

ISLAMIC CULTURE FORUM

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EDITOR'S NOTE

ISLAMIC CULTURE FORUM is an English language quarterly magazine of the Islamic Culture Society (Japan).

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ABU BAKR MORIMOTO

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Editor:

Abu Bakr Morimoto

Associate Editor:

Iskandar Chowdhury



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TO OUR READERS

Islamic Culture Forum is now in its second year. By the grace of Allah, the Merciful, we can now present this No. 5 issue to our readers. On this occasion, while expressing our deep gratitude to Allah, we also express our thanks to the innumerable readers of the ICF in about 85 countries around the world for their sincere support to it.

The ICF-publisher, Islamic Culture Society, Japan, has so far borne the publishing and mailing costs of the ICF depending absolutely upon individual contributions and support from its members and well-wishers, as also mentioned in earlier issues. Because the Society loves independence, it did not ask for subsidy from any kind of umbrella organization. And it was no easy task for it to bear alone all the expenses from limited contributions by individuals. Moreover, recently, there has been about 150% rise in the postal charges in Japan, due to which we could not mail, in part, the last issue (No. 4) though it came out in November last year. We regret this delay and earnestly request our readers' understanding towards our difficulty.

Problems facing Islam in Japan

As mentioned in the previous issues, Japan is a hard land for Islamic penetration through conventional process of preaching. Apart from the deep-rooted local Shinto religion, there are strong imported religions such as Buddhism and Christianity, and also some new local religions. Added to them are blind imitation of western material civilization, atheism, non-religionism, or even anti-religionism – all of them making almost an impregnable wall against the penetration of Islam, though inadvertently. To break this wall, it needs great patience and will to sacrifice on the part of those who want to make the presence of Islam felt. However, under all situations, we believe that this country needs the increase of its Muslim population as well as the establishment of a strong bond with our brothers abroad.

Having been a latest addition to the history of Muslim people of the world, we do not dare preaching Islamic principles to our Muslim brothers who have centuries-old tradition of being Muslim. Nevertheless, through the ICF, we are endeavouring to make our circumstances known to and understood by our Muslim brothers everywhere in the world and to exchange views with them, specially in respect of life of an insignificant Muslim minority in a vastly non-Muslim culture, something like a drop in the ocean. For the present, we cannot render any bigger service to ourselves and to our brothers abroad than this.

The Muslim population of the whole world is said to be about 700-million. Among these Muslims, there must not be any difference of opinion

so far as the basic principles of Islam is concerned. However, one cannot ignore the facts of life — the geographical, social, linguistic or political differences or differences in traditions, customs or habits, because of their local cultural bases which are different. And, except for the basic tenets of Islam, there is no absolutely unified and universally accepted opinion on various problems among the Muslims of various cultural societies. For example, we can cite the example of Muslim women. In the case of Muslim minorities in the predominantly non-Muslim societies like Japan where all the Muslims have to lead their life very sparsely and have little chance to form a compact community, it is very difficult to expect of the Muslim women living there to lead the Muslim woman's life exactly according to precepts, and their way of life, in effect, may not look Islamic in the eyes of the people having centuries-old Islamic tradition. To them, the way of life pursued by the Muslim women in the non-Islamic countries cannot simply be permitted. In case of Japan, the social environment is such that Muslim girls cannot avoid receiving school education together with boys for various tenable reasons. In adult life, they have to work in various spheres of life also with men. In other words, the Muslim women under such conditions cannot be expected to exactly imitate the life of the traditional Muslim woman. In short, in almost all spheres of life men and women have to work together, which cannot be even imagined in a traditional Islamic society. We have to give thoughts to adjustments of Muslim life to the non-Muslim environment, if we have to live there.

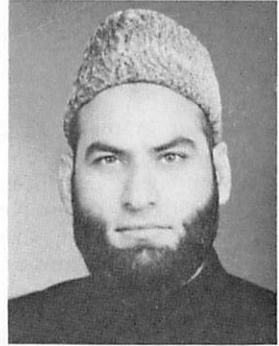
There are many other problems such as photography, music, or physical exercise, to cite only a few, on which opinions vary among the Islamic intellectuals. We have not so far received any unanimous opinion about all these problems. On the problems of photography and Muslim women's life, one of our correspondents has said elsewhere in this issue that those who support photography or women's presence in the mosque "must make exit from Islam with grace." Another correspondent and an author have given different views. Also regarding the latest Islamic call movement in Japan, there has been a criticism against its approach, in a certain quarter. But the criticism is based on unfounded allegations.

In sum, when living in a situation dominated by non-Muslims, our approach of Islamic call must not be for creating friction with the local culture, but for winning its understanding towards Islam.

Editor

THE REAL PURPOSE OF LIFE

Ashfaq H. Shaikh



The writer

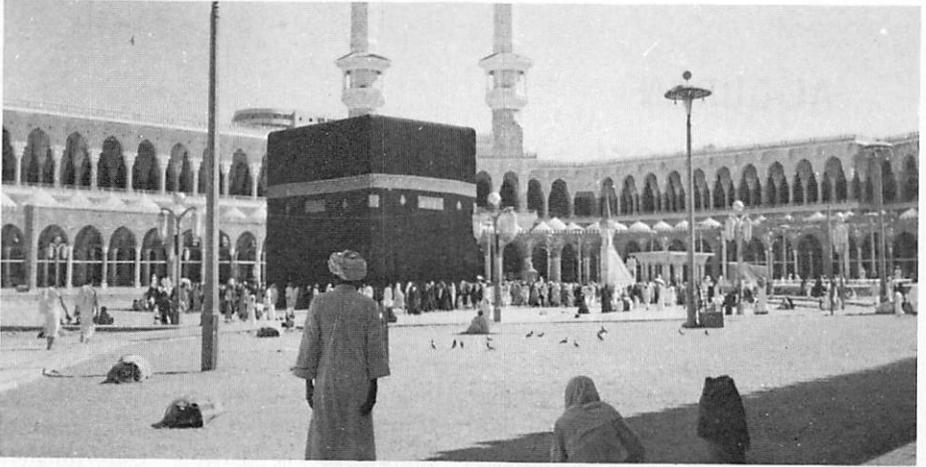
Allah has created man, the best of all the creations, to make him Caliph on the earth, thereby bestowed upon him a great responsibility to live a model life strictly in obedience with the commandments of Allah and totally in accordance with the life of prophet Mohammad (SAS) who, though weak materially and circumstantially, lived the pure life and set an example for the mankind. Irrespective of caste, creed and colour, whosoever will follow the commandments of Allah and methods of Mohammad (SAS) will likewise secure every benefit and blessing directly from the most exalted Allah.

The Companions (SRA) of Mohammad (SAS) struggled in their life to follow the path established by Mohammad (SAS) as closely as possible. Allah accepted their sacrifices and attempts and blessed them with the real supremacy over the entire mankind and with the real peace and prosperity. So this has become a general rule for the living universe to derive the real benefits and success in this world and hereafter.

Prophets were sent by Allah to convince mankind of the power and might of Allah and to guide them on to the right path through which successes could be achieved directly from the Almighty

Allah. The chain of prophets ended with the advent of our prophet Mohammad (SAS) who is Khatem-un-Nabiyeen i.e there will be no prophet after Mohammad (SAS). But with that the task of prophet Mohammad (SAS) was not brought to an end but now the followers of Mohammad (SAS) in his stead have to carry out the job of propagating Islam.

As long as Umat remains on this object of life it will have value near the Great Custodian (Allah) and also in the eyes of the mankind. But, on the contrary, if Umat forgets her major role, it will loose this credit and shall suffer a big disaster. Just as when a cow refuses to give milk, or the hen stops laying eggs it looses its value in the heart of the owner who then hands it over to the butcher. All the five fundamentals of Islam i.e. Faith (Iman), Prayers (Salat), Poor due (Zakat), Fasting (Saum) and Pilgrimage (Haj) are the dire necessities to become a Muslim, but now the so called (qualified) Muslim should take upon himself the duties of service to Islam. After which he can expect reward and profit from Allah. For instance a doctor, after getting an elaborate education and qualifying for the medical profession, if he sits idle



at home and does not apply his knowledge in the medical field, his mere qualifications can not bring him any reward or profit.

So those Muslims who are contented on these fundamentals alone (of what ever degree) and do not make efforts for further improvement within themselves and in others, will naturally find that deterioration starts in them and thus do not retain the original standard, as Islam is a dynamic and not a static power.

Moreover, they loose the special kind of help and reward which are reserved for prophets and for those who perform the duties assigned by prophet Mohamad (SAS).

However the struggle for unavoidable necessities of life is not forbidden as long as the main object of life as desired by Allah is kept in view and in the forefront of one's existance and by having full faith in Almighty Allah and not basing upon man's own faculties.

Allah's commandments (during twenty four hours life) are full of blessings

for mankind and reflect His own beauty and perfectness.

In order to achieve the goal of life and derive the real success man has to purify himself first by striving on the lines laid down by the prophets. This calls for sacrificing one's own desires and to comply implicitly with Allah's commandments. Thus the man is gradually and surely elevated to a state of harmony with Allah, a stage at which he is in a position to beg of Allah what he wants. Salat (Prayer) and "doa" after it form a typical example of the way to beg from Allah. By praying the Muslim communes directly with Allah, the greater his devotion during prayer and in his general life, the nearer is he to his creater and the greater response will he get from his "doas".

Man's noble existance is a gift from the Almighty, not to be wasted on materialistic activities which have no bearing on his soul but must be used in Allah's Glorious service to bring harmony and peace to the greater part of mankind.

AL-QURAN CHALLENGES LITERATORS



Muhammad Sharif Ahmad

The writer

The miracle of ingenuity of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) in Islam is the most universally unique Al-Quran. The miracles in Muhammad (SAW), in his practical deeds and teachings are considered the most supreme and supernatural than the entire miracles of other prophets of Allah. The Holy Quran is strongly believed to be the God's teachings and oral Revelations through Muhammad (SAW) for all mankind irrespective of their races, colours and cultures. Those who follow the right path and lead pious life as elucidated in the Holy Quran will enjoy perfect bliss in this world and hereafter.

