

# ISLAMIC CULTURE FORUM

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## FORUM NOTE

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**ABU BAKR MORIMOTO**

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# ISLAMIC CULTURE FORUM

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## OVERSEAS EDITION

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## TO OUR READERS

On the publication of ICF No. 6, we take this opportunity to express our gratitude to Allah, the Almighty, for His unending kindness towards us.

During the period of preparation for the publication of the present issue, we, the Japanese Muslims, had the opportunity to receive great stimulus through various events concerning Islam. One such event was the visit of a number of international Islamic leaders such as Dr. Inamullah Khan, Secretary General of Motamar-al-Alam-al-Islami; Sheikh Sobhi, Secretary General of Call of Islam Society of Libya; Dr. M.M. Al-Fahhum, former Rector of Jamia Al-Azhar; Dr. Towfik Oweida, Chairman of the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs of Cairo; and Sheikh Muhammad Safwat Saqa Al-Amini, Deputy Secretary-General of Rabitatul Alam-al-Islami, Mecca. Their contact, speeches and advices benefited us a great deal to strengthen our own belief as well as to make further efforts for spreading Islam in this country. Secondly, the scope of Islam-related news in the mass media of Japan including press and broadcast also increased. This is really a good omen that the Japanese people, who were almost completely ignorant of Islam before, have now been able to know a lot about Islamic countries and peoples all over the world. Another very good effect is the formation of Coordinating Council of Islamic Organizations in Japan under the advice of Dr. Towfik Oweida, with Prof Abdul Karim Saito as its Coordinator.

And this was also the time when our brothers of neighbouring Korea inaugurated their first established mosque and an Islamic center in Seoul. A greatly encouraging event, indeed, we heartily congratulate our Korean brothers on the occasion and pray to Allah for rapid progress of Islam in that country.

Innumerable readers and well-wishers of the ICF have sent us letters, articles, reports, etc. for publication in the magazine. For want of space, it is not possible for us to publish all the correspondences. Sometimes, we carry forward some correspondences for publication in the future issues. However, one thing is certain: Our readers' interest shows their love for our magazine. We hope that this love from our readers will never faint and we, on our part, will continue to strive to give our readers our best.

Finally, we deeply apologize to our readers for the inordinate delay in bringing out this issue. This is due to the financial condition of its publishers. A separate appeal is enclosed with this issue for our readers' understanding and goodwill.

**CHIEF EDITOR**

# MOHAMMAD (p.o.h.)

— A study by the non-Muslims —

Abrar Mohsin

## PREFACE

The Muslims have unbounded love and devotion for Mohammad (p.o.h.). It is the life of the Holy Prophet that regulates and governs the lives of the Muslims all over the world. The Muslims believe that Mohammad's Message is true because they believe in the truthfulness of the Messenger himself.

The eye of the sun has never seen, nor will it ever behold, a greater than Mohammad was, on this earth. This personality towers above all great men whom history can possibly recall to its pages. The silent world of the history of by-gone ages, partly lurking in the dust of oblivion and partly visible to human memory, is alive with the people who inhabited our planet, who lived and died under the sun. The eye of our imagination can vividly visualise the long-lost world swarming with millions and millions of children of Adam, rich and poor, high and low, proud and humble, famous and ignoble, who all went away and dwindled into eternity. In this caravan of humanity there have been some whose names are as ever-lasting as if they were written in the letters of stars in the night skies. The name of Mohammad outshines all such names. The perfection of goodness, the mountain of character, the light-house for the human race, the embodiment of virtue, and the last of the long, long chain of Prophethood, Mohammad rightly deserves unfathomable devotion and love of the Muslims. To the Muslims, love for Mohammad implies love for God, and Mohammad's personality has been their anchor in storm and their guiding-star in clear skies.

It is absolutely impossible for a frail human mind to comprehend fully and to translate into words this greatest personality of all times whose loftiness of character dwarfs even the heights of the sky; the brightness of whose virtues outshines the moon, the sun, the stars and all galaxies. Mohammad, the crown of prophethood, the chosen one of God, the Apostle of Allah in whose praises the Quran goes in raptures, is, in fact, the HOLY QURAN RENDERED INTO HUMAN LIFE.

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**Note:** Born of an educationist family and educated in Bereilly, Uttar Pradesh state of India, which is well-known for its numerous Islamic educational centres, Mr. Abrar Mohsin is an educationist himself. After teaching at colleges in his own country, he is now engaged in the same mission in Malawi, East Africa. Mr. Mohsin's writing interest ranges from short stories for children to Islamic articles for sophisticated adults. The present article is the first instalment of a series of the same title. — Editor

When he came down with God's message, the ignorant people refused to listen to him although they themselves bore witness that he had never told a lie, had never uttered a false word. They were fully convinced that it was truth, and nothing but truth, that always came out of his mouth. They called him with the name of al-Amin and Mohammad, the true. But they did not listen to him because what he said was contrary to their ages-old dark beliefs and was a death-warrant to all the evils prevalent in their society. They had become so much habituated to the gloom of ignorance that they could not open their eyes to the glare of truth.

The Arabian society had stooped to miserable moral, social and human degradation and was groaning under the yoke of evil practices. The pages of the Arabian history are replete with the terribly brutal and corrupt ways of the Arabs of those days who worshipped innumerable deities, who drank madly and swore badly, who gambled and told lies, declared incessant wars on their own brethren and ruthlessly buried their daughters alive.

