his speech follow :

"Imam al-Khui was the teacher of two generations of Ulema and ranked among the most knowledgeable Ulema. His vision and method of work as a supreme religious authority was unique and he proved to be a formidable force who never buckled under the sheer weight of pressure because he was truthful in his convictions and foresight.

He had an inimitable conduct in the domain of public work, be it social or political. Contrary to what his critics, who are less familiar with his scholarship, may think, he was never neutral or negative. He used to react to developments in his own unique way.

To give an example of this aspect of his political thought, one needs to acquaint oneself with his dynamic visions stemming from courageous and sincere convictions, both ideological and juristic, contained in his book about 'Jihad'. He conducted himself in a way reminiscent of that of the Imams of Ahl-ul-Bayt, the Progeny of the Prophet (s.a.w) when they faced the upheavals that beset them and dealt with them in a manner inspired by Providence.

Another aspect of Ayatullah al-Khui's great personality was his concern for the social welfare of Muslims. This personality reflects the Islamic way of understanding life as a complete system with each part supplementing the others. Pursuit of knowledge can by no means justify the discarding of social responsibilities which involves paying attention to individual priorities or alleviating the plight of Muslims at large.

The late Imam had many good qualities and giving due credit would be difficult. After the desecration of the holy shrines in Iraq following the popular uprising in March, 1991 many chose to give up the struggle and resilience and to instead emigrate so as to safeguard themselves, their family members and their interests from the ruling regime's persecution and repression.

Our late Marja had ample opportunities to leave Najaf, the Holy city which is the seat of Shia Muslim scholarship and theological learning. Even some of his immediate relatives and close confidants advised him to leave. Yet he resisted all those sincere calls, with the overriding goal of preserving what was left of an-Najaf Parochial University, established by his predecessor, ash-Sheikh al-Tusi over a thousand years ago.

In conclusion I propose that, to make use of the wealth of knowledge bequeathed to us by our late Marja, his biography be researched in order to set guidelines for those who enter the fray of spiritual leadership work."

Appreciation

The UK Times, carried this Appreciation by Emma Nicholson, MP who is the Chairman of the all party parliamentary group for Iraqi Shias.

It is a tragic irony that Ayatullah al - Udhama Syed Abul Qasim El Khui died just two days before three members of the United Nations Security Council (Britain, France and the United States) announced their move for an urgent meeting of the Council to discuss the continuing Shiites repression in the south of Iraq by the Saddam Hussein regime.

The Ayatullah's last years of spiritual leadership of 250 million Shiites were clouded by the Iran-Iraq war and culminated in his own arrest and ill-treatment by the Iraqi army at the age of 91 in the wake of the Shia Muslims uprising after Iraq's war with Kuwait.

He survived the shocking brutality to die when negotiations that led to the subsequent implementation of UN resolution 688 against Iraq were just about to begin. These resolutions have given some relief to the the Shi'ites sheltering in Iraq's marshes or in refugee camps over the border in Iran.

But at least he knew of the large effort his people were making to tell the west of the 'ethnic cleansing' by the Iraqis. A constant trickle of upto-date information was passed through to him, at some risk to the lives of the messengers (It is a capital offence to listen to an overseas radio programme, yet he received and watched a video tape of BBC Breakfast Time's clip of my most recent visit to the Iraq marshes in June).

The Grand Ayatullah leaves a wonderful legacy of humanitarian knowledge that the Shi'ite Muslims will find hard to replace. I only wish that he had lived to see physical liberation of those followers whose sufferings he had shared in Iraq.

Emma Nicholson

The Late Ayatullah's private life.

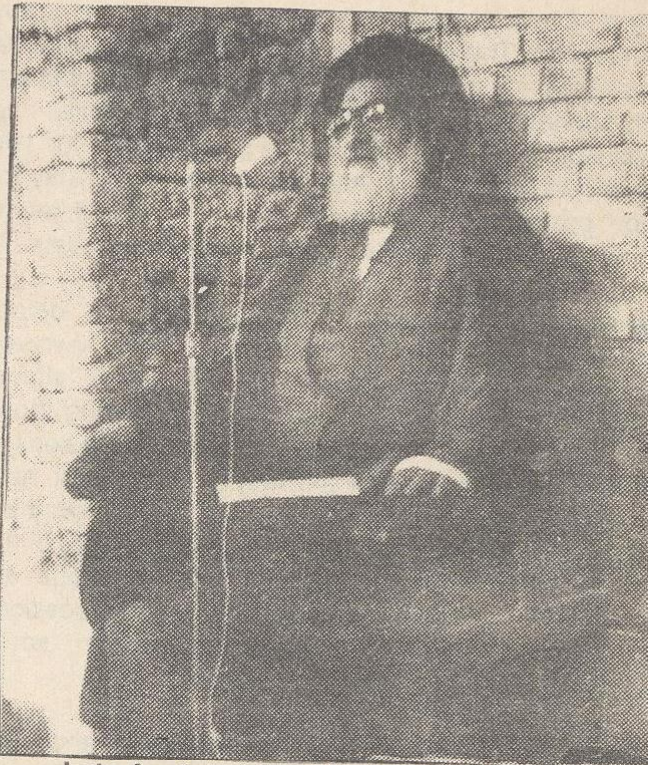
As-Sayyid Abdul Majid al-Khui, the son of the departed great jurist relates that when he started his theology studies, he used his mother as an intermediary to plead with his father to allocate a monthly allowance for him as a student in the parochial school (al-Hawzah - al-Ilmiyah).

His Eminence reply was. "If he really is a student he should undergo the same treatment of other students applying for monthly allowances i.e. he should be interviewed by the special panel appointed for this purpose".

His son says: Thursday was the day when the examining committee used to convene. I was apprehensive that I might not pass with a grade acceptable to my esteemed father. I sat the exam in religious law (sharia) and Arabic under the supervision of Shaikh Mustafa al-Harandi. In the evening of the same day the successful result was sent to my father. Accordingly, my father granted me a monthly bachelor rate allowance like other students. After a while I approached my father with a plea to increase my allowance in parity with other students who were in receipt of allowances from other sources vis other parochial schools. His answer was, "Your other expenses (food and attire) are being met by me". However, he increased my allowances albeit by a small amount after he carried out a rigorous computation.

This incident, as told by as-Sayyid Abdul Majid, is indicative of the way the late Imam handled public money. He never spent money from the public purse on his domestic needs. Instead he used to meet such needs from the few presents he received. He constantly reminded members of his family to be economical with expenditure and to lead a simple life, so that they might not feel elated.

Doctors had repeated their advice that the Imam should take some time for himself to relax from constant work. He used to say "Reading and giving lectures are my way of relaxing." Indeed, the days of Imam (May his soul rest in peace) were very busy. His daily routine was that he used to wake up well before dawn prayer to meditate until it was time for the prayer. He would then pray and subsequently take breakfast with other members of his family. His breakfast used to consist of a piece of bread, local cheese and tea. He always insisted that whoever was



Late Ayatullah Khui delivering a sermon.

present in the house that day including guests and house keepers must join in eating.