Miracle or *i'jaz* signifies "to weaken". It weakens the ability of a man or a group of intelligentsia to make one book similar to the Holy Quran which contains Allah's miraculous teachings and it is obviously beyond man's capability even with his sophisticated aid of scientific and technological devices to compete with Al-Quran or to excel the Quranic verses. The Holy Quran is a remarkable Islamic masterpiece on which

man's knowledge is based. It becomes a fundamental source from which all knowledge is derived. Unfortunately, many people tend to be ignorant in the Quranic qualitative analysis.

The Holy Quran has for a long time proved that no man or '*jinn*' can surpass it. During the prophetic period of Muhammad (SAW), many prominent Arab scholars from all tribes were asked to produce their short verses to contend and compete with the Quranic verses, but every soul was reluctant. The unbelievers expressed illogically that the Quran was merely a magic. In fact, the morally and intellectually impressive Quranic verses are extremely irresistible and incomparable. As a consequence, many Islamic theologians, scholars, linguists and experts in literature have unanimously agreed that the Holy Quran is a paramount miracle of our Prophet Muhammad (SAW). For instance, Prophet Musa (AS) possessed miracle to divide the Red Sea with his staff or Prophet Isa (AS) whose miracle was to cure the sick men, and many other miracles

A native of Malacca, West Malaysia, Mr. Muhammad Sharif Ahmad is an educator by training with deep interest in the study of Islam. Though young at about 30, Mr. Sharif Ahmad showed depth of his study in the present article ... Editor

that were revealed by the Will of Allah.

A question was raised. Why the miracle of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) is solely a "book" that is to be read and studied but why not a miracle which amazed the eyes? The miracles that were revealed by Allah in the Islamic Prophets were spiritual incidents as mentioned in the Holy Quran and they could be seen during prophetic era with the divine objective to convince mankind of Allah's Greatness and Omnipresence. Those miraculous occurrences were not eternal. When the prophets passed away, their miracles also vanished. Only the miracle of the Holy Quran given to Muhammad (SAW) by Allah cannot be explored by five senses. But the Quran was revealed to be read and studied for mental, emotional and moral developments as well. Thus it is said that all apostles' and prophets' miracles, except Al-Quran, were divine evidence which were visible but not eternal. They only occurred during the life of the prophets and apostles. Only Al-Quran, the genuine miracle of Muhammad (SAW), is eternally harmonized with any period and all human races. Nowadays, the Quran is explored by men's mental capacity with profundity from one generation to another. Factually speaking, the Holy Quran is not subject to any alteration or slight modification and it is divinely safe-guarded and thus secured by Allah in the ever changing world until arrival of the doomsday.

The Holy Quran is the sacred revelations from Allah to Prophet Muhammad (SAW) with divine motives to give chaste guidance to all mankind so that they may go along the right way toward the

strong belief or trust in the unity and oneness of Allah.

Undoubtedly, the Holy Quran is an extraordinary Islamic Holy Book, its divine laws cannot be invented or composed by man.

Thomas Carlyle says: "I am brave to say that I do not understand why the Arabs love the Quran much. If you have once read the Quran intelligently, you will begin to feel mentally and emotionally the sacred characteristics of Quranic contents as a Miracle."

In Al-Quran, its miracle can be analysed into various aspects as below:—

- a) Language
- b) Soul
- c) Knowledge
- d) Law based on the Islamic teachings.

a) Miracle of Al-Quran from the aspect of its language:

The Holy Quran was first introduced to the Arab tribes from Allah through Prophet Muhammad (SAW) in Arabic. In the period of turmoil, between Allah's followers and idolaters, a group of non-Muslim scholars tried to disparage the Quranic verses of its linguistic structures. The Prophet came forward to challenge anyone among them who was willing and capable to compose one verse similar to the quality of any of the Quranic verses. If the Arabs who possessed the Quranic language have acknowledged that they are incapable of competing with the revelations of Allah and the beauty of its language, how other races who use different languages, can accept that challenge? For fourteen centuries until today man has never been able to

compose words or verses to compete with the philosophy of Al-Quran.

In fact, no ancient and modern writings, particularly literature, can match with the uniquely and perfectly arranged beauty of the Quranic verses.

b) Miracle of the Quran from the aspect of soul:

Quran is the greatest revelations from Allah and is not a form of writings like an ordinary book of knowledge.

The revelation of Allah has two functions:

i) To explain the Islamic law and truth.

ii) To instil the truth or belief of Allah into man's soul and mind.

Monotheism or Unity of God is the basic principle of Islam. Solely with the guidance of the Quran, truth in the unity of Allah can be instilled into one's soul and, in this way, will totally obliterate polytheism and atheism. The Holy Quran reveals adequate and satisfactory proof to substantiate the Divine Existence in the Unity of Allah, the Almighty. The Holy Quran always keeps in us the memory of Allah's munificence apart from the concrete truth of knowledge.

The Holy Quran has been a powerful force in moulding and shaping our thinking and emotion in our religious life.

c) Miracle of the Quran from the aspect of knowledge:

In the Quran, knowledge is generally mentioned as religious knowledge and worldly knowledge. Allah has given approval to all Muslims to participate ac-

tively in social welfare activities. Furthermore, God encourages us to strive in developing the nations or in worldly matters, and Allah will reward us for our pious deeds in the heaven of supreme bliss. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) also urged upon us to work diligently and piously in this world and to humiliate the idle one. All Muslims either male or female are encouraged to gain theoretical and practical understanding of all subjects of knowledge.

d) Miracle of the Quran from the aspect of Law based on the Islamic teachings:

The formation and development of God's Law in Islamic teaching is comprehensively clarified in the *suras* such as *Al-Baqarah*, *Al-Imran*, *An-Nisa*, *Al-Maidah*, *Al-Anfal*, *At-Taubah*, *An-Nur* and *Al-Ahzab*. These chapters contain verses about Islamic Law besides verses which concern with 'aqudah,' moral virtue and historical stories of ancient peoples. Whatever judicial matters not found in the Quran, are mentioned vividly in our Prophet's Al-Hadith to explain further the Quranic verses.

Last but not the least, the miracle of the Holy Quran can be applied to all fields of studies and activities comprising Islamic religion, politics, sociology, economics, philosophy, science, technology, arts and so on. An overall survey in the teachings of the Holy Quran deals not only with Islamic faith but also with simple and complex problems involved in the affairs of mankind from time to time. This comprehensive account of the Quran, Allah's revelation through Prophet Muhammad (SAW) is significantly useful.

MUSLIMS AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS OF OUR AGE

Jamila Qarar

Islam is the religion which God has chosen for us. It gives clear guidance and tells us how to live within our society and within the whole creation. The Quran urges us constantly to reflect upon the physical world and to do research into its natural wonders so as to understand the marvellous creative power of God in nature. "Behold! in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of night and day there are signs for men of understanding" (Quran 3/190).

It is He Who brought everything into existence and keeps everything in being. Man, as the representative (Khalifa) of God on earth (see Quran 3/30) has the right to make use of nature, and has also the responsibility to do so in a reasonable manner "It is He Who has created for you all things that are on earth; moreover, His design comprehended the heavens, for He gave order and perfection to the seven firmaments; and of all things He has perfect knowledge" (Quran 2/29). Unfortunately, man's interference into his biological surroundings has not always been successful nor advantageous nor use-

ful. Sometimes this was because scientific knowledge had not been developed sufficiently, or if it had it was not yet part of the general knowledge of the common man. However, sometimes the ruin which comes from industrial or (surely superficial) scientific work is due to the unscrupulous exploitation of natural resources or to their inconsiderate use in order to make profit. Profit has become a magic word and a "deity" in certain parts of the world. For profit everything can be sacrificed — even the lives and the health of innocent people. There are terrible examples of the results of this behaviour. For instance, an American professor of radiology in Pittsburgh has proved that in the surroundings of atomic power plants the infant mortality rose by 140%. This is due to the nuclear waste expulsion into the water and the air. So far, the scientists have not yet developed methods of lowering this dangerous expulsion or to neutralize the nuclear waste (1).

Nuclear testing, particularly in the atmosphere, is a grave danger to humanity.

Mrs. Jamila Qarar, an Austrian by birth now living in Afghanistan embraced Islam at 20. Why? As she says herself: "I felt that as a Mulsima I could lead a full and valuable human life, that Islam leads man to satisfy his spiritual as well as his material needs in an equilibrium that guarantees the development of a culturally creative mind ... ICF No. 3 pg. 20-21" Her Present article is very interesting in that she has dealt with a most pressing problem of the modern civilization from the Islamic point of view ... Editor

Reliable estimates show that the fallout of nuclear explosions (30 megatons) cause, in the course of generations, the death of 420,000 embryos or new born babies as the result of environmental radiation; the birth of 230,000 babies with mental and physical disfunction; and the suffering of millions of people from inherited infirmities (2).

The inhabitants of a city in Japan (Minamata)* suffered for years from visual defects, mental weakness and disorder. The physicians could not explain what kind of disease this was. Over the years, it came to be called the "Minamata disease". Later it was discovered that the people of that city were fishermen and their food supply was near a factory which worked with mercury (quicksilver). The industrial waste was dumped into the same water from where the people caught their fish, and chemical analysis found traces of quicksilver in the fish and mussels. The factory was sentenced by a court to compensate the people for their immediate health problems, but who can ever compensate the life-long ill effects? Of course, those who made the profits without caring to avoid water pollution may reply that there are natural diseases and inherited defects also, but how can they deny their responsibility for the human harm and grief brought about artificially?