Mohammad (p.o.h.) brought light in the gloom of ignorance and depravity, social injustice and cruelty, and began to preach those inspired words which revolutionised, not only Arabia, but the whole world. He preached a religion dedicated to ONE GOD, testifying to and glorifying all other prophets who came before him preaching the same religion of God, Islam, again and again.

Mohammad (p.o.h.) is not a legend, not a fictitious figure from some old fable; he was born in full light of history and his life, like an open, spotless, flawless book, has been fully recorded most accurately.

Unfortunately, this greatest and the noblest personality of all times has been wilfully misunderstood, poorly understood, purposely distorted and most unjustly criticised in the West. Some Western writers, due to their squint vision or out of prejudice, have made Mohammad and his mission a target of their unfair comments and have ironically charged him with the very same evils he had made his mission to uproot altogether.

Whereas history alone is sufficient to expose this conspiracy of the ugliest dye against Mohammad, it is heartening to see that all those Western and non-Muslim writers, who are endowed with the sense of honesty, sincerity and who are really seekers after truth, have stood up at times against this hurricane of falsehood and have not hesitated in coming forward with an unbiased, honest and true assessment of the character of Mohammad.

## **THE STUDY**

No other prophet or religious leader is as thoroughly and intimately known to the world as the Prophet of Islam. The life-records and personalities of almost all other prophets are surrounded by the mist of historical, oblivious obscurity and very little is known about them. There is no doubt that all these prophets existed, but a greater part of their lives is hidden in the fog of antiquity, and whatever is known about them is coloured in exaggeration and distortion. The only Prophet

whose life has been fully and accurately recorded is Mohammad (may peace be on him). He was born in full light of history and through its pages we know him as intimately as the Meccans of his own days would have known him. We are fully familiar with his appearance, his features, his habits, and his complete life-both private and public. There is absolutely no part of this magnanimous personality that is hidden from the world. We even know the exact number of his hair that had turned grey, and that "his fine, long arched eye-brows were divided by a vein which throbbed violently in moments of passions." His red and white complexion, silk-and-satin like softness of his hands, his sobriety, his extremely simple life- are all known to us with minutest details. This noblest personality is neither a figment of imagination nor a fictitious figure from some ancient tale; he existed as much as we exist and it has been testified to and confirmed by history. This is the only historical figure regarding which no two historical records have ever differed or contradicted each other.



It is universally acknowledged that MOHAMMAD (p.o.h.) is the most outstanding figure in world history. Ancient chronicles are alive with great, grand and noble personalities but Mohammad (p.o.h.) heads and shoulders towers above all others. In the history of mankind Mohammad is the only person in whom all the finest traits of a magnanimous personality are blended together. His intellectual qualities know no parallel. The world has not failed to realise that such astounding combination of wonderful comprehension, unexcelled retentive memory, lively imagination, powerful inventive genius, and prudence in dealing with all matters, is decidedly uncommon. His extremely simple life, his total disregard for magnificence and his indifference to all worldly honours point to a greatness that no other person has ever achieved. History is hopelessly unable to produce any other leader whose

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**STANLEY LANE-POOLE** observes:

Mohammad was of middle height, rather thin but broad of shoulders, wide of chest, strong of bone and muscle. His head was massive, strongly developed. Dark hair, slightly curled, flowed in a dense mass almost to his shoulders; even in advanced age it was sprinkled with only about twenty grey hairs, produced by the agonies of his revelations. His face was oval-shaped, slightly tawny of colour. Fine, long arched eye-brows were divided by a vein, which throbbed violently in moments of passion. Great black restless eyes shone out from under long heavy eye-lashes. His nose was large, slightly aquiline. His teeth upon which he bestowed great care, were all dazzling white. A full beard framed his manly face. His skin was clear and soft, his complexion 'red and white'. His hands were as 'silk and satin', even as those of a woman. His step was quick and elastic yet firm as that of one who steps from 'high to a low place'. In turning his face, he would also turn his whole body. His whole gait and presence was dignified and imposing. His countenance was mild and pensive. His laugh was rarely more than a smile .... In his habits he was extremely simple, although he bestowed great care on his person. His eating and drinking, his dress and furniture retained, even when he had reached the fulness of power, their almost primitive nature. The only luxuries he indulged in were his arms, which he highly prized and a pair of yellow boots, a present from the Nagus of Abyssinia. Perfumes, however, he loved passionately, being most sensitive to smells. Strong drink he abhorred.

triumphs did not awaken any pride in him. Mohammad's simplicity of manner and appearance remained rigidly the same in the time of his greatest power as it was in the times of adversity. Ironically, his own bitterest foes themselves could not help testifying and bearing witness to his qualities. There is no doubt, Mohammad (p.o.h.) was "an exalted standard of conduct".

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No one has seen his like either before or after him. His captivating manners, endearing courtesy, gentle behaviour and noble teachings won over even his most hostile enemies. His heart, which was over-brimmed with the sweetest milk of human kindness, captivated the hearts of those who were rocks of cruelty. Even after becoming the ruler of his country, he ruled over the hearts of the people and lived in his thatched cottage. He never deceived any one, nor did he break any promise even with those who were after his life. He, who remained firm like a rock against all hurricanes of adversity, whose astounding courage and fearlessness have always surprised the world, was more modest than a virgin behind her curtain. His habit of patting children with paternal love, visiting the sick, and his universal affection is the true index to his noble heart. Who can be more competent to testify to the sweetness of his temper than his own servant to whom he never spoke a harsh word? What more can be said about the loftiness of his character who, after becoming the over-lord of his people, darned his own clothes, mended his own shoes? He, whose greatness dwarfs all the mighty emperors, waited upon himself. He stands on solitary eminence of greatness.