After breakfast he would take a short break. At 8.0 a.m. he would start the session of passing legal judgements, normally inaugurated by opening and reading incoming mail by himself and reading them carefully. Those who used to be present in the session included a group of ulema among them Ayatullah as-Sayyid Murtadha al-Khakhali (presently detained by the Iraqi authorities since the failed popular uprising of March 1991), Ayatullah Sheikh Mohammad Ishaq al-Fayyadh Hujjatul Islam Shaikh Ja'far an-Na'ini (grandson of the Ayatullah ash-Sheikh an-Na'ini senior) who is the son-in-law of the late Imam.

However, on some days this permanent committee would host other distinguished ulema and dignitaries with the sole purpose of enriching the discussion leading to the inference of religious edicts, especially in complex matters. Among those who would sometimes be present in sessions of this committee were great jurists like Grand Ayatullah as-Sayyid Ali as-Seestani, who administered prayer on the body of the late Imam as-Sayyid al-Khoei, Ayatullah Murtadha al-Burujardi, and ash-Sheikh Ali Asghar al-Ahmadi. After deliberations, they would reach a consensus on legal judgements, put them down in writing and give them to Imam al-Khui for approval. On approval, he would put his personal seal on them. He never parted with his seal which he used to keep with his private keys.

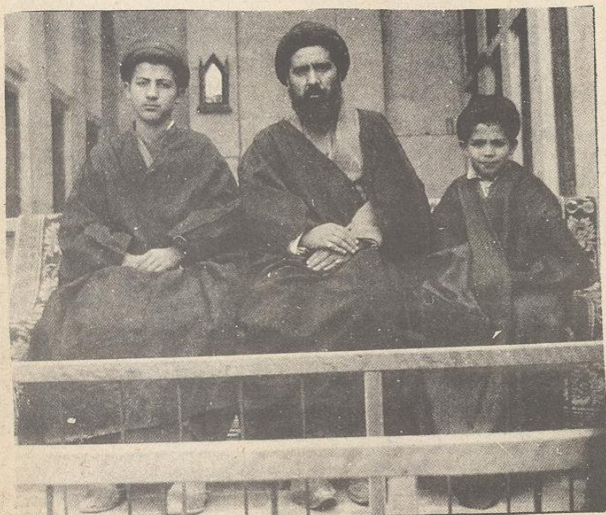
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Such sessions would extend until shortly before the time of Dhuhr (noon) prayer when he would get ready for ablution. Then he would lead prayers at Al-Khadra Mosque which is adjacent to the holy precinct of Imam Ali's shrine in Najaf, Iraq. However, his poor health had prevented him from frequenting the mosque for two years prior to his death. After prayers he would stay for short period receiving well wishers and would return home to have lunch with family members or guests.

He would then take a break until 4.00 p.m. before beginning his second session which involved discussion of general issues like his agents affairs, schools, institutions and social matters. Among those who used to attend the afternoon session were sons of the late Grand Ay-atullah as-Sayyid Abdul Hadi Ash-Shirazi, Hujjatul Islam as-Sayyid Mohammad Ibrahim, detained by the Iraqi authorities since the events of the popular uprising in March, 1991 and the late as-Sayyid Mohammad Ali. Also present in these sessions were those who had vested interests in social ventures, administration and politics.

The above is a measure of the importance His Eminence attached to consultation and he used to say, "Whoever embarks on consultation shall never be disappointed".

At the end of the afternoon session he would renew his ablution in readiness for performing Maghrib (sunset) and Isha (evening) prayers at Al-Khadra' Mosque. After prayers he would receive visitors who converged from different parts of the world. During this time he would listen and acquaint himself with the visitors problems and then issue pertinent instructions or solutions. Such sessions continued till 9.00 p.m. and sometimes even extended to 11.00 p.m. After that the departed Imam used to return home to spend some



Late Ayatullah Khui with two of his sons.

Federation Samachar

time with members of his family to discuss domestic matters peppered with light hearted jokes. His room had two doors, one leading to his private living quarters and the other to the reception hall.

His son as-Sayyid Abdul Majid says, "My father used to act like a judge when disputes arose among members of our family. He was ever cheerful with us and was endowed with quick wit. Whenever he would see any one of us showing signs of distress, discomfort or joy, he would immediately ask him or her as to what caused that state of feeling. Every night he would give sweets to the children and give them their share of presents he received from those who visited him. The session with members of the family would take just over an hour. Family members would then disperse leaving him to listen to world news, especially Muslim affairs broadcast by Arab and international stations. He often complained of sleeplessness because of some bad news he heard the night before like that of a natural disaster or a man-made one which may have struck any part of the Islamic world.

Apart from his personal track of news of the Muslim world, he often asked his sons and confidants to keep him abreast with the latest news. He habitually sent sympathy messages to victims and when necessary, material aid to help alleviate their plight. Religious taxes paid to him were partly allocated to the poor and the needy whose hardships he would endeavour to eliminate as much as possible. He also often issued instructions to take special care of noble families who faced real hardships. He used to say, "pay heed to the plight of those who, because of their self-esteem, appear to be wealthy but are not."

Presents and help were sent to them in a very discreet manner in order to preserve their dignity. He usually made sure that the needs of schools, hospitals orphanages and other institutions of public good should be met.

At domestic level, he always shared in his neighbours and relatives happy and sad moments. He prevented his household from facing his adversaries abrasively and when his enemies, who wielded power, visited him he would show hospitality and gentleness to them and pray for their success and return to the right path.

One day one of his sons enquired, "Oh father! do you really pray for them to be righteous or do you do so out of etiquette because they are your guests?" He answered, "Never, I truthfully pray for them to be among the righteous so that the faithful will be spared their wrath and evil".

He never abused anyone verbally nor did he harbour a grudge against anyone. For those who begrudged him

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and let their feelings be known through letters they sent him, he did not bother to descend to their level by ignoring them completely. One day, one of his sons said to him, "Why do you keep quiet in the face of those who accuse you maliciously? He answered, "If the right was mine, I absolve them of any responsibility". His son added, "What about our right? Do not we have a right to respond to those and defend you? He replied, " You have a right. But as long as I am alive the right to reply is lawfully mine and you are barred from replying".

He would open his personal letters by himself and would forward letters addressed to members of his family to them personally, without opening them. If some letters arrived open, he would forward them with the remark that he had not read their contents.

The only letter which hurt him a lot was sent to him by a pseudo cleric. He kept it in his inside pocket. The thrust of the letter was that it cast doubt on his lineage as a descendant of the Prophet (s.a.w.) He instructed that it should be buried with him so that he might show it to his ancestors, Prophet Mohammad (s.a.w.) and Lady Fatimah (a.s.), complaining against the sender of the letter.

He was greatly upset by anybody lying. He was tender-hearted, wept vehemently, especially when he remembered the tragedy of his great great grandfather, Imam Hussain (a.s.). He used to hold mourning sessions in memory of Imam Hussain (a.s.) every week and regularly fed visitors to his shrine in Kerbala during season visitations.