Water pollution by industrial and residential refuse poses great danger for human societies. Not only does this waste pollute the water of lakes, streams and sea with moribific (disease-causing) agents, but it cannot be incorporated into the biosphere and, thus, it causes

death or contamination of water and micro-organic life, which makes the nourishment from the sea a potentially dangerous one for man. In the highly industrialized countries the pollution of the air by industrial and automobile exhaust gas has become a most serious problem. American cities frequently face "pollution alerts" in the summertime, which means that the air is literally too dirty to breathe with safety, and persons with breathing disorders (asthma, bronchitis, etc.) are encouraged to stay indoors. In some European cities the problem is often so acute that children who walk to school daily have been found to be suffering from lead poisoning. The margins of roads with usual heavy traffic are mostly deserted of all vegetation on account of the lead and exhaust gas expulsion.

What can be done about these evils? It would exceed the space and the time here to discuss the various scientific, technical and industrial means to withhold the environmental destruction and to protect human health. But it is possible to keep the air and water clean and also to reincorporate the polluted water, for instance, into the production process of certain industries and thus avoid the contamination of the biosphere. Likewise, it is possible to use the waste of certain industries for other useful industries, not to mention the economical advantage of such processes of production. This involves cost, especially in the beginning, but they are insignificant in comparison to the cost caused by the great damage done by the permanent pollution. And does not the health

and the well-being of people also justify the cost? The short-sighted principle of exploiting everything for the sake of profit without considering the effects on future generations cannot be allowed to have priority over life and health.

Whereas the developing countries must make great efforts to industrialize, due investments for the preservation of a healthy environment should not be neglected. It is the great advantage of these developing countries that they face not yet the problems of damage caused by careless pollution which, in fact, greatly worry the over-industrialized countries today.

Careful attention must be paid to agriculture as well. Steady control of the composition of fertilizers and insect antidotes as well as of the quantities applied is very important, since improper use of these agents causes opposite results from what is desired. Disparity in the cutting and growth of timberland has serious effects on the climate and soil condition. The well-known impact of erosion on agriculture points to the necessity of due programmes and making information available to private farmers. Agricultural education should be made accessible to farming people on a broad basis.

At last, what can individuals do to keep our surroundings safe and wholesome? If we introduce the Islamic attitude in all spheres of life and develop a deeper sense of Islamic consciousness we can provide a good example of awareness to our fellow men. Our lives can be living example of the benefit of

choosing morality over expediency, because Islam causes a mental revolution in which man directs his actions in harmony with the universe. Islam opens the eyes and ears of those who reflect and fosters respect and Rahmah towards all the creation. All organic and inorganic beings are in the service of Allah; therefore, one may not kill or destroy them without reason and necessity. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) is reported to have forbidden the unnecessary cutting of trees or branches of trees, especially fruit trees, and he considered the planting of a tree as a permanent charity. This noble attitude even towards plants places a responsibility upon us, with our modern knowledge of biology and the chain of nature.

In respect of our nearest surroundings, our homes and dwelling places, women have the greatest influence on them and they shape them practically. Their obligations towards the family require not only an economical but also a healthy housekeeping. Women should be aware of the requisites of sound nourishment. Cleanliness is part of Iman and this would apply also to our relations with the physical world. No Muslim would deliberately pollute his natural surroundings, the sustenance that Allah has provided for us, or the place where other people dwell or seek rest.

Furthermore, we should be aware of the Quranic injunction to "eat and drink but do not squander". We are told that God does not love those who squander. Mothers have a great task to implant these feelings into the minds of the children who are our greatest hope for

an Islamic society of tomorrow. We cannot overlook unfavourable or dangerous developments caused by short-sighted and irresponsible exploitation of the world's natural resources without having found new substitutes and expedients which God has provided for but of which man may not yet know. All these things which form man's attitude and make his view of life a homogenous whole must lead to the lofty ideal of selfless service to Allah. Only when our thoughts, feelings and action strive in that direction will we be capable of

building an Islamic order, for the well-being of all humanity.

FOOT-NOTES

- (1) STERNGLOSS, E.J.: Infant mortality and Nuclear Power Generation, Harrisburg, 1970; and: Effects of Low-level Environmental Radiation on Infants and Children, Univ. of N., III, 1971.
- (2) PAULING, L.: No More War, New York, 1958; German title: Leben oder Tod im Atomzeitalter, Vienna 1960.

*Minamata is a coastal city in the western Japanese island of Kyushu. In this city, a mysterious disease broke out during 1953-64 affecting 108 persons, among whom 34 died. A Kyushu University Medical investigation revealed that its cause was their eating fish from the neighbouring waters polluted by organic mercury poisoning from the exhausts alleged to have been released from the nearby chemical industries. But the industries denied it. During 1964-67 again, similar disease broke out in other parts of the country. Later, the Japanese Health and Welfare Ministry recognized it to be a pollution disease. A court decision also reaffirmed it and the industries concerned were made to pay compensation to the victims of the disease which commonly came to be known as "Minamata Disease," after the city where it first surfaced. — Editor

THE CHILDREN'S BOOK OF ISLAM, PART I,

Published by The Islamic Foundation,
3-7 Keythorpe Street, Leicester LE2 0AL, U.K.

Although "Produced specially for the School Programmes run by the Muslim Educational Trust" in the U.K., this 40-page handbook of the basic tenets of Islam will be extremely beneficial not only to the children but also the adults who have newly adopted the faith in the non-Muslim English speaking world. The book is also worth translating into other languages for the benefit of non-English speaking new Muslims. We are eagerly looking forward to the publication of its subsequent parts. Excellent printing and get-up.

Islamic Culture Society, Japan.

ATTENTION

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Thank you.

Executive Director
Islamic Culture Society, Japan

Mr. A.S.K. Joommal, a South African Islamic scholar and author, born of Arab-Pathan parentage, mainly devoted his pen to fighting orthodoxy in Islam. The present article is one such writing, reproduced from MUSLIM NEWS of 10 September 1965. One may not fully agree with his arguments, but he has put up a point of view which is worth discussing. His books include THE PATH OF ISLAM (1960) and BIBLE: WORD OF GOD OR WORD OF MAN? (to be published) ... Editor

MUSIC, PHOTOGRAPHY -AND ISLAM

A.S.K. Joommal



The writer

This article is not in defence of “western materialism.” We Muslims should NOT (I repeat NOT) become slaves to western mentality at the expense of our own Glorious Deen of Islam. We must adhere to our own Islamic principles and maintain our own identity as Muslims. We must NEVER allow our eyes to be dazzled by the flutter of the West. However, at the same time, we must not disparage the progress and advancement achieved by the West – a progress and advancement of which we Muslims partake liberally.

I therefore cannot understand the patent hypocrisy of the “upholders of the Sunnah” who, on the one hand, treat with contempt all “western” advancement and conveniences, yet, on the other hand, cannot do without these same conveniences in their everyday lives.

We make use of the modern media of transport, e.g. aeroplanes, ships, trains, motor cars. We use telephones and have radios at home. Are these not inventions of the evil West? If they are so evil, then why do these gentlemen to whom everything of the West is evil, make use of these media? They should rather stick to the “Sunnah” of the Prophet and NOT contaminate themselves by riding in cars, aeroplanes, etc. They should rather travel on camels as our Nabi did. That would be the Sunnah way of travelling! Similarly one could speak of many other mod. cons. that our friends of the “upholders of the Sunnah” brigade make use of daily – yet speak against it. Why do they make use of the

“western materialistic” printing presses (which is an invention of the West) in order to print their magazines in which they run down “western materialism”?

When I speak of advancement, I mean advancement in science and technology. The morals of the West, as everyone knows, is that of a tomcat! We Muslims, thanks to Allah, still retain our modesty and morals as taught to us by Allah and our Beloved Rasool (S.A.W.). To utilize the results of the advancement of other nations is NOT prohibited in Islam. On the contrary, our Nabi taught us that “Wisdom is the lost property of the Muslims; take it from whatever source you find it.” We also know that the foundation of science was laid by Muslims. All that the West has done is to improve upon this foundation and persist with it, whereas, we Muslims have lagged behind and lost the track of progress due to overindulgence in wine, woman and song as Islamic history testifies. The Qur’an and our Nabi exhort

us to study science and to improve the world we live in. Why, then, are the “upholders of the Sunnah” so persistently opposed to the progress of the world through science and technology?

Science is the discovery of the Laws of Allah Jalla Shaanuhoo and as such, is universal. It is NOT the heritage or monopoly of the West.

People who have not allowed their God-given faculty of thinking and reasoning to be hamstrung by fossilized dogmas, often ask whether photography and music is prohibited in Islam.

The “upholders of the Sunnah” referred to above have made it their pre-occupation to repeat – ad infinitum and ad absurdum – that Islam has banned photography and music. Fatwas are quoted by this Moulvi and that Moulvi in substantiation. Certain Ahadith are presented to “prove” their point – but only those particular Ahadith are taken which suits them. Other sayings of our Nabi that refute their contention are avoided like the plague.

MUSIC

A comprehensive essay dealing with the subject of music in Islam by that indefatigable Islamic scholar, M.O. Seepye, is out (a copy of the essay on music may be obtained gratis from: Mr. M.O. Seepye, P.O. Box 506, Pietermaritzburg, Natal, South Africa). I shall, therefore, deal very briefly with this question.

Music is food for the soul. It brings us nearer to Almighty Allah. Imam Ghazzali (R.A.) in his magnum opus IHYA-UL-ULOOM, says that there is

something wrong with the man who does not like music. The incomparable Imam who was one of the greatest scholars in Islamic history, left no doubt about the goodness of music when he declared that: “One who is not moved by music is UNSOUND OF MIND and intemperate; is far from spirituality and is DENSER than birds and beasts: because EVERYONE is affected by melodious sounds.” Great Awliyas loved music and saw nothing “haraam” in it. Hazrat Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti (R.A.) was himself a great musician and played the sitaar beautifully. Rabia Basria (R.A.), the greatest woman saint of Islam, was an accomplished flautist (flute-player), and at one stage she played the instrument to earn her living!

The three great elemental sounds of Nature are music. Is the sound of rain, the sound of wind, and the sound of the ocean on a beach not reminiscent of an awe-inspiring rhythm? The sound produced by a rivulet cascading merrily over pebbles and stones, is music. When the Qur’an is intoned with ilhaan and tajweed: is that not music?