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#### **WASHINGTON IRVING FULLY ENDORSES THE SAME OPINION:**

His (Mohammad's) deportment, in general, was calm and equable; he sometimes indulged in pleasantry, but more commonly was grave and dignified, though he is said to have possessed a smile of captivating sweetness. His complexion was more ruddy than is usual with the Arabs, and in his excited and enthusiastic moments there was a glow and radiance in his countenance, which his disciples magnified into supernatural light of prophecy.

His intellectual qualities were undoubtedly of an extraordinary kind. He had a quick comprehension, a retentive memory, a vivid imagination and inventive genius.

He was sober and abstemious in his diet, and a rigorous observer of fasts. He indulged in no magnificence of apparel, the ostentation of a petty mind; neither was his simplicity in dress affected but a result of real disregard for distinction from such trivial a source.

In his private dealings he was just. He treated friends and strangers, the rich and poor, the powerful and the meek, with equity, and was beloved by the common people for the affability with which he received them, and listened to their complaints.

His military triumphs awakened no pride nor vain glory, as they would have done had they been affected for selfish purposes. In the time of his greatest power he maintained the same simplicity of manners and appearance as in the days of his adversity. So far from affecting a regal state, he was displeased if, on entering a room, any unusual testimonial of respect were shown him. If he aimed at universal dominion, it was the dominion of faith; as to the temporal rule which grew in his hands, as he used it without ostentation, so he took no step to perpetuate it in his family.

Many ascetics came to this world who, renouncing all pleasures and severing all ties from human society, gave themselves up to meditation, and worship of God, with a view to attaining salvation for their own souls. They shook off all responsibilities and duties towards their fellow-beings and confined themselves in the solitudes of mountain-caves or other far-flung places, far from mankind, where the groans of the creatures of God could not reach their ears. Many philosophers came to this world who made an uproar with their abstract philosophising and led the world into more confusion instead of simplifying matters they endeavoured to penetrate through. Their ideas, accepted by one generation, were rejected by the other generation, following theirs. The 'sages' of their own ages were declared as outright 'fools' by succeeding ages. Many legislators came to this world; their laws were recorded in golden letters and then were written off completely after some time. Many orators throw spell on the listeners and were thrown into oblivion. Many conquerors brandished their mighty swords over the then-known world and then became a forgotten chapter in the book of the history of mankind and their names were covered under the sands of time. Many prophets came to this world but, later on, their teachings were distorted and their personalities were confused with exaggeration by the very particular peoples or tribes for which they were sent. Mohammad (p.o.h.) meditated and worshipped God as no other man has done but he did not renounce mankind; his philosophy was not for a generation, not for an age, not for an era, but for all times and stands unchallenged even to this day; his laws (revealed to him by God) are as eternal as the Truth Itself; he was the conqueror who conquered the souls of mankind in all corners of the globe and his empire goes on extending unceasingly; his eloquence moves the listeners to tears and inspires them to shake mountains, even after fourteen hundred years; his teachings remain strictly unalloyed, preserved in millions of hearts and even the slightest digression therefrom is regarded as a great sin; his personality has never been distorted or exaggerated.

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#### **STANLEY LANE-POOLE comments:**

He was gifted with a mighty power of imagination, elevation of mind, delicacy and refinement of feeling. He was more modest than a virgin behind her curtain, it was said of him. He was more indulgent to his inferiors and would never allow his little page to be scolded whatever he did. 'Ten years', said Anas, his servant, 'I was about the Prophet and he never said as much as UFF to me'. He was very affectionate towards his family. He was very fond of children; he would stop them in the streets and pat their little heads. He never struck anyone in his life. The worst expression he ever made use of in conversation was WHAT HAS COME TO HIM? He visited the sick, followed any bier he met, accepted the invitation of a slave to dinner, mended his own clothes, milked his goats, and waited upon himself. He never first withdrew his hand out of another man's palm, and turned not before the other had turned.

He was the most faithful protector of those he protected, the sweetest and most agreeable in conversation. Those who saw him were suddenly filled with reverence, those who came near him loved him, they who described him would say: "I have never seen his like either before or after". He was of great taciturnity, but when he spoke it was with emphasis and deliberation, and no one could forget what he said.

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Mohammad's truthfulness and honesty were acknowledged even by his enemies who were after his life. His enemies mocked him, stoned him, persecuted him, boycotted him; his honesty and truthfulness they denied not. Once the-then king of Greece asked Abu Sufyan (Mohammad's enemy at that time), "Did you ever see him lying before he came to his calling?" "No", replied Abu Sufyan. The king then said, "How shall he shun lies against people and yet forge lies against God?" There is another instance of similar kind when a man met Abu Jahl, the bitterest enemy of the Prophet, and asked, "Here is no one besides you and me. Tell me about Mohammad. Is he speaking truth or is he a liar?" Abu Jahl could not help exclaiming: "Surely Mohammad is truthful, don't you know that Mohammad never tells lies?" Referring to Mohammad's truthfulness, God says in the Quran: **THEY DO NOT MAKE YOU A LIAR BUT THE WICKED REJECT VERSES OF ALLAH.**