During the life time of his father the late as-Sayyid Ali Akbar, he did not feel at ease when people were introduced to him rather than to his father. He kept a strong bond with the families of his former teachers

and often enquired about their well being. He often said that his teachers had done him a great favour. He strongly believed in keeping appointments and his word. If some one arrived late for a date, he would courteously tell him of another person he liked who honoured his appointment time.

He had a special liking for architecture alongside other artistic works of poetry and literature. When building of his parochial school [Darul-Ilm - - House of Knowledge] in Najaf, Iraq was about to be started, he sat with the architects and engineers and discussed the outlines and main features of what the building should look like. The said building was destroyed by Saddam's forces during the violent suppression of the popular uprising in March, 1991. He wrote poetry in the three languages he was proficient in, namely Arabic, Farsi and Turkish.

He used to follow up financial matters personally. Although most of the paper work was done by Hujatul Islam as-Sayyid Murtadha an-Naqshwani (died August, 1990), the late Imam used to check matters rigorously. He never bought new clothes until his garments become old enough. One of his close friends said to him, "You are the spiritual leader of the Muslims. You should put on the best of clothes." His reply was, "As long as the clothes I wear are clean, it does not matter if they look old".

In his passing away, the Islamic umma has lost a great jurist, an educationalist, a guide, and a refuge who spent his life in the service of religion, knowledge and humanity at large. In discharging his responsibility he was made to suffer a great deal of persecution and afflictions under the pressure of which he neither wavered nor buckled. He passed away under the most adverse of circumstances and may Allah (s.w.t.) rest his soul in eternal peace.



Late Ayatullah Khui (left) pictured with other prominent religious heads.



At the time of death !

On Saturday morning, 8 August, 1992 all telephone communications between the house, offices and the houses of those related to His Eminence, the late Imam al-Khui were cut off.

This was evident from repeated attempts to establish contact with him by al-Khui Foundation, London, U.K. as is customary every morning. That is hours before the news of his death. The first news of his death came from the marshlands of southern Iraq and Kuwait, whereupon, moves to contact some of the faithful in Iraq to ascertain the news, which was confirmed in that he passed away at 3.10 p.m. local time on 8th Safar, 1413 A.H. (8th August, 1992).

News received from the late Imam's house at Kufa the following day talked of the sudden deterioration of the Imam's health in that a swelling appeared in his abdomen in the area immediately under the chest. When called, the specialist medical team could not arrive in time. The late Imam told his family that he had a feeling as though the preceding night was his last spent with them. He ordered water to be brought for him to perform his ablution. Immediately after performing ablution his soul departed his body. No sooner the news of the death spread, the masses started converging on the house of the late as-Sayyid al-Khui at Kufa, Iraq. Streets of the neighbouring Holy City of Najaf became clogged with multitudes of people. Fearing a popular backlash, the authorities deployed crack units on the streets. At 4.00 p.m., less than an hour from the death of the great jurist, the troops barricaded the approaches of Kufa and Najaf and issued orders to the crowds gathering around the house to disperse and come the following morning for the funeral procession!

After that a curfew was imposed on Kufa, Najaf, and other towns and cities in the centre of the country. The Iraqi armed forces were put on ready alert, especially in middle and southern Iraq in anticipation of any unsavoury developments which might have been precipitated by the Imam's death, the news of which had spread to all parts of Iraq by then. Military patrols also roamed the streets of Kadhimayn, Shu'la, and Thawra districts in Baghdad.

On Saturday evening, Iraqi Television and Radio Stations stopped their normal programmes to announce the news of the death of the Imam, without giving any details as to the cause of the death. The statement also announced that the funeral ceremony would take place on Sunday morning i.e. the day after his death.

However, around midnight (Saturday/Sunday), without any warning, the authorities summoned the bereaved family of the late Imam al-Khui that the body should be buried before Sunday's dawn. Therefore, the family had no alternative but to perform ceremonial washing of the body, wrap it in a shroud and get it ready for burial, which took place at al-Khadhra mosque before Sunday's dawn. A score of family members and close friends took part in the burial rituals. The telephone lines between the Imam's house and offices at Kufa and the outside world remained disconnected until Sunday evening.

The authorities, who observed a three-day official mourning did not allow any public expression of the mourning as is customary, especially the holding of memorial service (Majlis-Fatiha) on the departed soul by his family. Ironically enough, the Country's Ministry of Religious Endowments announced the holding of such a service - - when the destiny and whereabouts are still unknown of the many scholars, parochial school staff, the late Imam's deputies and some of his family members who have been detained since March, 1991.

The Iraqi state-controlled media dubbed the late jurist as 'the martyr of the nation and the motherland.' The Iraqi news agency alleged that the late Imam was given an official funeral, in which members of the public as well as government officials took part. What contradicted this naked lie is that the picture of the coffin sanctioned by the agency for distribution worldwide showed only a handful of mourners!



Handful of mourners at the funeral.

Media Coverage of the death

The news of Grand Ayatollah Imam as- Sayyid Abul Qassim al-Khwei's death was widely reported in the world Television, Radio and the Press.

Hereunder is a selection of what was reported in the British and American press:

New York Times

Ayatollah Khomeini, Leading Scholar of Shiite Islam Dies in Iraq at 95

PARIS, Aug 9 - Grand Ayatollah Abulqassim al-Khoei one of the greatest scholars of Shiite Islam, died on Saturday, Baghdad radio announced today. He was 95 years old.

The Ayatollah died of a heart ailment, the radio said. He had a pacemaker implanted in July.

His grandson Youssef al-Khoei said the Ayatollah collapsed and died while preparing for Saturday afternoon prayers in his home town, Kufa near the holy city of Najaf, a major center of Shiite scholarship about 100 miles south of Baghdad.

Both Iraq and Iran, where many of the world's estimated 200 million Shiites live, declared three days of mourning. Shiites, who make up about 20 percent of the world's Muslims, split with mainstream Islam in the seventh century in dispute over succession to the Prophet Mohammed.

Praise From Baghdad

Ayatollah Khomeini, who wrote more than 90 books and manuscripts on Shiite theology, was one of six grand ayatollahs, the highest officials in the Shi-ite hierarchy. The other grand ayatollahs live in Iran in the cities of Qom and Mashed.

In Shiite religious circles, many scholars viewed Ayatollah al-Khoei as someone with more command of theological subject than the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini of Iran, whose political status gave him greater prominence.

While Iraq praised Ayatollah al-Khoei, whom the official Iraqi press agency said was buried in Najaf at a

ceremony attended by "a large crowd". Iran said that crowds were prevented from attending the funeral and that a delegation of Iranian mourners was still awaiting permission from Baghdad to pay its respects.

Iraqi opponents of the Baghdad Government and some relatives of the Ayatollah in London said that only members of his family were allowed to attend a restrained funeral on Saturday. The Iraqi radio and his grandson said he was buried early this morning. His grandson said that under pressure from the Iraqi authorities there had been little ceremony.

TV Appearance Called Forced

Experts on Iraqi affairs said it was doubtful that Iraq would permit any large funeral for the Ayatollah for fear that it would turn into a protest by Shiite Iraqi opponents of President Saddam Hussein.