Can we ever listen to the lilting song of the Namaqualand thrush in the garden after the rains and remain unmoved? Are our souls so dead that we cannot recognize and experience the divine gift in the nightingale and canary when mesmerizing cadences emanate from their throats? The chirping of birds in unison during dusk and dawn is not just birdy noise, but divine music. These little winged creatures of God celebrate His praises with their warbling, throaty music.

The attraction of a warm summer's night is enhanced by God's little music-makers – the crickets and beetles. Is their perfect orchestral performance not music to the ears? Only a man deaf in ears and dead in spirit will fail to perceive their God-inspired ability to make music in the night!

Music by itself is not haraam, but the manner in which it is used should provide us with the cue whether it is desirable or not. If music is used in accompaniment with a divine song or a song eulogizing our Beloved Nabi (S.A.W.), there is absolutely NOTHING wrong with it. But if music is used in dance halls to stimulate erotic passions, then naturally it is undesirable and Haraam.

Music, like an aeroplane, is neutral. An aeroplane may be used to drop bombs and kill thousands of people. It may also be used to drop mercy drugs and save thousands of lives. Since an aeroplane can be used to drop bombs and annihilate people, this is no reason to ban all aeroplanes! We must try and ban the EVIL USE to which the plane is put. Likewise if music is used for pandering to evil, then it is the EVIL that should be banned, not the music. Music, like calligraphy, is an ART, and the cultivation of art as such has never been forbidden by Islam!

PHOTOGRAPHY

The next point on which the “upholders of the Sunnah” always have an apoplectic fit is photography, or pictures. Dr. Muhammad Fazlur Rahman Ansari Saheb, that towering colossus of Islamic learning, is always photographed wherever he goes. If any savant can be said to

know the religion of Islam inside out and in all its aspects and manifestations, it is Dr. Ansari. Yet he sees nothing wrong in being photographed. Does he, perhaps, not know that he will have to “put life into” his pictures on the Day of Qiyamat?

Photography is a result of man's ingenuity. Allah Ta'Ala has given man a mind – and man puts his mind to use. Through research and investigations man develops machines and equipments that benefit mankind. Photography is one such result of the “hikmat” of man's mind. We must remember that the Holy Qur'an commands Muslims to do research and discover things thus making this world a better place to live in.

How is an Islamic State in this day and age going to conduct its criminal investigation department effectively if it does not have a complete catalogue of all the known criminals' fingerprints and photographs?

In a penetrative search into cosmos, a fundamental method is the use of photographic plates to record the paths traversed by particles which come from the infinite expanse of the universe. Some of these particles have been recorded on such plates having passed through 6,000 feet and more of solid rock at the bottom of our gold mines!

The electron microscope is vital in research into the very essence of what is life. This microscope uses photographic principles: without it the fundamental research into the beginnings of creation would have to stop. Consider the various departments of life where photography plays a vital role – hospitals, schools, universities, laboratories, to name but a few.

A toothless argument often advanced by this group is that photographs will lead to idol-worship. I have not known – ever since the advent of photography – of a single instance where Muslims have worshipped a photograph! No Muslim in his right sense will ever do such a stupid thing. The argument – if it could be called an argument – is therefore hypothetical and holds no water. Only a twisted, sick mind can put forward such an “argument”. A Muslim worships ONLY Allah, and not a photograph!

Another example of the hypocrisy of this group is that although they shout from rooftops that photography and pictures are Haraam, yet they carry photographs and pictures in their own pockets – even while they perform their salaah. Does not the picture of Jan van Riebeeck appear on our Republic of South African notes and coins? If we are so strictly holy and religious, then we must go the whole hog and refuse to have anything to do with a currency that has the picture of a human being embossed on it. We must petition the government to issue special “Islamic” coins and notes for the use of Muslims. How ridiculous can we get?

The “upholders of the Sunnah” carry Identity Cards. Why did they submit to this photographing which, according to them, is Haraam and evil? They should have had the guts and the courage of their convictions to stand by what they preach and should have steadfastly refused to be photographed! They should have taken an example from the Jehovah’s Witnesses who fearlessly reject all Government attempts to get them to do army training because such training is against their religious principles. All

of them have gone to jail – and are happily prepared to go to jail in future – but they have never thought of compromising their religious beliefs. Compare the Jehovah’s Witnesses’ stand with that of our “upholders of the Sunnah”. The conclusion is obvious: it is oh so very easy to preach, but quite, quite another thing to PRACTISE what you preach!

Photography; therefore, is not haraam or forbidden in Islam.

Bukhari is regarded as the ASAHHUL KUTUBI BA’DA KITAABILLAH – the most correct book after the Book of Allah. Every single Hadith in Bukhari is venerated as genuine and irrefutable by the “upholders of the Sunnah”. This is what Bukhari has to say about pictures:

Hazrat Ayesha (R.A.) relates that the Prophet (S.A.W.) said to her: “..... An angel brought your PICTURE wrapped in a velvet cover and told me that (the woman whose picture it is) is my wife. I removed the velvet cover from the PICTURE, and saw that it was UNDOUBTEDLY you! (Sahih Bukhari).

Thus if the picture of a living person is brought FROM ALLAH TO HIS RASOOL, what is wrong with us lesser mortals if we take family photographs, wedding photographs, photos of our parents, or near and dear ones for remembrance?

Islam is not an inflexible, rigid, dogmatic faith. On the contrary it is a most rational way of life that allows us to live in harmony with changing situations WITHOUT SACRIFICING OUR ISLAMIC PRINCIPLES AND SCRUPLES! Our tragedy is that intellectually we simply refuse to grow up and arrive in the 20th Century!

THE TOKYO MOSQUE

ITS HISTORY AND ITS ROLE IN THE ISLAMIC CALL MOVEMENT IN JAPAN

Abu Bakr Morimoto

Some of our readers have expressed surprise knowing for the first time that there are Muslims in Japan and that there are also mosques in this country.

Perhaps this surprise originates from the fact that although Japan is very well-known as an economically advanced country to the people of the world, its spiritual image among them is apparently one of non-Islamic, even anti-Islamic.

In the past, Japan had a very thin or no relation at all with Islam. Until about seventy years ago most of the Japanese did not have any clear idea of the existence of a religion called Islam. Only recently that many of them came to know about the Islamic world. And the oil crisis gave them the opportunity to know quite well that a large number of the people of Asia and Africa are believers of Islam because the shock came mainly from the Middle Eastern Muslim countries from where Japan must have most of its oil requirements. Yet, though the Japanese people have shown great interest in the oil producing Muslim countries, their lands and their people, very few have shown any interest in these people's religion—Islam. At the same time, the number of the Japanese Muslims is so negligible that they are also not in a position to exert them-

selves and impress upon their non-Muslim compatriots so far as the religion of Islam is concerned.

For instance, the oldest organization of the Japanese Muslims, Japan Muslim Association, which has a history of 24 years, has a regular Japanese Muslim membership of not more than one hundred. It is quite likely that for various reasons hundreds of other Japanese Muslims have not enrolled themselves as members of Japan Muslim Association. In any case, it is true that its membership has not increased upto the extent as one could expect of it for a period of 24 years.

However, in spite of such unfavourable circumstances, we can see that a pioneer Japanese Muslim, Mitsutaro Yamaoka, performed Hajj and became the first among the Japanese Muslims to do so as early as in 1909. From 1920 until today, at least six Japanese translations of the Holy Quran were published, among them, the one rendered by Haji Umar Mita is the only one by a Muslim scholar, and the rest by non-Muslims. Thus, it can be said that at least several hundred thousand Japanese have had the opportunity to read the meaning of the Holy Quran although not all of the translations can claim accuracy or genuineness.

Before World War II, many organizations sprang up for the purpose of study and research on Islam. One such organization was "Dai-Nippon Kaikyo Kyokai" (Japan Islamic Association), supported by the then Japanese Government with Prime Minister General Senjuro Hayashi (1876 ~ 1943) as its President. But almost all of them were organized by non-Muslim scholars or people interested only in its cultural study. None of them, thus, could be called a part of Islamic call movement by any means. But there were also a few Islamic establishments meant for the religious activities of the Muslims. Among them were the Kobe Mosque established in 1935, the Tokyo Mosque in 1938 and another small place of worship in Nagoya city about the same time. However, since then nearly forty years have passed and during this long period great many Japanese came in contact with the Muslims or acquainted with Islam. Yet the number of Muslims has not increased remarkably. Why? What were the difficulties that stood in the way of spreading Islam in this country?

To answer this question, I want to have close look into the situation some forty years ago when the Tokyo Mosque and other mosques were built, and into the role of the Tokyo Mosque, in particular, in spreading Islam in Japan.

At present, the Tokyo Mosque is situated in the Oyama quarters of Shibuya Ward of Tokyo. It was first opened for prayer on 12 May 1938 which was also the Prophet's Birthday. On that auspicious day of the opening ceremony, apart from the foreign Muslim residents



Holy Quran, first printed in Japan (1938).

of Tokyo, Muslim guests from various parts of the world including China, Southeast Asia, India, Middle East and others also attended the ceremony on invitation. Among the distinguished guests were Amir Saiful Islam Al-Hussein, the fourth prince of the Kingdom of Yemen attended, representing the Imam of Yemen accompanied by Foreign Minister Hussein Al-Gibsi and Hodeida Governor Qadi Ali Al-Hussein Al-Amri; Sheikh Hafiz Wahaba, Minister at the Saudi Arabian Embassy in the United Kingdom, representing the King of Saudi Arabia; and Abdul Wahhab Dawood Bey, Minister at the Egyptian Embassy in Tokyo, representing the King of Egypt and many others from a number of Muslim countries.

From the Japanese side, patriotic political leaders like Mitsuru Toyama and General Iwane Matsui, the Minister of Education and many other influential personalities attended the opening ceremony of the Tokyo Mosque. From the

grandeur of the ceremony through the participation of so many Japanese and foreign dignitaries, it appeared as if a strong Islamic movement is going to take place in Japan.