The hostile Meccans never doubted his honesty in any matter; they knew he was true to God and true to mankind. He is the only person in the history of mankind with whom his own bitter enemies deposited their goods with absolute trust in the honesty of their al-Amin. When the Meccans were plotting against his life and he had to flee from Mecca, his only worry was how to return the belongings that his blood-thirsty foes had kept in his trust. The reason why Ali stayed behind in Mecca when the Prophet and Abu Bakr left was so that he might restore to their owners their belongings, which they had entrusted to Mohammad's safe-keeping. This is the last 'horizon' of honesty beyond which no human being can go; this is the highest peak of integrity, grandeur, greatness that has never been surmounted by any human being but Mohammad. Each moment of his life, public and private, was devoted to his mission – **TOTAL SURRENDER TO THE AUTHORITY OF GOD.**

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**LAMARTINE** frankly declares:

Philosopher, crator, apostle, legislator, warrior, conqueror of ideas, restorer of rational dogmas, of a cult without images; the founder of twenty terrestrial empires and of one spiritual empire, that is Muhammad. As regards all standards by which human greatness may be measured, we may well ask, is there any man greater than he?

Muhammad's character and qualities was a combination of the best that is in a human being and exalted him to a position unsurpassed by any man since the creation of the world.

**MAJOR A.G. LEONARD** boldly declares:

If ever a man on this earth found God, if ever a man devoted his life to God's service with a great motive, it is certain that the Prophet of Arabia is the man ..... Muhammad was not only the greatest but the truest man that humanity has ever produced.

*(to be continued)*

# FAMILY LIFE IN ISLAM

Fatima Heeren-Sarka

At the time when values tend to be turned upside down, family life as the very heart of society was attacked just as much as many other handed down traditions. About ten years ago, when it became fashionable for young torch-bearers of "Modernism" to live in "communities", share sex and children and earnings, many people feared that this might mean the end of family life. Fortunately, this is not so. In the end, the overwhelming majority of young women still dream of having a wedding ring on their finger, living in a comfortable flat as "Mrs. so-and-so" and bringing up their children in an orderly home, just as young men prefer to introduce "her" with the words "this is my wife" instead of "this is my mate or comrade". Neither Socialism nor any others "isms" were able to uproot what has been implanted into human nature from time immemorial.

If dangers to family, particularly matrimonial, life could be overcome successfully in the West, they were the more unable to gain ground in the Muslim World. There, family life with all its aspects concerning not only husband, wife or children, but all other relatives too, is so firmly established by tradition as well as by religious law that it could not be effected seriously.

Now, one may say that a happy and healthy family life cannot be guaranteed

by law. It is true that it depends so much on the goodwill of all concerned that the best laws remain written phrases where this goodwill is missing. Here, however, as in all other spheres of the Islamic Way of Life, the ruling factor is the fact that Islam is not a religion in the Western sense of the word, but truly **THE WAY OF LIFE** for those adhering to it. Islam means, on the one hand, the complete submission to the Will of God, and it is the conscious acceptance of man's vicegerency on earth as ordained by God, on the other.

Submission to the Will of God, if applied to family life, means accepting the desires inherent in man's nature and living upto them: the desire for a companion with whom one can share love, mutual confidence, kindness, self-sacrifice and solace; the desire for children, parents, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts and all other relatives whom one can trust and who may either grant protection or be granted protection; the desire for a peaceful and fostering home; the desire for a good education; the desire for help in the hour of need; and the desire for doing good or receiving good, just as the events may demand.

The conscious acceptance of man's vicegerency on earth means seeking the best possible means for a successful vicegerency. And here again family life

provides the most promising basis for our activities. A good and healthy family life grants us the right approach to life, helps us to see matters in the right perspective, gives us the most useful education not only as far as our future profession is concerned but also for the handling of life itself. When we are grown up, it gives us a safe home that enables us to take part in society life to its greatest benefit, and when we become old, it grants us our livelihood just as we used to grant it when we were still able to do so.

To people completely engrossed in the way of life prevailing in the West today, this may sound incredible. Why not leave children in the nursery and depend on their education at school – after all, what a lot of taxes is paid for this purpose? And why feel responsible for relatives in need or old family members since they certainly must be insured against troubles of all sorts and there are homes for old people where they are neither disturbed nor can disturb...? There are so many much more useful and lucrative things to do instead of looking after children and caring for old or sick family members.

Yet, incredible though it may sound, in the Muslim World these responsibilities are still shouldered by the majority of families. This is due to the Islamic injunctions which have not at all become obsolete in course of modern technological developments but are taken quite seriously by the Muslims up to this very day. And why is this so? I think it is so because the Muslims honestly believe in their accountability for their conduct here on earth on the Day of Resurrection, because they are fully

aware of their role as God's vicegerents and because they feel contentment in fulfilling their religious duties thus achieving God's good pleasure which is the main aim of their very existence.

**Non-Muslims may wonder how a religion can still exercise such a powerful influence over people in modern times that at least in this sphere Western examples are rather shunned instead of being imitated contrary to the usual trend in most other fields.**

It is the firm structure of Islamic family life resting on the following four pillars that make these values so enduring and enable them to outlive Western practices. They are based on the Quranic regulations and the traditions from the life of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), handed down from generation to generation:

1. Family life as a cradle of human society providing a secure, healthy and encouraging home for parents and the growing children;
2. Family life as guardian of the natural erotic desires of man leading this powerful urge into wholesome channels;
3. Family life as the very breeding-place for human virtues like love, kindness, mercy;
4. Family life as the most secure refuge against inward and outward troubles.