Iraqi opponents of the Government have maintained for months that the Ayatollah had been placed under virtual house arrest. They said that a television appearance by the Ayatollah in which he praised President Hussein was forced upon him under threat of death following the uprising of Shiites in March 1991 after the end of the Persian Gulf war. The uprising was violently put down. Human rights organizations have said that thousands of Iraqi Shiites were killed.

Throughout his life, Ayatollah Khomeini had studiously avoided any involvement in politics. He came to Iraq as a 15-year-old religious student, settling in Najaf. Focusing on religious and scholarly studies, he rose in status on the strength of his reputation as a religious leader and interpreter of Islamic matters.

Religious Leaders Executed

Today, in pointed reminder that such a restricted role in Iraqi society is precisely what Baghdad would like to see for clerics, the Baghdad radio praised the Ayatollah as a "fine example of a committed cleric who served Islam and the nation."

In the early 1980's, Iraq executed a Grand Ayatollah after accusing him of backing a movement that was aiming to ally itself with Iran and overthrow President Hussein.

The Iraqi regime has since arrested, jailed and executed hundreds of Shiite religious leaders, their families and their supporters.

In Iran, the country's spiritual leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei praised Ayatollah Khomeini as "a pivot" of the

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Shiite uprising against Iraq's Hussein, charging that he was "tormented" by Iraqi authorities after the Gulf War.

The Times

Saddam Linked to Ayatullah Death

CONTROVERSY, outrage and allegations of foul play surrounded the burial yesterday of the spiritual leader of the world's Shia Muslims, Grand Ayatollah Abul Qassim al-Khoei, who died at the age of 93 in southern Iraq on Saturday.

Ayatollah al-Khoei collapsed and died as he was preparing for afternoon prayers in his home near Najaf, where he had lived under virtual house arrest since last year's uprising.

His family accused the Iraq authorities of burying him without ceremony and in unseemly haste to prevent public outpourings of grief among the Shia community that rose against President Saddam Hussein after the Gulf war. His grandson voiced suspicion that the Iraqi President had the Grand Ayatollah killed. "Its quite possible there was foul play," said Yousif al-Khoei, speaking from exile in London. "They rushed the burial through, so no evidence would show up. No doctor was allowed to examine him before he was buried. When we spoke to him on Friday, he was fine. Then three hours before he died on Saturday, it was impossible to get through to him on the phone."

Leading Shias from the region were denied the chance to pay their last respects and many of the Ayatollah's relatives, including his youngest son, are in Iraqi jails. Three other sons who are in exile did not even have time to decide if they would dare return for the funeral which took place shortly before dawn.

Iran, which declared three days of official mourning for the man whose religious learning was accepted as out-ranking even that of the late Ayatollah Khomeini, said the Iraqi authorities had imposed a curfew on the holy city of Najaf. Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said that the Grand Ayatollah's death was a "great catastrophe". He said that Ayatollah al-Khoei was the "pivot" of the revolt in Iraq after the Gulf War and accused Baghdad of "tormenting" him since.

Southern Iraq has remained restive since last year's uprising and Saddam's forces recently launched a concerted offensive against Shias and refugees that has been condemned by Washington and Human Rights Organisations. Washington has been considering the establishment of a safe haven for the Shias along lines of that set up last year for Kurds in northern Iraq.

New York Newsday

Shiite Spiritual Leader Dies

Nicosia, Cyprus - The Grand Ayatollah Abul Qassim al-Khoei, spiritual leader of the world's 200 million Shiite Muslims, died at home in Iraq, his grandson said yesterday. He was 95.

The Ayatollah collapsed and died while preparing for prayers, the grandson, Yousif al Khoei, said in a telephone interview from London. He said his grandfather was buried yesterday with little ceremony under pressure from Iraqi authorities.

The younger Khoei said there also were reports of police clampdowns to prevent unrest during mourning in the province around Najaf, the holiest city for the Shiite who rose up against Iraqi President Saddam Hussein after the Gulf War.

The Guardian

Iraqi crackdown on Shi'ite funeral

IRAQ cut phone-links yesterday and slapped a curfew on the holy city of Najaf in an attempt to prevent thousands of mourners turning out for the funeral of the world's most senior Shi'ite Muslim scholar, according to opposition sources.

Grand Ayatollah Abolqassem al-Khoei, author of more than 90 books on theology, was buried at dawn yesterday in a brief ceremony attended only by members of his family. Plans for a public funeral were abruptly cancelled overnight, reportedly following a police visit to the family home.

His death, at the age of 92, came amid new reports of escalating air attacks against the marsh Arabs further south. According to Shi'ite dissidents based in Tehran, Iraqi aircraft last week made five bombing raids on-Shattanlya - "inflicting many casualties and damaging many houses" - a violation of Gulf War ceasefire terms.

Although Iraq has officially declared three days of mourning for the Ayatollah, reports reaching London from southern Iraq spoke of troops patrolling the streets of Najaf. Shops were forced to open after what Shi'ite dissidents claimed was an attempt by officials to head off any strike action and clergymen were put under house arrest and many mosques closed.

The death of so senior a Clergyman would in normal circumstances have prompted an outburst of popular emotion. Claims by the official Iraqi news agency that

OUR LATE MARJA

'a large crowd of clerics and followers' attended the funeral were dismissed by the Al-Khoei family.

His death, less than two weeks after he received a pacemaker, came as surprise to his family and prompted claims of foul play. His grandson, Yousif, telephoned the Ayatollah on Friday when "he sounded frail but otherwise okay. Everything was normal."

Al-Khoei spent the last 18 months of his life a dejected man, under virtual house arrest. Shortly after Iraqi troops put down the Shi'ite rebellion in south Iraq in March 1991, he was coerced into agreeing to appear on Iraqi television to meet President Saddam Hussein.

Iran, meanwhile paid elaborate tribute to the dead Ayatollah, describing his death as 'a great catastrophe' for Islam. In Tehran, three days of mourning were announced and the Iraqi Charg'e d'affaires was called in to be told that Iran wanted to send an official delegation to pay respects to the Al-Khoei family in Najaf and visit his grave. Earlier, Iran's President, Ayatullah as-Sayyid Khamanei, described Al-Khoei as "one of the standard-bearers of Islamic sciences."

A United Nations report charged Iraq with seriously violating human rights in its crackdown on Shi'ite rebels and civilians sheltering in the southern marshes. It also recommended that the U.N. set up a permanent presence to monitor human rights in Iraq.