The fund that was made available for the construction of the Tokyo Mosque amounted to about 120-thousand in the old Japanese yen currency the present valuation of which could be equivalent to nearly 800-thousand US dollars. If looked from the present-day circumstances of the Japanese Muslims, this is an unimaginably large amount.

Unfortunately, however, the worldwide conflagration of the Second Great War and its end through the defeat of Japan, in effect, destroyed what appeared to be the start of a strong Islamic movement in this country. All the institutions and organizations which had hitherto been making efforts for the study of Islam or supporting the Tokyo Mosque, were disbanded because they were sponsored or supported by the pre-War Japanese Government or the Japanese Military authorities through providing finance or leadership.

In spite of all the twists and turns, since about seventy years ago, Islam made its way into Japan, though in a very slow pace, and the people started to know about Islam little by little through the translations of the life of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) as well as the Holy Quran which found their way along the Western culture. Thus, Islam was introduced in Japan not as a religious belief for the Japanese people, rather as a socio-cultural study. So its diffusion was not possible as a religious belief.

Perhaps it was from around 1920 that Islam became a practiced religion in Japan by both the foreign and the Japanese Muslims when a group of Muslims of Tartar Turk origin migrated from the USSR to Japan in the wake of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, and settled in Japan. The Japanese Government which was strongly anti-Communist showed great sympathy for these uprooted Russian Muslims, numbering about 600, and helped most of them to settle in this country under its protection. Among them, about 400 settled in Japan mainly in Tokyo, Kansai and Nagoya areas and made their living mainly on peddling woolen cloth. At the same time, they were the first people who established the Islamic life in this non-Islamic land. In other words, Islamic religious life started in Japan with the immigration of these Tartar Turk refugees from Russia and with this started the intercourse between the local Japanese people and Islam, though in a very insignificant scale.

After their settlement in Japan, these Muslims needed to make contacts with the Japanese Government as well as with various other political, economic or social circles for the purpose of improving their situation. Fortunately, they were blessed at that time with a very resourceful leader in the person of the late Muhammad Abdul Hai Kurban Ali.

Son of a Bashikirit Imam, Kurban Ali was born in 1890 in Orenburg, eastern Russia. He came in contact with the Japanese Army in Manchuria when he was fleeing from the Soviet Russia along with other Tartar Muslims. There

he earned sympathy of the Japanese Army. In 1920, when he came to Japan, he was provided with a job of teaching Turkish and Russian at the General Staff Headquarters of the Japanese Army.



Late Kurban Ali with Mitsuru Toyama and other eminent Japanese. (Standing 2nd from left)

Kurban Ali was a man of great political and diplomatic acumen and possessed other statesmanlike qualities. He was also sociable and personable, the qualities which could influence people. With the help of all these qualities and by dint of untiring zeal and efforts as well as his convincing arguments, he impressed upon the Japanese Government, political, economic and military leaders, like Mitsuru Toyama (1855–1944), Tsuyoki Inugai (1855–1932), Shigenobu Okuma (1838–1922), Chosei Ogasawara, Tokijiro Jitsukawa and so on, about the necessity of Japan's having strong ties with the Muslims of the world. By his convincing advocacy, many influential Japanese became sympathetic toward the Islamic cause, though in political sense, and Kurban Ali earned their material and moral support for Islamic activities. Thus, in 1931, with their help and support an office of the Turkish Muslims was established in Tomiyaya in Shibuya Ward of Tokyo, not

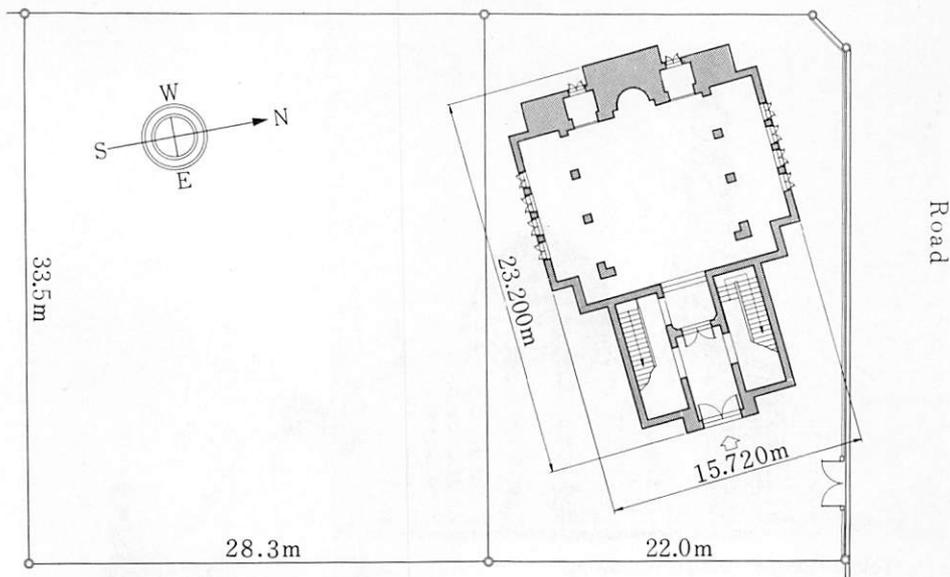
very far from the present location of the Tokyo Mosque.

In this office premises, educational facilities for the Tartar Turk children and an Arabic printing press were established. From this press, Kurban Ali published a monthly magazine called *Yane Yapon* in the Tartar language. In 1938, an Arabic print of the Holy Quran was brought out from this press for the first time in Japan. Through the *Yane Yapon Mokhbiri* he succeeded in drawing attention of people from various parts of the world. Thus, the magazine played an important role in establishing goodwill and understanding between its readers abroad and the Japanese people. As a result, it also earned high esteem and sympathy of many leading personalities in the Japanese political, economic and military circles. And also, just this was the time when the Japanese militarism was at its peak and when Japan was trying to establish a policy of co-operation and rapport toward the Muslim countries.



Late Kurban Ali

Kurban Ali had a long cherished desire for building a mosque in Tokyo. With the help and support from various



Tokyo Mosque: Its land with surface design.

Japanese patrons, he at last succeeded in collecting necessary funds for the land and building of a mosque. A top shipping magnet of those days, Kame-saburo Yamashita (1867–1944), donated $1,655\text{m}^2$ of his own land for the site of the planned mosque. For the expenses of construction, the then Mitsubishi Bank President Kiyoshi Seshimo personally donated 20-thousand pre-War Japanese yen. Enterprises such as Mitsui, Mitsubishi, Sumitomo and many others also made contribution. The total sum thus collected, as mentioned earlier, amounted to about 120-thousand pre-War Japanese yen (the present valuation may amount to about 800-thousand US dollars). The whole amount was handed over to Kurban Ali to meet the cost of construction of the mosque building. In October 1937, Kurban Ali initiated the construction designed by architect Yoshimoto and operated by the Morota Construction company. The building was

completed in May 1938. This is what the present-day Tokyo Mosque situated in the Oyama quarters of Shibuya Ward in Tokyo.

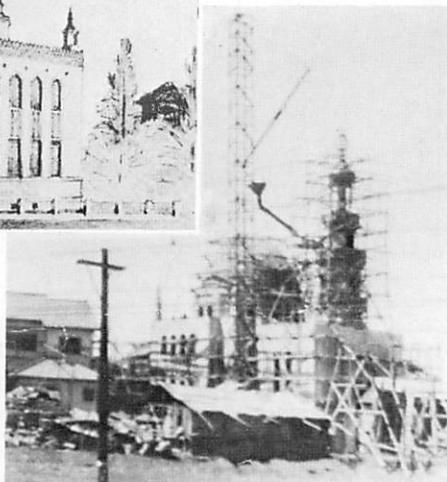
As the leader of the Tartar Turk immigrants and also of the Muslims in general, Kurban Ali left many achievements to his credit. On the other hand, because of his uncompromising attitude and strongly individualistic manner in the face of any interference, there also occurred some serious troubles involving him. One such example is his conflict with Ayas Ishaq, a prominent leader of the Tartar National Movement, who visited Japan in 1933. In another example, although he did not have any frontal conflict with Imam Ibrahim Bey, the Grand Mufti of Tartar, who came to Japan on a second visit (first visit in the turn of the century) sponsored by the Turkish Embassy in Tokyo, Kurban Ali did not find it opportune to cooperate with him, either. When



Tokyo Mosque: Designers drawing showing completion

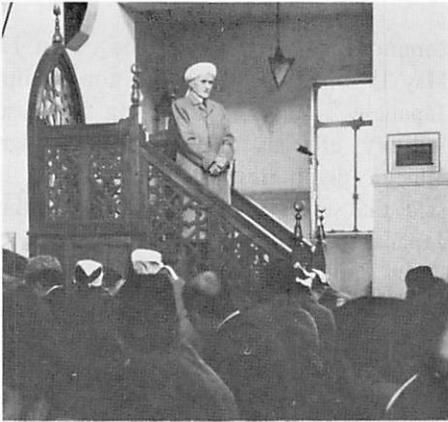
the construction of the Mosque was making rapid progress toward completion, a fierce controversy arose on the question who will become the Imam of the Tokyo Mosque. The situation developed into so serious proportion that, out of political expediency, the Japanese Government intervened. The result was that Kurban Ali was deported to Dairen (Lu-Ta), Manchuria. Thus, the man who was the driving force behind the building of the Tokyo Mosque could not even attend its opening ceremony. He had also to leave his family in Tokyo never to meet them again. After World War II, the Soviets took him as a prisoner. In 1972, Kurban Ali breathed his last in Chelyabinsk, Soviet Union. He was then 82.

When World War II came to an end, a greater part of Tokyo was in ruins due to air raids. Fortunately, the Tokyo Mosque escaped destruction or damage.



Under construction.