An ever valid and never outgrowing aspect of Islamic family life is, however, that the strength of all four pillars is made up by the system likewise of giving and taking, just as our age and the everyday conditions may need. And it must not be forgotten that the benefits of family life are extended not only

to blood relations but encompass also the world-wide Family of Muslims, the Islamic Brotherhood.

Let us look more closely now at each of these four pillars.

If the family is to be a wholesome cradle for human society, it means that the children as continuators of the human race must find there warmth, patience and every possible advancement in their all round education. For this purpose, they must have a mother who considers the care for her children not as a part-time job but as one of her foremost duties. And they must have a father who, as Sayed Abul Ala Maudoodi puts it so beautifully, "according to the patriarchal nature of Islam, is an Imam for the family on whose shoulders rests the religious responsibility of the family. He must uphold the tenets of faith and his authority symbolizes that of God in the world. The man is in fact respected in the family precisely because of the sacred total function he fulfills. The rebellion of Muslim women in certain quarters of Islamic society came when men themselves ceased to fulfill their religious functions and lost their virile and patriarchal character." This is the noteworthy opinion of a world-known Islamic scholar.

With a home where mother and father are aware of their important role and realize that the world of tomorrow will be what they make of their children, the foundation of society will remain intact.

As to the education of the children, I think it should consist of the following four phases: The basis, covering the period from birth upto the twentieth

year, that is, the time when the child leaves home, must be the Islamic milieu created in the family. As modern psychology teaches us, this milieu exercises its most important influence on the child already during the first years of life. It is many small and great things that make up this Islamic milieu. Foremost condition is that the parents love and respect each other, that they are – according to Islamic patterns – patient, and extend cherishing care to the children. But it is also important that the children can listen to beautiful recitations from the Quran (there are excellent records nowadays so that they can realize when there is Ramadan, the month of fasting, when the great festive days are celebrated, and also that Muslim friends and relatives come on visits or are visited. And they must hear words like Allah and Muhammad uttered in a loving voice. This is what in fact many of us are doing anyway. But for an Islamic milieu it is also significant that the home where Muslims live is furnished with some Islamic items at least. I don't mean the usual cheap sentimentalities but true, undiluted culture. The children should see some really beautiful calligraphies on the walls, perhaps a good carpet here and there and other things which cannot be found in a Western household. And the Muslims should at least at home wear traditional dress as used in their home lands and take their shoes off, even if only upon entering the living room. Thus they will keep a close contact to their own heritage and the children will distinctly feel that they are Muslims which will fill them with confidence and natural pride for their community. I am emphasizing this since I

am a Muslim living in Western surroundings.

The second phase I would call the phase of telling. We know from our scientists how the consciousness of children is formed by listening at an early age to horror stories and thrillers and how it may, on the other hand, be given wings by enchanting tales. Here lies ahead a wide field for parents endowed with imagination and much goodwill. They will study again the stories of the former prophets as told in the Quran, read the many beautiful traditions of the last prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and the heroes of the Islamic history. By gathering all their love, intelligence and good humour, they can make up the most interesting and inspiring tales of all this and, according to my experience, it is particularly the period from the second to the fifth year when children are most eager to listen to such stories. The mother may tell them to the child while going after her duties in the home and in most cases very nice discussions will follow since the child has his questions and wants to mention his own views. In this way the child's character can definitely be formed and standards may be established which maintain their validity throughout his life-time.

The third phase, established on the first and second, is that of the Islamic duties. It is only natural that a child wants to imitate his praying parents. Therefore, he is given a small prayer rug and though, at first, he will keep patience for a few minutes at most, in

due course, he will learn how to pray and get used to a daily rhythm and routine as envisaged by Islam. Similarly, it will be with keeping fast. At first, the child will not stand this for more than a few hours. But slowly he will manage half a day, and even a whole day. Here, it is very important that Sahar and Iftar, the meals before beginning the fast and after breaking fast, are really celebrated a bit. How proud will the child be if he is allowed to rise early in the morning for the first time in order to have breakfast with his parents, what a satisfaction will it be for him if he really managed to keep fast for a whole day! I think many parents will make the experience that the child will himself plead for being allowed to keep fast again instead of having to be persuaded to join the grown-ups. Also, there will always be opportunities for giving alms. The child should get the nice bright coin so that he himself can spend it thus learning that some money should go to the needy or into the collection box of a Mosque instead of being used for buying toys or sweets. In regard to the pilgrimage, the child should be told how Muslims from all over the world gather at the Holy places for the important purpose of being closely knit together into one brotherhood worshipping their creator as the servants of the Almighty have done in an uninterrupted chain since the time of Abraham.

The child will now be a conscious Muslim and, therefore, a broad basis has been established on which the fourth phase can rest firmly.

This is the phase of Jihad. The child about 15 years old has, in the mean-

time, learned that the life on this earth means trial and that only those who submit to the Will of God in profound reverence and humility can successfully emerge from this trial. It is, however, inherent in the nature of man and, particularly, in that of young and energetic people that they are looking for a real aim in life, something for which they can strive. There is, of course, a variety of elementary aims in everyday life like not neglecting the religious duties, passing school exams, getting over an illness, taking up a useful job, finding a loving husband or wife and bringing up good children. All these are, however, individual achievements necessary for a stable basis. Healthy ambition will, nevertheless, be directed towards some higher aim. If it is not guided into the right channels, it will easily fall a prey to demagogic persuasion and aspire for dangerous idols like all the prevailing "isms" reaching from Nationalism to Communism.