The Daily Telegraph

Troops alert as Shi'ite leader dies

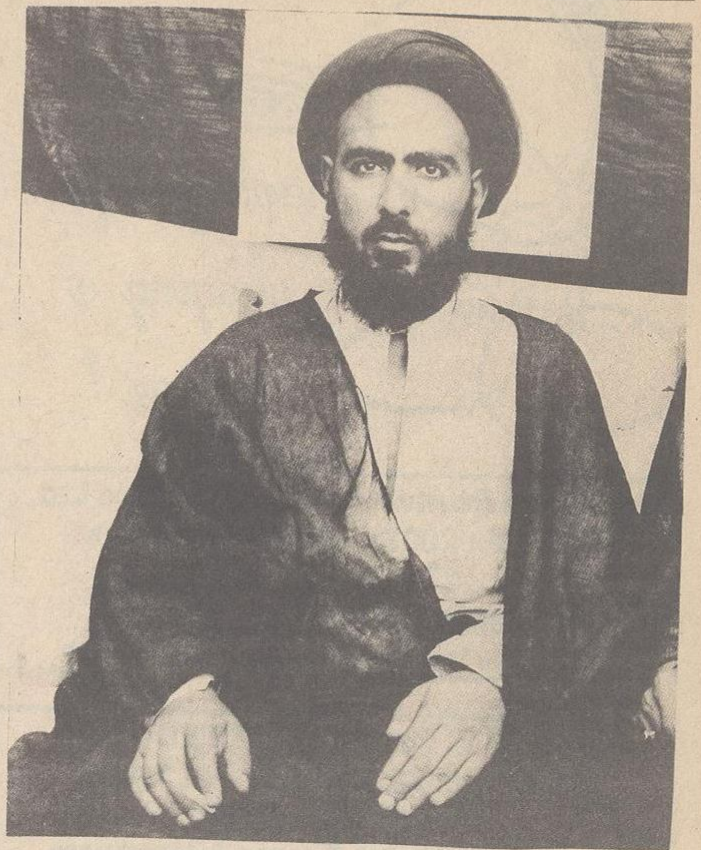
IRAQI troops surrounded the holy city of Najaf yesterday after the death of the world's foremost Shi'ite Muslim spiritual leader, Grand Ayatollah Abolqassem al-Khoei, an opposition group said.

The troops surrounded the city which is near Kufa, where family members said Grand Ayatollah Khoei died, because they feared 'a revolt and demonstrations', the Islamic Action Organisation (IAO) said in a statement in Teheran.

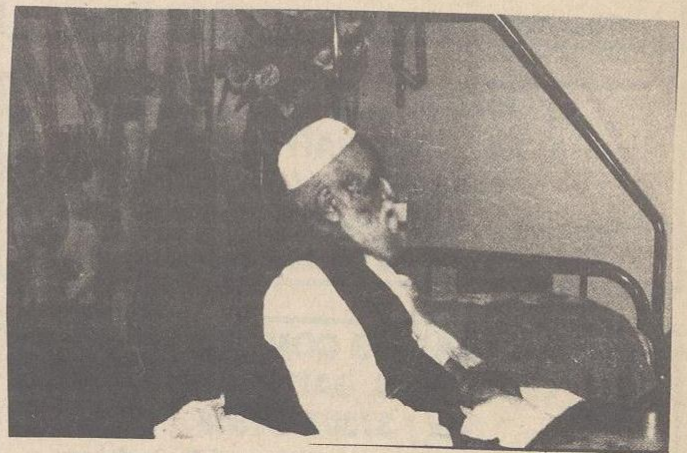
The IAO, headed by Ayatollah Mohammad-Taqi Modaressi, an Iraqi Shi'ite opposition leader, also said that Grand Ayatollah Khoei, who was 92, was buried "in haste" and "without any religious ceremony."

The Iraqi authorities rejected a request from the holy man's family to send a medical team to determine the causes of his death, the Organisation said.

Iraqi authorities said the spiritual leader died after "a chronic illness." He underwent heart surgery in Baghdad last month but the London-based Khoei Foundation reported that he had been recovering well.



The Late Ayatollah pictured as a young man.....



..... praying in Baghdad.....



.... procession held in London to mark his death.



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DOWN MEMORY LANE



Ithra-asheri Gymkhana - 1944 football champions when they won the Crawshaw Cup. From left on the back row, Abbas Ali Dawood, Gulamhusein Ismail Dharamsi, Mohamedhassan Musa Gulamhusein Lakha and Abdur Rasul. Sitting from left, Ramzan Ismail Dharamsi, Roshan Aloo, Babu Gulla, Abdul Nasser and Ashro. On the ground from left, Yusuf Ali Nathoo, Raza S. Meghji and Gulamali A. Nathoo. [Picture courtesy- Ramzan I. Dharamsi].

DOWN MEMORY LANE



Teachers and Special Class students of FAIZETHNA-ASHERI FREE NIGHT SCHOOL, ZANZIBAR in 1952. From left, rear row [standing] : Mohamedbaker M.J. Nathani, Hamza H. Chatoo, Jaffer Tejani, Mohamedali Juma, Gulamabbas Saleh, Ahmed Issa Hasham, Mohamed Khaifan, Mohamedhussein D. Kermalli, Baker Tejani and Yusuf H. Sheriff. Middle row [sitting] Gulamabbas Peera, Abbas Tejani, Mohamedhussein A. Tejani, Mohamed Jivraj, Raza Rashid Nathani, Molvi Sayyid Jabir Hassan Saheb, Agha Seyyid Mehdi, Mohamedjaffer R. Nathani, Mohamedhussein S. Lajji, Najaf M. Tejani and Akber Thawer. First row - Jafferati Ali Boga, Yusuf M.R. Alidina, Abdulhussein Akber Nathani and Gulamabbas Y. Kara.

**Edicts of Ayatullah
Ozma Sayyed
Mohammad Reda Musavi
Golpaegani**

Beginning from this issue we will regularly be featuring a page on the epistles [Resalah] of our current Marja-e-Taqleed. **Editors.**

" To sell something that is itself clean but that has become najas and is possible to be washed in not a problem, but if the customer intends to use that thing in a way for which cleanliness is a condition, such as intending to use clothes to pray in, the essential ehtiyat is that the seller informs him of it being najas."

" The buying and selling of najas medicines is haram, but if money is paid for its container or for the trouble taken by the seller of the medicine, then there is no problem."

" The sale and purchase of meat, animal fat, and leather which originates in non-Islamic countries is batel,... and the same applies, according to essential ehtiyat, when they are received from a kafer in Muslim market,... but if one knows that they are from an animal that has been killed in accordance to the laws of the shari'ah, then their purchase and sale is no problem."

" The sale and purchase of meat, animal fat, and leather which is received from a muslim in a Muslim market is no problem,... but if one knows that the Muslim has received it from a kafer and has not enquired whether or not it is from an animal killed in accordance to shari'ah, then its purchase is haram and batel."

" The sale and purchase of intoxicating drinks is haram and batel."

" The sale and purchase of the means of futile amusement, like banjos and mouth organs, even tiny mouth organs, is haram."

" If something that gives a lawful benefit is sold for it to be used unlawfully, like selling grapes for them to be made into wine, the transaction is haram and batel."

" If a Muslim takes reba from a kafer who is not under the protection of Islam, there is no problem...and also a man and wife, and a father and his children can take reba from one another."

" For men to engage in beating their chest (for religious reasons) in the streets even in the sight of women in not a problem provided the men are not bare chested. In the same way, If at the front of a mourning procession banners and such like are held aloft, there is no obstacle but instruments of futility (Lahw) must not be used."

" The use of contraception, provided that it is not permanent and not harmful, is permissible."