But the conditions surrounding Islam or the Tokyo Mosque drastically changed. After Japan's defeat in the War, all kinds of organizations associated with the defunct Imperial Japanese military were disbanded or reorganized appropriate to the new situation. So was the fate of the organizations which were patronized by the military for the study of Islamic culture. The New Law of Japan did not permit the Japanese Government to support any particular religious group or to help diffuse religious education as a faith in the government institutions. As a result, all sorts of Islamic activities have had to depend



Tokyo Mosque: Imam Ainan Safa on the "minbar."

solely upon private support of only the Muslims within and without Japan. The Tokyo Mosque came to be maintained by the Turkish community living in Japan.

However, even after the War, the Tokyo Mosque continued to be mainly a place of worship for only those who are already Muslims. In the post-War years, when many countries with predominately Muslim population became independent and have had ties with Japan, an increasing number of foreign Muslims both for private or official visits started coming to Japan, and the Tokyo



Tokyo Mosque: "Nikah" ceremony of a Muslim Japanese couple.

Mosque has been an important place as a visiting spot for them. No doubt, like any other mosque anywhere in the world the Tokyo Mosque serves the Muslims in performing their social, and community activities such as marriage, conversion, funeral, in addition to its religious functions beside the Eid and Jumma prayers. And being the only mosque in the capital city of Japan, it is also an important visiting spot for the Muslim dignitaries from different parts of the world, including heads of states and governments.

It is also true that in the Tokyo Mosque, Islamic educational classes have been conducted by some Arab teachers every Sunday for the last 10 years. Also, here advice regarding Islam is given to the non-Muslim Japanese who seek such advice.

There should not be any language controversy involving a Baitullah. There is also not a single Muslim to raise any question regarding using Arabic in the Salat. But the Khutba given by the Khatib must be understood by all the worshippers present. Specially, the Japanese who generally do not speak or understand a foreign language will extremely welcome the use of Japanese for Khutba and other deliberations in the Mosque.

Another point is that the Tokyo Mosque's role also as the pivot of the Islamic call movement among the Japanese people must be stressed. Because the call movement is aimed at the Japanese, they must also have a feeling of participation in all the functions of the Tokyo Mosque instead of merely



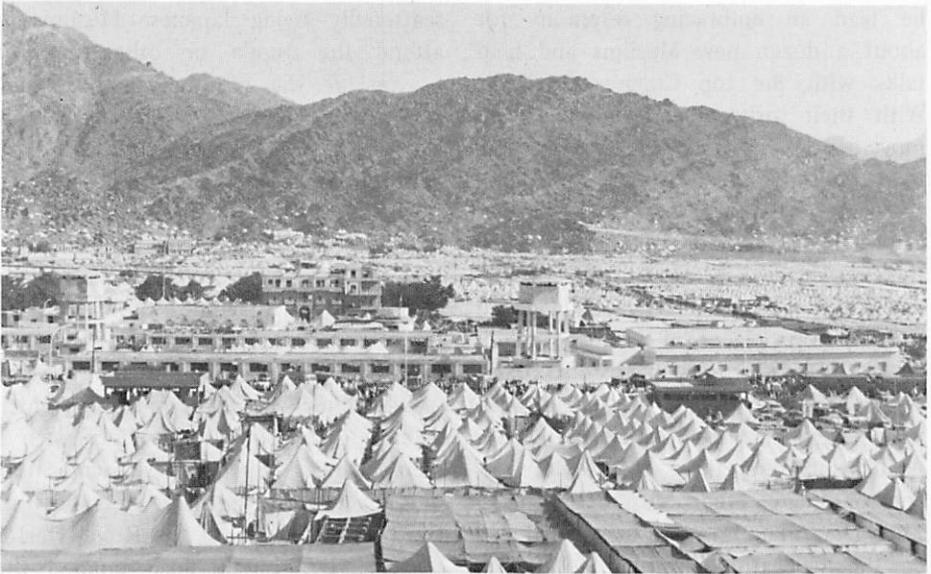
Tokyo Mosque: Brothers from various countries greeting one another.

playing the role of onlooker. Unfortunately, there has not been any scope for a feeling of participation among the Japanese Muslims for various reasons. Before the War when the Japanese Government and others supported the establishment of the Tokyo Mosque, they did it for political expediency and meant it for the foreign Muslims. They had nothing do with the diffusion of Islamic education or spreading Islam in this country. In fact, one cannot expect of them any such purpose other than expediency. And as a natural corollary, no one could expect much of the Tokyo Mosque playing a vital role in the Islamic call movement in addition to its providing a place of worship for the Muslims, mostly foreign in those days. It is interesting to note that in the opening

ceremony of the Tokyo Mosque on 12 May 1938, a large number of non-Muslim Japanese supporters including Japanese military officials together with foreign Muslim dignitaries attended, but it is said that there was not a single Muslim Japanese attending.

In sum, the use of the Japanese language in the Tokyo Mosque, in the situations where it can be or should be used, will raise a sense of participation among the Japanese and, in effect, it will help strengthening the Islamic call movement in this country. On the part of the Japanese Muslims, they must also play their own responsible role in creating a favourable atmosphere for the Islamic call movement in their country to build a line of generations of Muslims. It is a fact that they did not perform their duties in the past properly, neither are they performing them in the present days. Throwing out any kinds of passiveness, they must come forward and work in a positive manner for the cause in cooperation with their other brethren. Only as a result of their own efforts we can look forward to the day when a Khutba will be given also in Japanese also by a Japanese Imam.

The wooden and concrete structure of the Tokyo Mosque is now experiencing the wear and tear of time. And now is the time to make efforts to build a new modern structure with more congenial atmosphere pervading the Mosque as well as with better facilities so that it can play its desired role not only as mere a place of worship but also as the centre of Islamic call movement in Japan.



Hajj

Photo by: Khalid Futaki (December 1975)

ISLAM ON FORWARD MARCH IN JAPAN

Activities of Japan Islamic Congress

The story carried in ICF No. 3 under the above title created great interest among our readers throughout the world. A number of local news and views magazines in Japan also covered the situation described in the article from various angles.

Through the 'dawah' movement under the auspices of Japan Islamic Congress led by Dr. Shawqi Futaki, the numbers of new Muslims and prospective ones have greatly increased in the recent months. According to the information, the embracing of Islam by some 1,500 Japanese in about the last one year and

the movement steered by Japan Islamic Congress, the organization of the newly converted Muslims, which has by now mobilized about 24,500 signatures in support of Islam.

The Rabitaul-Alam-Al-Islami, Mecca, also gave its blessings to Dr. Shawqi Futaki's course of action in the movement. Mr. Hussein Shiraj, then Deputy Director-General of the Rabitat paid a visit to the Congress in August 1975. In the month of November, H.E. Sheikh Muhammad Saleh Al-Gazzaz, Secretary-General of the Rabitat, also took the trouble of visiting the Congress. There

he lead an embracing ceremony for about a dozen new Muslims and held talks with the top Congress officials. With their visits, the Islamic 'dawah' movement has received a great impetus in this country.

On 1 December last year, Dr. Shawqi Futaki led a 4-member Congress delegation to Mecca. The members of the delegation performed Hajj and visited various holy places of Islam in Saudi Arabia. During their nearly 50 days' stay in Saudi Arabia, they held talks with many Islamic leaders of Saudi Arabia including those of the Rabitat, and of many other Muslim countries. Then Dr. Futaki and two other members of the delegation returned to Tokyo on 20 January this year. Another member, Mr. Abdul Lateef Morishima, extended his stay for studying Islam at the King Abdul Aziz University in Mecca.

For the purpose of providing Islamic education to the newly converted Muslims, the Holy Quran classes are held at the Congress office every Thursday. Jum'a prayers are usually held at the headquarters of the Congress.

As is well-known, there is an established mosque in Tokyo. But there are many practical difficulties for the very

scatteredly living Japanese Muslims to attend the Jum'a or other daytime prayers at the mosque, because they cannot take leave from their places of work except for those Muslims who have their independent businesses. In this respect, one special advantage for Dr. Shawqi Futaki's call movement is that he is an eminent medical doctor having his own clinic known as the Royal Clinic in the Shinjuku quarters of Tokyo. The staff and the patients of the clinic has an organization which is called Royal Health Society with a membership of about 10-thousand. Most of the new Muslims are members of the Clinic staff or of the Royal Health Society. Dr. Futaki has founded the nucleus of the Islamic call movement comprising these new Muslims as well as with the sympathy and cooperation of other non-Muslim members of these two establishments. At the same time, the non-Muslim sympathizers have the opportunity to study about Islam.

On 14 February, Japan Islamic Congress held a large meeting to hear Dr. Futaki's lecture on his tour of Saudi Arabia and other Muslim countries. In the meeting, nearly 600 Muslims as well as sympathizers assembled and listened to Dr. Futaki. Apart from Dr. Futaki,





Dr. Shawqi Futaki, speaking on Hajj and Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Muhammad E. Tanaka, a member of the Japanese Parliament also spoke on the occasion. Both of them discussed *inter alia* the future courses of action of the movement and also called upon the Japanese people and the Government to make more positive efforts for promoting relations of goodwill and friendship with the Islamic people in the world.

As historically true, the rapid expansion of a certain movement also gives vent to a sort of resistance to it. So

is the case with Japan Islamic Congress, too. In December last year, when Dr. Futaki was away to Saudi Arabia, a mass-oriented weekly magazine published an interview with him taken before his departure. In the interview published, there were some expressions with ambiguous connotations which were not Dr. Futaki's, but put on the magazine to make the talk amusing. Later, this interview was translated into English and published in the leading English daily, **The Japan Times**. In the translation again, new concoctions crept in through taking advantage of the ambiguities of the Japanese terms published in the magazine. Unfortunately, a certain circle in Tokyo misunderstood this and unfairly criticized Dr. Futaki and the Congress, and even tried to misguide others with their own misunderstanding. Fortunately, their attempts fell flat.

We strongly believe that NO unfair criticism which shoots up from misunderstanding will be able to stand in the way of the forward march of the current Islamic 'dawah' movement in Japan. Allah's will shall prevail.