Jihad, the struggle for the cause of Islam, offers so many opportunities that every Muslim will find a field of action suited to his mentality and talents. This struggle may be conducted in the hour of need with the sword as well as with the pen, with the shovel as with the scalpel, or even with a sewing machine or a pot-ladle. Jihad is a struggle against all forces attacking Islam from within and without. Whether these attacks are being waged in order to ridicule Islam, to weaken its traditions and customs or to undermine its political power — they have to be taken most seriously because they are out to destroy the very roots of our heritage.

A family where this spirit is constantly kept alert, will be the best guarantee for a sound Islamic society because it enables all family members to assume their vicegerency consciously. And this is one of the most important purposes of family life.

It was necessary to devote special care to the explanation of this first and foremost pillar of family life containing the aspect of education since it is concerned with the future of human society at large.

We now come to the second pillar, that of family life as guardian of the natural erotic desires of man. It is on purpose that I would give Eros preference over Sex since this word has been misused so badly that it tends to distort rather than to describe what I want to say.

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) has said: "Marriage is a part of my Sunnah, whoever runs away from my path it not from amongst us." In the Quran, Sura II, Verse 187 men are told: "They (your wives) are your garments and you are their garments... So now associate with them." Islam being the complete way of life that always takes into consideration the natural disposition of man, enjoins marriage. And it tells us in a few beautiful words how husband and wife should, like garments, cover and protect each other, how they may find fulfilment in each other in their erotic urges, in their desire for children and in mutual exchange of love and tenderness. I would like to add a few personal words here since as a convert to Islam I am, sometimes, asked how I feel about the approach of Islam towards matrimony.

What I appreciated by watching how well it is usually working out is, firstly, the custom in Muslim families of so-called arranged marriages. During my stay in a Muslim country as well as from the numerous former students and other Muslim friends whom I know since over 15 years, I could always observe that family life in arranged marriages is far more lasting and stable than in the average Western family. It seems that where parents or relatives with much insight and experience propose marriages, they do it on a broad basis considering family background, education, ambitions, likings and dislikings and so many other things. And though nearly all Muslim marriages are conducted by buying the cat in the bag (as we say in Germany) which means it is not tried out beforehand whether the partners fit together sexually as it is customary in the West, they can be called far more successful than marriages here.

Secondly, it is the ticklish matter of polygamy. Before the registrar married me to my European Muslim husband, he warned me of the four wives which would be admissible to him if we should ever live in a Muslim country. Though a bit awe-stricken at first, I soon learned that just because having more than one wife is allowed in Islam, it is practiced very seldom. And since this official concession to the polygamous disposition undoubtedly inherent in some men, or to extraordinary circumstances like constant illness or barrenness of the first wife, on the other hand, completely prohibits sexual relations outside marriage, I hold it to be a very wise decision.

If a Muslim man for this or that reason simply cannot help desiring more than one wife, he is not forced by this urge to resort to any sinful act but may quite lawfully enjoy its fulfilment along with shouldering the consequent responsibilities. That, in my eyes, is the main point: hardly any man will merely for the sake of his greediness support more than one wife and the children out of this liaison. He will think more than twice before he acts, while in societies without such sensible rules it is so terribly easy to jump into bed and walk away afterwards. Instead of the essential human dignity for the other woman, nothing but misery and degradation is in store for her and perhaps even for her innocent child. There are so many sad examples before us that no further comments are required on this subject.

Thirdly, in matters of divorce I hold the Islamic solution to be much superior to others I know, for example, those of Catholic Christianity. If for any reason, seldom though this does happen in practice, husband and wife consider it impossible to live together any longer, there is no loathsome chain keeping them together by force. They may separate in peace and each of them may seek fulfilment with somebody else. If a wife cannot stand her husband taking another wife, she can always ask for divorce and is not forced to tolerate what seems intolerable to her. Is it not more in tune with human dignity if in these matters no mystery-mongering is required? The husband does not have to tell fantastic lies whenever he wants to meet his girl-friend, the wife needn't pretend not to notice what is going on behind her back? Or if a husband thinks

he cannot put up any longer with some bad habits or other things in his wife, there is no need for him to torture her by illtreatment – he simply separates from her. And the same applies to the wife. In this way, human society will be much more clean and healthy, homes will not be miserable for children and none of the spouses is condemned to life-long unhappiness. There is a number of laws and regulations concerning divorce which I consider as most sensible, be it in respect of the financial position of a divorced woman and her children or in other respects, but it would lead us too far off to discuss them here. As Abu Daud relates, the Prophet has said: “Of all things permitted by law, divorce is the most hateful in the sight of God.” And I think this very strong tradition is also responsible for the fact that divorce, necessary though it may be in certain cases, is practiced so extremely seldom in Muslim families.