" Artificial insemination, the placing of male sperm in the womb of a woman by artificial means, is permissible provided that the sperm is the sperm of the woman's husband,.....and if the sperm is other than from her husband, it is haram."

" Masturbation, doing something to oneself that causes orgasm, is haram."

" If a father or mother is faqeer and cannot earn a livelihood, it is wajib for their sons and daughters to provide for them."

" Singing that is particular to purpose-less parties and amusements is called Ghina and is forbidden..... and even to recite religious dirges, poetry or the holy Quran in such a voice is also forbidden but to recite the same in a pleasant voice that is **not** Ghina is not forbidden."

My Hajj Experience

By Shazia Damji in Toronto [Age 11]

When my mum asked me to go for Hajj with her, the thought excited me and I agreed right away. Since I was only ten then, I did not fully realize how lucky I was to be doing my wajib Hajj at this age.

We set off from Toronto on 6 June, 1991 in a group of about 30 people. Our first stop was Laguardia Airport in New York. We had to transfer from there to JFK International where hujjaj from the USA joined us. When we arrived, we all prayed Zohr namaaz and had a tasty breakfast brought by New Yorkers who were seeing their relatives off for Hajj.

From New York we flew to Jeddah. That night we slept on the grounds outside Jeddah airport. It was uncomfortable but I didn't mind it because I was told that this was all part of Hajj.

The next day we went to Medina where we stayed at the Sheraton Hotel. Every morning we would wake up at 3.00 a.m. to get on a shuttle bus that would take us to the Holy Haram. There we would say Namaaz-e-Shaab and Fajr prayers.

After six days in Medina, we went to Mecca in a coach and on the way we made a stop at Masjid-e-Shajara to make the niyat of putting on Ehram.

We arrived in Mecca wearing our Ehram and stayed there at the Ghonaim House, a popular location for North American hujjaj. In Mecca, the first thing we wanted to do was to see the Holy Kaaba.

I had feared that moment because I imagined that there would be millions of people and that if I tripped or fell, I would be trampled upon. We walked to the Kaaba which was not far from where we stayed and I was truly amazed when I got a first glimpse of the structure. It looked so beautiful and there was no crowd. I had seen the Holy Kaaba in pictures but those pictures did not look half as beautiful. This was for real!

It was about noon and boiling hot, but I didn't care! I was where I wanted to be, having come here from halfway across the world. We all finished our tawaf, did the walk between Safa and Marwa and then returned home.

The next few mornings we performed sunnat tawafs before fajr prayers and I was truly excited to actually touch the Kaaba a couple of times.

I knew we would soon be going to Minna to hit the shaitans with stones and I looked forward to pelting them hard. But first we had to complete Arafat!

We went to Arafat with our ice packs and I was worried of the heat. When we got to our tents I was tired and so lay back for a while. In the afternoon we sat inside another tent and listened to duas. It wasn't really hot there - - it felt about as warm as Toronto in summer. To me, I thank Allah that it wasn't boiling and that I didn't faint.

Our next stop was Muzdalifah. Here we picked stones and I made sure I picked the big ones but my mum told me that I was not supposed to pick rocks that big!

From Muzdalifah we took a bus to Mina but with the traffic being heavy, some of us decided to walk the rest of the way. In Mina we all went to hit the shaitans and as it turned out, my practice paid off - - I only missed once! Then the men went to shave their heads and to sacrifice goats. In the mornings of the next two days we hit all the shaitans twice.

We then took a bus to Mecca. Almost all of us did a sunnat tawaf before travelling onward to Jeddah. After a night's sleep at Jeddah we flew to Toronto via New York and that is how our two weeks for Hajj flew by!

Our Hajj went very well, thanks to good organisation and all the help from volunteers. We also had a very good group of hujjaj.

I was so excited, I could hardly contain myself. I had missed my brother and father and could not wait to see and tell them and my relatives and friends of my memorable experience. An excellent experience that I long for once again!

'Waiting' and 'Watching' are the famous words of a loser. In business you can lose out to competitors if you don't advertise your products.

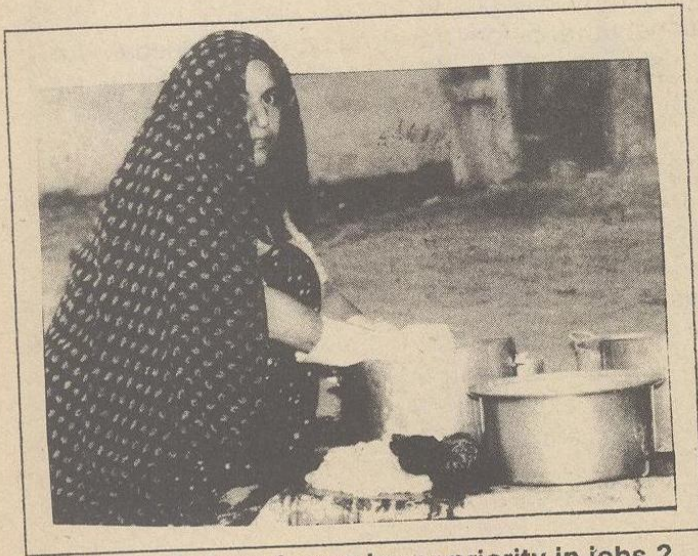
Contact Br. Amir Lakha on Telephone 37307/8 for advertising space in the **Federation Samachar.**

The Worldwide plight of women

The involvement of women in social activities substantially contributes to the growth and development of a society and is behind the success of many countries in uprooting poverty and cultural deprivation.

For over a century the issue of women's labour has been a heated topic of discussion. It dates from the beginning of the industrial revolution in Europe, when women were encouraged to work in factories as a cheap labour force and ever since women's engagement in social activities has seen many ups and downs.

Despite some improvement in working conditions, women are still often exploited and get lower salaries and fewer fringe benefits than men for similar jobs.



Always being given a lower priority in jobs ?

A United Nations convention of 1967 concerning the removal of discriminations against women urged that women should enjoy the following rights:

- To take a job of her choice freely, undergo vocational training and be promoted without being

discriminated against regardless of marital status.

- To receive the same salary as men for doing jobs which are of equal value with that of men.

- To take a leave of absence, receive a pension and enjoy job security. In spite of the approval of this convention and other efforts made in this regard, many problems have remained unsolved. To clarify the issue, it is useful to take a look at the status of employed women in some countries.

In Japan, working women, who are usually highly educated, are paid less than men under equal conditions. Canadian women, despite having a big share in technical jobs, receive a pay 15 to 20 percent less than men, even under equal working conditions. Only three percent of top managerial jobs and eight percent of less important occupations at the United Nations belong to women.

In a Third World country like Bangladesh, which is also amongst the poorest in the world, only one in every three girls of school age can go to school and only 10 percent of high school teachers are women. In that country, women account for one fifteenth of employed people and only three out of thousand Bangladesh women have permanent jobs outside the home.

According to a worldwide survey recently conducted by the U.N., women are among the first to be laid off during economic recessions. It also found that nearly half of the world's foodstuff is grown by women but they have no land of their own.