The Assembly of Japan Islamic Congress, 14 February 1976.



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Jl. Kemiri 8, Jakarta, Indonesia

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60 Robson Heights, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

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Gem Chambers, Zaibun-nisa Street, Karachi-3,
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10-C/163, Mansura, Federal B Area, Karachi,
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P.O. Box 4872, Cape Town 8000, South Africa

Islamic Centre of Cape Town, "LIBERTY,"
360, Albert Road, Salt River, Cape Town,
South Africa

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100 Brickfield Road, Durban (Natal), South
Africa

The Young Men's Muslim Association,
P.O. Box 5036, Benoni South, Transvaal, South
Africa

Mr. M.K.M. Zubair,
41, Baudhdhaloka, Mawatha, Colombo-4, Sri
Lanka

Young Muslim Association of Thailand,
16 Tambessa Lane, Silom Road, Bangkok,
Thailand

Dirlis,
Aylik Dergi, Sirkeci, Istanbul, Turkey

Isik Kitabevi,
Darussafaka, Cad No. 22, P.K. 35, Fatik,
Istanbul, Turkey

The Islamic Foundation,
3-7 Keythorpe Street, Leichester, LE2 0AL,
U.K.

Union of Muslim Organizations of U.K. & Eire,
30, Baker Street, London W1M 2DS, U.K.

To be continued in the next issue

READERS FORUM

ISLAMIC COMMUNITY OF LISBON

For a long time, we in Portugal, felt an urgent need for an Islamic organization in this country, not only to give moral support to all the Muslims living here, but also to promote wide understanding of the Islamic religion which is professed by about 600 millions of human beings all over the world. At the same time, we had also an absolute necessity to do serious, scientific study of Islamic culture because the so-called "islamologues", "orientalists" and "arabists", upto now, have looked at it as an exotic culture and, consequently, with a negative point of view in which the Muslims were obviously never dignified.

Therefore, in the Portuguese capital of Lisbon, we decided to establish the "Islamic Community of Lisbon". Its Statutes have been officially recognized on 28th March 1968. Its members, numbering nearly eight hundred, are all Muslims living in Portugal. By the way, we may mention the fact that Islam has had a long contact with Portugal since the commencement of the statehood of Portugal.

We also must not forget the Arab domination of the Iberian peninsula for nearly seven centuries (711-1452 A.D.). Since then Portugal's contact with Islam has never been broken. From the fifteenth century, the undertaking of the maritime discoveries once again established contact between Islam and the Christian West and many Muslims from the former Portuguese overseas territories started living in Portugal. It is their descendants that today established the "Islamic Community of Lisbon", a religious, apolitical and cultural body. This organization has to play a big role in the promotion of the religious and cultural life of the Muslims of Portugal. The Muslims also expect of it a great deal of important works.

Some of the Community's objectives are:

- a) to build the first mosque in Lisbon since the fifteenth century (to attain this goal, we solicit financial help from Muslim organizations and philanthropists all over the world);
- b) to work for the dignity of Islam;
- c) to develop friendly relations among

believers of different religions;

- d) to publish books on Islam in the Portuguese language;
- e) to promote classical Arabic studies in Portugal; and so on.

Every three months, the Islamic Community of Lisbon publishes regularly a magazine entitled "O Islão," which is the only periodical about Islamic culture in Portuguese. At present, there are more than three million Muslims who speak the Portuguese language. They live in Portugal, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Timor and Macao. One-third of the total population of Mozambique and 60% of Guinea-Bissau follow the Islamic religion. The Muslims living in Portugal are originally from Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, Goa, Timor, Macao, Morocco and Pakistan.

The Community plans to build an Islamic centre which will include a mosque, a madrasah, a cultural home, and a library with necessary facilities costing a total of US \$200,000. Until this plan is realized, it wants to establish a small centre with a prayer hall and cultural home at a cost of US\$50,000.

Presently, the Community has collected an amount of US\$14,150 (figure of Oct. 1975) deposited with "Crédito Predial Português-Miguel Bombarda" Bank in Lisbon (Account No. 1.042.792/01).

Rua Luís de Camões,
100-3º Eq., Lisbon-3, Portugal

Dr. Suleiman Vally Mamede,
President,
Islamic Community of Lisbon



We are very pleased to learn that recently thousands of people have become Muslims. May almighty God bless you, and your group, with more success, so that you should be able always to acquaint new groups with Islamic religion.

We appreciate your efforts in the path of Islam, and would like you to keep us informed of your activities.

We are ready, with great pleasure, to send you any number of publications and Islamic books that are in the possession of our group. We have many books of different subjects written in Arabic. Also we have English books and publications, the samples of which have been sent to you before.

Finally, once again we appreciate your Islamic efforts and wish you success.

Teheran, Iran

Mortaza Nouri

Indeed, it is a great pleasure for us to receive your Islamic Culture Forum the contents of which are educative to us.

Dear Brother, rest assure that you have all our cooperation in the propagation of Islam. We wish to contribute articles to your most esteemed magazine. As soon as these articles will be ready, we will send them to you for consideration of publication. May Almighty Allah guide us always on the right path.

Port Loius, Mauritius

Secretary General, Islamic
Literary Movement

●●

Kindly accept my heartiest congratulations for bringing out your Islamic Culture Forum. It is indeed heartening to see such a wonderful magazine, appearing from your country. I pray to Almighty for its continued success. And may Allah bestow His infinite Mercy to all those who are associated with the publication of this magazine. I shall be highly glad if you will please arrange to send me a copy of the magazine regularly.

Chittagong, Bangladesh Burhanullah Khan

●●

I am very happy to receive the Islamic Culture Forum and thank you very much for your invaluable kindness to me.

Your magazine is very fascinating and useful to me. From it I can learn about my Muslim brothers and sisters in Japan, about their efforts toward the advancement of Islam through propagating Islamic teaching and culture. All these are astonishing to me and I read everything with great interest. With reference to its contents, I would like to request you to add more about the social condition and activities of the Japanese Muslims in the future.

I would like to correspond in friendship with my Muslim brothers and sisters in Japan in particular, and throughout the world in general.

Finally, I pray to Allah that He always bless you for the success of your endeavors in the cause of Islam in Japan.

c/o Syafrizal Peg.-Sip.

IMMINDAM-I/Isk., Kutaraja,
Aceh, Indonesia

A. Jalil Ahmad

●●

I came across your Islamic Culture Forum recently and was pleasantly surprised to go through its contents including the highly informative and readable account on "Islam in Sri Lanka" penned by you.

I am a textbook writer working in the Ministry of Education of my country, engaged in the preparation of religious textbooks for the use of Muslim students.

I shall be happy to receive regularly the copies of your Islamic Culture Forum magazine.

May Almighty Allah shower His choicest of blessings upon you and your Society for the work you are doing to spread Islamic culture within Japan and abroad. It is gratifying indeed to know that so few are doing so much for the cause of Islam, Al-hamdolillah.

Colombo, Sri Lanka

M.F. Mohamed Hazauul Fakhir

●●

I have read the articles of Islamic Culture Forum thoroughly and, in my opinion, most of them are very interesting and informative. One of the articles (INTRODUCING A JAPANESE MUSLIM) in the No. 2 issue was so interesting and important to me that I could not resist the urge for translating it into the Indonesian language and sending it to the Islamic weekly ADIL in Sala (Surakarta) for publication. The Editor of ADIL is a close friend of mine since our joining the Islamic boy scout HIZBUL WATHON during our school life in Sala. I hope he will be of the same opinion and put the article in his magazine so that it can be widely spread among the Islamic readers of Indonesia and thus create a more sympathetic attitude towards the development of Islam in Japan.

I hope you will kindly accept my apology for not having asked your prior permission. Surabaya, Indonesia Sumarto Harsolumakso

●●

It indeed came as a rude shock to me that whilst you printed the letter of the great defender of Islam in South Africa, Mr. M.S. Bhula of Benoni, Transvaal, concerning photography being unlawful, you yet persisted in filling more than half of your magazine with pictures. It is a shame.

Another point is that you allow women in the mosque (see page 16 May issue, 1975). This is totally Haraam (forbidden) in Islam.

I spent sometime in India studying Dien of Islam and in India the alims say this is Haraam.

We will be sending you a booklet on "Women in Mosques" and I hope you will be convinced. I see that you are not convinced by Mr. Bhula's letter to you. If people do not see light, they must make exit from Islam with grace.

Cape Province, South Africa

Molvi A.S. Desai

●●

I had the occasion to read your Islamic Culture Forum and I read a letter therein by Mr. M.S. Bhula.

Your magazine is of very high standard in every respect, and I do not have adequate words to commend you. Please keep up the good work.

In South Africa there are some people who like to sow seeds of dessension and create divisions among Muslims whereas Allah says that Muslims must UNITE and be ONE. In a recent booklet of theirs they have spoken so much of dirt and filth against women in Islam that they have caused an uproar in the local Muslim community.

May Allah Almighty crown all your efforts with success and may your magazine go from strength to strength, Ameen!

Newcastle, South Africa

Ali S. Khan

●●

My brother in Islam with whom I correspond, Abdul Rehman Loop, sent me the enclosed application form and suggested I write to you for assistance. I am endeavouring to learn as much as possible about Islam, and would greatly appreciate any help you can offer by way of books and information. I specially should like a book or a list of Muslim names with their meanings, if possible.

I have a few books at the moment. They are: 1) The Translation of the Quran by Marmaduke Pickthall, 2) The religion of Islam Vol. I-II, 3) Introduction to Islam by M. Hamidullah (which I found extremely helpful) and 4) Islam - Our Choice.

I have only recently begun my search for knowledge on the right path to Allah, and I would really be pleased to hear from you soon.

C/- Post Office, The Summit,
Queensland 4377, Australia

Sally Spiller

●●

We are pleased to inform you that the year 1395 H. was very fruitful for the work of our organization. We are deeply touched by the feelings of sympathy and goodwill which you demonstrate towards the Muslims of our country, by sending us your organ, "Islamic Culture Forum".