And fourthly, I want to say a few words about the status of women in Islam. In Sura 2, Verse 228 of the Holy Quran we read: “And they (women) have rights similar to those (of men) over them, and men are a degree above them.” Those who want to find fault with Islamic regulations, consider this detrimental to the dignity of women. But I am of the opinion that this one sentence includes all that is necessary for my happiness as a woman. It grants me all the rights to which I aspire: the right to education, to my own property, to my being the guardian inside the house and even to a job if circumstances demand it, to name only a few aspects. But, most important of all, it grants me the right to depend on my husband,

be it in matters of my livelihood or in regard to any important decisions that have to be taken for the benefit of the family. On the husband, however, rests the great responsibility of caring for his family and finding by consulting his wife and making use of all his wisdom, the best possible solutions. Does it not lie in the very nature of a woman that she wants a powerful, just, wise and considerate husband who is capable of taking these decisions? This, I think, is the ideal family life as envisaged by Islam. In such an atmosphere, both partners will find fulfilment in erotic matters as well as in all other matrimonial fields of which rearing children has pre-eminence.

In regard to the third pillar, that of human virtues like love, kindness and mercy, I would like to let the Quran speak for me: “We have enjoined on man kindness to his parents: In pain did his mother bear him, and in pain did she give him birth... At length, when he reaches the age of full strength and attains forty years, he says: ‘O my Lord! Grant me that I may be grateful for Thy favour which Thou hast bestowed upon me, and upon both my parents, and that I may work righteousness such as Thou mayest approve; and be gracious to me in my progeny. Truly have I turned to Thee and truly do I bow (to Thee) in Islam.’” (Sura 49, Verse 15). And further, we are told in Sura 17, Verse 23 and 24: “Thy Lord has decreed that ye worship none but Him, and that ye be kind to parents... And out of kindness, lower to them the wing of mercy and say: ‘My Lord! Bestow on them Thy mercy even as they cherished me in childhood.’” What a spirit of

mutual kindness, this lowering of the wing of mercy on us while we are helpless! And later on, our protecting tenderness to our children and our elders when they are in need of it! If we are good and patient, understanding and encouraging in our behaviour towards our family members, thus bringing forth the very same virtues in them as well, we are sure to carry these virtues forward into human society as well. A tender and considerate family father will also be good to those whom he meets outside the home, just as he will be strict and uncompromising when he has to protect his family or his fellow men against vices that are out to undermine or destroy these virtues.

And to round off the argument, the fourth pillar grants us within the fold of family life a secure refuge against inward and outward troubles. At a time when people mistrust each other, when everybody thinks of himself first and it is considered a crime to be bothered with the worries of others, only those are well off who know that there is for them at least one place of refuge. Here we may get either a good advice or a piece of bread, a helping hand or a bed. Here we can be sure to be defended against the outside world, and we know

that the other family members are expecting of us the best, and not the worst, which helps us so much to unfold our best qualities. Thus, the family is a marvelous institution for the needy as well as for those who are able to help. No other social institution has so far shouldered similar responsibilities as successfully as the family.

The more perfect a society has become in the eyes of a superficial spectator, the more heart-rending may all its utterly impersonal social achievements appear in the sight of those who know the cherishing care and warmth of a truly Islamic Family Life.



Mrs Fatima Heeren-Sarka

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Mrs Fatima Heeren-Sarka, daughter of a German general, was born in 1934. After completing education in Munich and England, she worked as secretary at various German newspapers. She met her husband, a Ph.D. and also convert to Islam, in 1958. In 1960, they got married and she embraced Islam. In 1962-65, they stayed in Pakistan. During 1971-76, Mrs Heeren-Sarka worked as Secretary of the Munich Islamic Centre which brings out a bi-monthly German magazine "al-Islam" and a children's paper "Du und der Islam", the latter edited by her. The 1976 editions of "al-Islam" started to carry a German translation of the Holy Quran with commentary compiled from the notable comments by Yusuf Ali, Daryabadi, Maudoodi, Siddiqi and Sayyid Qutb. This translation, carried out in cooperation with an Arabic expert, will be Mrs Heeren's main work for the years to come. May Allah make her endeavor a great success - Editor.

## INTRODUCING A JAPANESE MUSLIM—2

### Prof. Haji Abdul Karim Saitoh

By Forum Reporter



Prof. Haji Abdul Karim Saitoh

In ICF No. 2, we introduced a senior Japanese Muslim leader, Haji Umar Mita. The article introducing Haji Umar Mita and his work has drawn our readers' attention both in Japan and abroad. Actually, such a response was beyond our expectations. In one instance, the whole article was translated into the Indonesian language and was published in the famous Indonesian language magazine "ADIL." Its reaction from the Indonesian readers was also great.

In the present issue, we introduce another Japanese Muslim leader, Professor Haji Abdul Karim Saitoh who is still in active service as an educator and is known not only in Japan but also many foreign countries because of activities which have expanded to a wide perimeter all over the Muslim world. Presently, he has been chosen as the Coordinator of the Coordinating Council of the Islamic Organizations in Japan which is a kind of federation of about a dozen of Islamic organizations in this country, and is destined to play a very important role in the unification of all Muslims living in Japan. (The Coordinating Council of Islamic Organizations in Japan is the translation of

its Japanese original "NIPPON ISURAMU DANTAI KYOGIKAI" and the English name is yet to be decided.)

Professor Abdul Karim Saitoh was born in 1908 in Kiga city near Lake Hamana in the Shizuoka prefecture of central Japan, and was given the name Sekihei. Sekihei was the third son of Ryohei Saitoh, a Buddhist by faith.