Women are said to constitute one third of the total working force in the world but sociologists say that yet they are discriminated against by men who often deny them their most basic rights under false guises.

The sexual harassment and abuse of women as a tool for advertising goods produced by the capitalist world is now very common in many countries. Additionally, under the slogan of equality between men and women, the latter are encouraged to do jobs that are quite beyond them physically. Their special physical make-up and their feminine build for such tasks as pregnancy, giving birth and breastfeeding speak for themselves and undertaking masculine jobs that demand great physical power obviously leads to physical disabilities and associated health problems.

Our women need to fight for their rights, within the limits of Islam and should avoid being exploited in any way be it at home, in the office or at social gatherings or occasions of the Community.

A Mind Diseased by the 'Dities" cannot see the light

Islam obliges a believer to think and reflect [which man by his nature is inclined to do] as a way to attain TRUTH and strengthen one's beliefs in big and small matters of religion. Such an exercise of mind is considered 'ibadat' in Islam.

However, there has developed an unhealthy culture among us - a culture of timidity in exercising our mind boldly and independently - perhaps for fear of 'rocking the boat' which has a ballast of various beliefs in small and big matters inherited in the family or are imposed unchecked because of timidity.

Through timidity grows rigidity in various beliefs and with the beliefs grows a rigidity in timidity - and the circle is complete in defiance of teachings in the Qur'an which tell us to exercise the mind through positive 'thinking', 'reflecting' and 'pondering'.

MORALS



There comes a time in the life of many of us when all our hopes and plans come crashing to the ground. Suddenly we seem to have lost all security, all that made life worth living.

When such a calamity strikes us, we may fear that this is the end of everything. We see no hope of rising again to engage in fresh battles and to win future victories.

If ever such a problem confronts you, remember the following story.

A great manufacturer was notified by his partner over the telephone that their new factory was only a pile of ashes. After a few moments thought he

We have the reputation and indeed a sharp acumen for boldly and independently exercising our fertile minds but only when it comes to matters other than religion though such matters are temporal in nature and gain.

The hereditary culture of timidity is camouflaged as a sense of devotion to our faith. We are receptive to any ideas however inconsistent with Islamic fundamentals if these are prescribed from the pulpit, with least regard to the knowledge, 'ma'rifat' and intention of the preacher. The question is : are we that much ignorant that we precariously accept rather than question the ideas which are marshalled to mould our beliefs?

This attitude and approach to beliefs makes an intelligent audience widely gullible, with its keen sense of critical judgement switched off to swallow, digest and assimilate 'naturally' anything served and claimed as edible - more so if the dishes are such as to assuage the pang of hunger and that is the pang of guilt from day to day sinning.

Such is the tale of two 'Dities'! But why should it be so ?



replied : "The next time it burns down, the ashes will be twice as great as they are now."

That was a vision, instantaneous vision backed by faith, for at once he saw a new and greater factory arise out of the ashes. In boundless faith, there is no time to complain; it does not permit of it, for faith can see beyond ashes.

The destruction of existing plans often leads to new and better ones. All material things resolve themselves in time and disintegrate into ashes but new and greater conceptions can arise.

Though your heart's desire may change in a few hours into ashes this does not of necessarily mean the end of your desire; for if you have faith in Allah (s.w.t.), there is no material conception that cannot be enlarged and improved.

If you retain faith and vision, that which 'was' can 'be' again and even greater things can arise from the ashes of your fondest hopes. Never let your vision or your faith be turned into ashes. Backed with the right effort you can achieve wonders.

BEARDS - - There is no exception!

Some of our sinful acts are committed in full view of people because they cease to carry the stigma of sin and have become acceptable and fashionable. Whilst playing music, watching un-Islamic movies, gossip and slander, gambling, paying bribes, drinking alcohol have become the order of the day for some, the God-fearing one's refrain.

Ironically the sin of shaving one's beard is often committed by believers who offer regular prayers, keep fasts and go on pilgrimage to Mecca and the holy shrines. According to the late Ayatullah-ul-Uzma Sayyed Abul Qasim al-Khui, it is unlawful to shave the beard unless one is subject to ridicule. Ayatullah Gulpaegani says "shaving one's beard is haram, and in this law all men are the same, and ridicule does not change God's law.... so, even if young men who have just become adult, or men who, if they do not shave, will be ridiculed, shaving their beards or clipping them in such a way that it is the same as shaving, is haram."

Minor sins when repeatedly committed enter the category of major sins and hence should not be underestimated. The argument against beards often centres on the Holy Qur'an not having any clear verse prohibiting the believers from shaving the beard. But on certain issues the Holy Qur'an simply gives broad outlines with details being left for Muslims to learn from the traditions of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) and the Ahlul Bayt (A.S.). For example, Muslims have learnt to pay zakat and perform Hajj correctly by following traditions of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) and the Ahlul Bayt (A.S.).

Allah has said in the Holy Qur'an : 'Indeed there is for you in the Messenger of Allah [Muhamamad] an excellent pattern [of conduct] for him who hopes in Allah and the latter day...' (Surahal-Ahzab). This verse calls on believers to follow what the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) did in his life. He kept the beard and showed displeasure against shaving as is clear from various traditions.

The Holy prophet has said "Fire-worshippers shave their beards and keep long moustaches but we keep beards and trim moustaches." He is also quoted to have said "Allah has cursed those men who try to

resemble women." Such resemblance refers to shaving the beard, wearing gold ornaments and silk clothing.

A Washington based medical practitioner, Dr. McDonald reports that "Daily shaving of one's beard shortens life and very few of those who sport a beard are affected by lung diseases." Another medical opinion furnished by Dr. Charles Sofer says : "There is better sex health in those who keep beards. Their progeny is strong and healthy whilst the contrary applies to those who regularly shave." Shaving the beard is also known to cause weakening of the eyes.

Just as women are endowed with more fat in the neck which protects them from dental troubles, men have been granted beards, the combing of which strengthens the teeth. Upward combing of beards also helps to remove throat phlegm.

It is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an that when Prophet Musa (A.S.) came to know that in his absence the Bani-Israel worshipped a calf, he caught hold of his brother and successor, Hazrat Harun's (A.S.) beard and reproached him. To which Hazrat Harun(A.S.) said : "O Son of my mother! Seize me not by my beard nor by my head..."[20:80-94]. It is obvious that the tradition of the prophets was to keep the beard.

Before the 14th Century A.D., people of other religions used to observe the sanctity of the beard. Some Roman Catholic priests, Jews and Hindu spiritual men even today keep beards. And highly learned and talented people like Shakespeare, Homer, Dr. Anton Chekor, Sir Walter Raleigh, Dr. Rabindranath Tagore and the like are unrecognisable without their famous beards.

Although the proper length should not exceed what can be held by the fist of one hand, it is permissible to trim the beard on both sides of the face. After all, it is an adornment for men and they may wear it the way they like, as long as it can be called a beard.

There is no justification for shaving the beard except when it endangers life in a hostile community or when a medical treatment necessitates it. All other reasons are irrelevant, invalid and unacceptable.