The articles published in your magazine are of great use for us and are highly appreciated. In order to consolidate and develop the ties which have been established between us, we would like to receive your publications regularly in future, too. By the will of Allah, you will regularly receive in exchange our organ, "Muslims of the Soviet East".

Using this opportunity, we want to extend to you as well as to all the members of your Editorial Board our best wishes of perfect health and every success in your noble work for the benefit of Islam and the Muslims.

103 Hamza Street,
Tashkent-700055, USSR.

Mufti Z. Babakhanov,

President, Muslim Religious Board
for Central Asia & Kazakhstan

●●

I was very happy to see Islamic Culture Forum publication of the Islamic Culture Society, Japan. By chance I came across the magazine. I was very glad and prayed to Allah that Mussulmans are still conscious of their duty of spreading Islam.

In my country, Mozambique, 30-40% of the people are Muslims. All over the country we have many madrasahs and mosques. But we have no publication like yours. Always when we want to publish anything we utilize pamphlets. I would like to request you to kindly send me a copy of Islamic Culture Forum regularly including the back issues.

Lorenco Marques, Mozambique

Abdurrahid Nurmohamad

●●

I am glad to read your Islamic Culture Forum which you kindly send to my madrasah. Congratulations to you for the kind of work you are doing in the world to spread the Islamic religion. May Allah guide you to the achievement of your objectives.

I would like to correspond with pen-pals in Japan who are interested in exchanging gifts, correspondences, viewcards, etc. The correspondence should be in English. I am a boy of 22 years.

P.O. Box 1423

Kumasi, Ghana

Ahmed Murtala Iddrisu

I have just finished reading Islamic Culture Forum and am much impressed by its contents. For the first time in my life I came to know about Japanese Muslims and your good work. I earnestly pray to Allah for your success.

I shall be very grateful indeed if you could kindly put my name on the mailing list of your esteemed magazine.

Rangoon, Burma

Yusuf Hla Tin

●●

I have great pleasure in writing to you and introducing the ARABIC STUDIES CIRCLE, which was formed with a view to imparting knowledge in Arabic language, the language of the Holy Quran, to our interested brethren.

I receive a copy of your Islamic Culture Forum from my good friend from Malawi. I congratulate the members of Islamic Culture Society of Japan for bringing out this interesting and informative magazine and for their service in the cause of Islam. It is really a great task to publish such a good magazine. May Allah crown your efforts with success. Madras, India

Syed Karamatullah Bahamany,
Secretary, Arabic Studies Circle

●●

I acknowledge with profound thanks the receipt of Islamic Culture Forum. The journal deserves praise from brethren in faith not only in that land of the rising sun but also throughout the Muslim World.

I have shown the pictures in this journal to my Muslim brethren and sisters in my community. All those who saw it were astonished to find out that there are Muslims in Japan.

After reading Brother Haji Umar Mita's introduction, I was deeply touched by his zeal and enthusiasm in propagating the Islamic faith. May Allah give him the strength and means to pursue his undertakings. If only some Muslims follow his example, Islam will soon gain momentum among the other faiths, that is, there is the possibility of winning the hearts of other faiths to the fold of Islam.

I am a public school teacher and religious leader in our community. I have been long thinking to reproduce prayer guides of Islam in English here as there is dearth of such prayer guides in and around our community.

I have also in mind to reproduce the Friday sermons into our dialect because our religious leaders are not learned in English sometimes. The sermons or 'khubta' are delivered in the Malay or Arabic languages which few understand. Lastly, if I have the means, I would like to work out a translation of the Holy Quran into our dialect, Sinama. In fact, I have already done one-half of it. But my job at the public school and my limited knowledge in Arabic hindered me from pursuing the work. I used the English translation of Abdullah Yusuf Ali for rendering into my dialect, Sinama.

I want to correspond with Chinese Muslims. Can your journal help me in this respect? By the way, My wife is also of Chinese origin.

c/o Mrs Consuelo B. Kunting,
St. Joseph School, Moret,
Zamboanga City, Philippines

Hadji Yusuf Kunting

●●

I read Islamic Culture Forum with great interest and zeal. It is really attention-arresting, educative and informative and I hope that your magazine is a silencing refute to the so-called modernists and orientalist. To me, the greatest attraction was 'Islam' by Paul Thomas Welty dispelling some of the sinister misconceptions about Islam. However, Welty's "... the former husband must support her until she remarries" (ICF No.3, May 1975, P.12) is a wrong notion. Muslim savants are unanimous in their opinion regarding the provision of maintenance. Islam instructs its adherents to support the former wife till her 'iddah' (waiting period) expires.

P.O. Cheruvadi, Calicut,
India

A.K. Ismail Wafa,

Jt. Secy, Sunni Students Federation

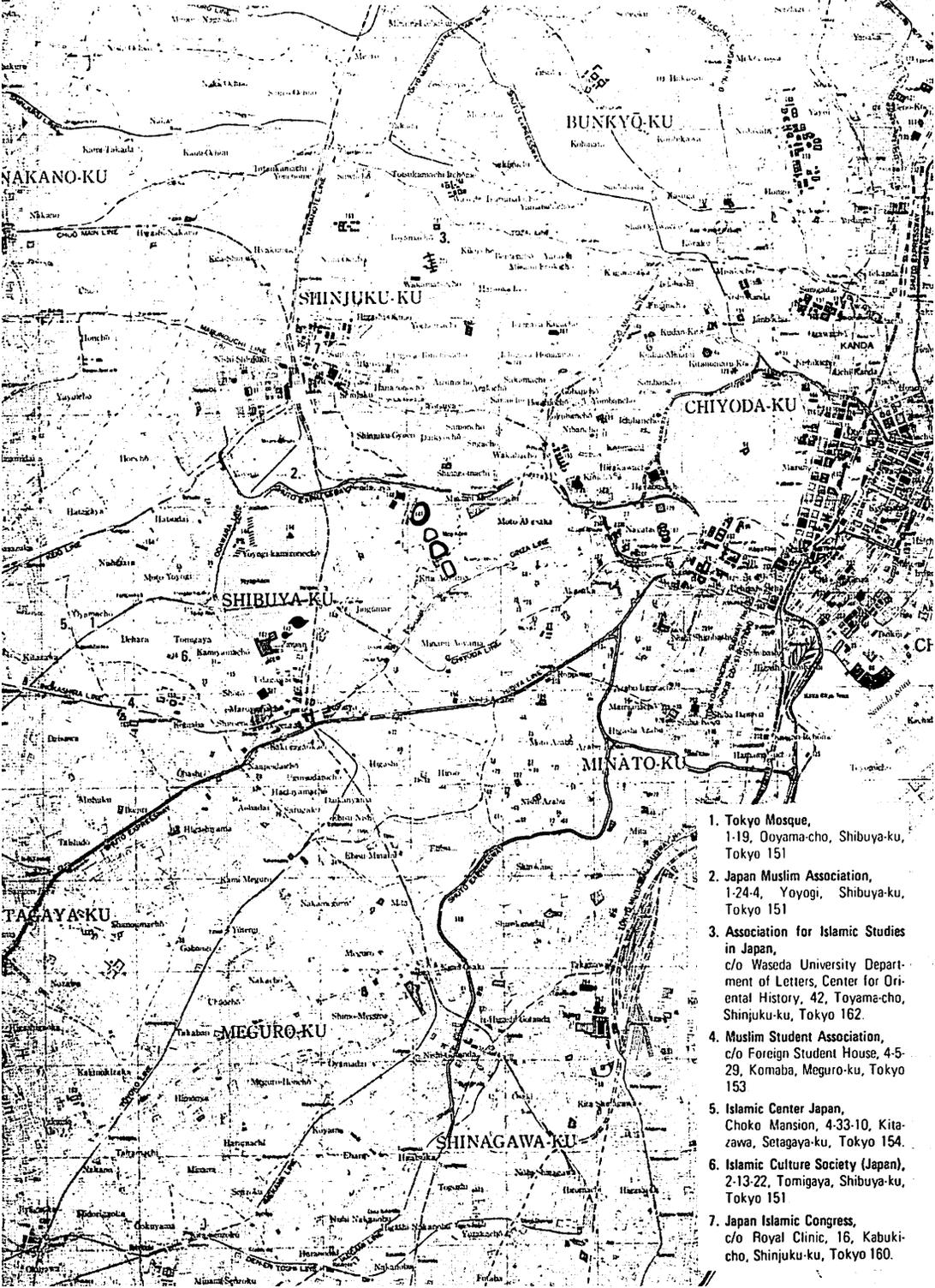
●●

It is amazing to know the stupendous rate at which Islam is progressing in Japan. There is no doubt in my mind that it is largely due to sincere and continuous efforts of people like yourself. All Muslim brothers of our Islamic Society of Greater Houston like to join with me in appreciating your efforts and would like to help in any way we can. Jazak Allah.

Houston, Texas, U.S.A.

Dr. Jamil Ahmed, Ph. D.

Part Map of Central Tokyo and location of Islamic Organizations.



1. Tokyo Mosque,
1-19, Ooyama-cho, Shibuya-ku,
Tokyo 151
2. Japan Muslim Association,
1-24-4, Yoyogi, Shibuya-ku,
Tokyo 151
3. Association for Islamic Studies
in Japan,
c/o Waseda University Department
of Letters, Center for Ori-
ental History, 42, Toyama-cho,
Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 162.
4. Muslim Student Association,
c/o Foreign Student House, 4-5-
29, Komaba, Meguro-ku, Tokyo
153
5. Islamic Center Japan,
Choko Mansion, 4-33-10, Kita-
zawa, Setagaya-ku, Tokyo 154.
6. Islamic Culture Society (Japan),
2-13-22, Tomiyaga, Shibuya-ku,
Tokyo 151
7. Japan Islamic Congress,
c/o Royal Clinic, 16, Kabuki-
cho, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 160.