In olden times, criminals were punished by shaving their beards. Nowadays respectable people bring upon themselves this ignominy and curse of Allah, with their own hands. Those who consider themselves to be Muslims and men should stop shaving their beards or else opt for the hijab which is for women.

COURTESY : JA'FARI OBSERVER

OUR POLLUTED MARRIAGES

By Late Haji Gulamhusein Karani, Dar es salaam

Today's life is fraught with insecurity, instability and soaring inflation but we still spend fortunes on marriage celebrations.

This trend makes the poor families wretched because they have to take substantial loans to keep up with 'traditions' which often involve unrequired expenditure. The Holy Quran in Verse 7:31 warns **'O Children of Adam.....do not waste by excess. For Allah does not love those who waste.'**

An Islamic marriage only requires NIKAH or AQD [Contract] but we have adopted many practices which pollute the very essence of that holy occasion. The many 'Na-Jaez' actions practiced in our marriages reduce or annul the sacredness of the occasion.

A Fiance may put an engagement ring on the Fiancee's finger and move around freely with her before 'Nikah'. Or he could visit her to talk and (?) for hours with parents raising no objection although this is outrightly prohibited.

Similarly at the 'Dudh Pinu' [Milk Drinking Ceremony] held before the 'Nikah', the fiance shakes hands with his 'to be' mother-in-law and a chain of other 'Naa-Mahram' women.

Videos dubbed with film songs along with photographs make rounds to the homes of relatives, friends and office colleagues. Most viewers are 'Naa-Mahram' notwithstanding the fact that many video films also have intimate shots of the couple.

Intrinsically the marriage practices which have crept into our society have originated from

other cultures which are nefarious to our beliefs. Our marriage ceremonies have in fact become a mixture of Muslim, Hindu, Christian and even Pagan customs.

For instance, 'Wanai' and 'Phitikri' are Hindu systems while the cake ceremony or buffet party are purely Christian [Western] traditions. And stepping on spilt blood of a slaughtered fowl certainly does not come from Islam.

In cake-ceremonies it is normal to see females and males freely intermingling with the 'Hijaab' forgotten. Thus the marriage starts with a great sin on the wedding night just after the prayer for blessings at the 'Nikah' ceremony.

If we must have a cake-ceremony or receptions then all aspects of the Shariah should be considered. The 'Hijaab' should be preserved and music or alcoholic drinks should be prohibited. But the best marriage is one that is simple and it is best to avoid extra functions. Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) has said that "the simpler the marriage, the more blessed it is."

If the current trend in marriages is ignored, the coming generation will follow, believing it to be permissible, because we never forbade them. We have the responsibility to stop sins committed in the name of marriage otherwise we remain vulnerable to Allah's wrath.

Individuals and leaders should piously consider and heed to 'marriage simplicity' as this would be an eye-opener for others to emulate.

Editor's Footnote

Considering the money spent (squandered?) on marriages, we surely are being short-sighted. For indulgents who don't pay their obligatory religious dues [khums etc.], such prodigal expenses are a tragedy. For others, is not the alternative of donating to a worthwhile [religious] cause a better option?

And if one really wishes to spend lavishly and display the power of money, then at least let us begin to shun the un-Islamic ceremonies.

Defending Shias with a pen

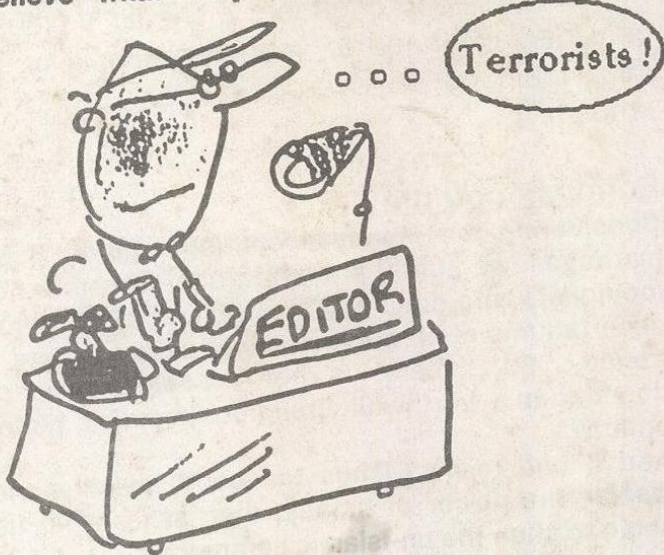
By Munir Daya, Dar es salaam

The media intrinsically relates an event or the analysis thereof to readers, listeners or viewers. Writing is a mode of imparting knowledge and delivering a message either as a first hand slight report or as a commentary and analysis of an occurrence.

The media which primarily encumbers newspapers, magazines, the radio and television has a strong influence on the thinking of readers, listeners or viewers. Other forms of media and information like books and exhibitions also play an important albeit limited role in raising people's awareness on a subject.

With the important role it plays in today's social, economic and political circles, the media is often misused to fulfil the whims and wishes of individuals or organisations. Whilst it is important for a set-up, be it political, social or religious, to have a meritorious public relations system, it is essential that this is handled with sincerity.

Unfortunately under the guise of 'Open Media', when the forum is left open, querulous critics capitalise on the situation to write destructively. When destructive views are embodied in vague but sensational and lengthy verbosity, readers are often dangerously misguided because they believe what they read assuming the material



content is all true. It is much easier to be critical than to be correct and it is for this reason that an 'Open media' is often discouraged.

On the other hand pragmatic antidotes to existent wrongs should be welcome as long as opinions presented are objective, constructive and therefore effective. While we all aspire for and wish to exhort what is best for mankind at large and our community in particular, the best has to be consistent with reality as it prevails, devoid of wishful thinking or utopian vision that may appear good on paper or may provide gleeful but hollow comments by armchair critics.

The snag is that almost all newspapers around the world operate on a commercial concept or are run by Organs which have their selfish motives at stake. Ethically anything reported should be accurate and devoid of hypocrisy or pretense but in real life this is more an exception than the rule!

In the turmoil of recent politics, Shias have questioned why the international community has not been sympathetic to the plight of our brothers in southern Iraq as it has with the Kurds. One reason is that the western media has continuously portrayed Shias negatively and it is not easy to draw sympathy for an unliked community.

In spite of the longevity and originality of Shi'ism in Arab and Islamic history, Shi'ism as a faith remained outside the limelight until the Islamic revolution in Iran took place. After this Shias occupied the centre stage of international politics but have since been on the receiving end through negative media propagations.

The role of the clerical establishment, Ayatollah Khomeini's ideas and propagations and the uncompromising stances on political and social issues got negative publicity either intentionally or because the true concepts were not comprehended by western writers. The media, especially the TV, often portrayed Shia clerics leading popular rallies and demonstrations, making antagonistic remarks against the east and west and in spite of the prevalent indulgence in this orgy of writings, there was sadly no effective medium to counter the accusations and adequately depict the true motives of the Shias.

Media establishments depend for their news on what is circulated by News Agencies whose main task is to transmit news fast, accurately and in a simplified form to establishments spread around the world which subsequently disseminate it in

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