In 1933, Sekihei Saitoh graduated from the Takushoku University in Tokyo and was employed in the Japanese Foreign Ministry. Next year, in 1934, he was posted in the Japanese legation in Kabul, Afghanistan. He stayed in Kabul until 1939 when he was called back to the head office in Tokyo, but only to be posted in Kabul again in the following year. During the whole period of World War II, he stayed in Kabul. When the War ended, Sekihei Saitoh returned to Japan in 1946, and lived for a while in his native Shizuoka and Yamaguchi.

In 1955, he joined the staff of Waida Sangyo Co., Ltd. and worked with that company until 1959. As a staff of the company, he again visited Kabul, and also

was despatched to Beirut and Cairo. Since 1959, he has been engaged in teaching at his *alma mater* Takushoku University till today as a professor in the Faculty of Political and Economic Sciences taking charge of the Middle-East Studies.

### Conversion to Islam

As mentioned above, Sekihei Saitoh lived in a Muslim country for quite a long time and had a lot of chances to come in contact with Muslim people and their life. Specially, in a country like Afghanistan where Islam is the only religion of the people, this is but natural that he would be influenced by the local culture. Again, his visit to other Muslim countries, though for a shorter period, also gave him enough opportunity to come in contact with many more Muslims. However, as Prof. Abdul Karim Saitoh himself says: "Although I lived in a Muslim country for a long time, yet I had little interest in Islam. On occasions I came across European books on Islam. But I never tried to learn the true meaning from those books or understand them."

Prof. Saitoh's remarks, as given above, is typical of all the other non-Muslim Japanese who go to the Muslim countries on business as diplomats, trade representatives or tourists and live there, but never care for knowing the land of their stay or its people, let alone the religion of that land. In spite of the fact that Sekihei Saitoh was never interested in the religion of Islam, Allah's blessings were showered upon him. This was in 1957 when a *tabligh* group from Pakistan visited Japan and Mr. Saitoh had a chance to be with the members of the group for a while and move with them. The saintly as well as

puritanic life of the members of the *tabligh* group and also the depth of their faith and belief impressed him and, for the first time, he was able to understand the meaning and significance of submission to Allah. In the same year, Sekihei Saitoh embraced Islam at the Kobe Mosque in a ceremony led by Maulana Fazlul Karim, leader of the *tabligh* group and came to be known as Abdul Karim Saitoh.

### Islamic activities

About seven years before Prof. Saitoh embraced Islam, the Muslims of Japan who had become Muslim before or during the War gathered together and founded an organization that is now Japan Muslim Association and started work to introduce Islam to the Japanese people in an organized way. The first president of Japan Muslim Association was Brother Sadiq Imaizumi. Prof. Saitoh joined the organization and vigorously devoted himself to the work. On the sudden death of Sadiq Imaizumi, Haji Umar Mita was elected president of Japan Muslim Association. But as he intended to devote his whole time to the translation of the Holy Quran into Japanese, he stepped down in 1962 and in his place Prof. Abdul Karim Saitoh was elected president, the post which he held until 1971.

During his tenure as president of Japan Muslim Association, the organization became known to the world, specially the Muslim world, more than ever before. This is due to his vigorous activities as well as his ability in a few foreign languages which helped him to have better communication with Muslim brothers of other countries. In 1962, the very year when he became the president, he was

invited by Nahdatul Ulama of Indonesia to visit that country as head of a 3-member Japanese Muslim delegation to its congress. In the same year, he was delegated to become a member of Islamic Academy of Jamia Al-Azhar, Cairo. In the following year he was invited by the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs of Cairo and became a guest member of the Council. In 1964, Prof. Abdul Karim Saitoh performed Hajj.



Prof. and Mrs. Saitoh receiving His Late Majesty King Faisal on arrival at the entrance of the Tokyo Mosque during His Majesty's visit to Japan in 1971.

As president of Japan Muslim Association, his most important achievement was the despatch of a number of young Japanese Muslims to Muslim countries for education and training in Islamic life and culture, at his initiative. As a result, now we have in Japan quite a number of Islamic and Arabic scholars of Japanese origin, who studied in the Muslim countries. Prof. Abdul Karim Saitoh's personal care and initiative and his wide range of acquaintances in these Muslim countries made it possible and fruitful, to a large extent. His personal acquaintances with the leaders of the Islamic organizations of Muslim countries, such as the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs of Egypt, Motamar-al-Alam-al-Islami of Pakistan,

Rabita-al-Alam-al-Islami of Saudi Arabia, Nahdatul Ulama and Asia-Africa Islamic Congress of Indonesia, and many others, thus, not only produced highly qualified Islamic scholars in Japan but also enhanced goodwill and friendship between the Muslims of Japan and of the Muslim countries, on the one hand, and between the peoples of those countries and Japan, on the other. And, to a great extent, it is also due to his personal friendship with them that leaders like Dr. Muhammad Natsir and Sheikh Ahmad Sjaichu of Indonesia, Sheikh Towfik Oweida and Sheikh Muhammad Al-Fahham of Egypt, Sheikh Muhammad Saleh Al-Qazzaz of Saudi Arabia, Dr. Inamullah Khan of Pakistan, and others found time to visit Japan.

In 1968, he also took initiative to get Japan Muslim Association registered as a religious body, that is, to earn the recognition of the Japanese Government as Muslim religious organization. For this purpose, owning of some landed property by the Association was required by law. With the financial help mainly from the Saudi Arabian Government and also from others, a tract of land measuring about 10,000 square meters was acquired in Enzan city in Yamanashi prefecture, west of Tokyo, and a Muslim graveyard was established there.

After about ten years of service as the chief executive of Japan Muslim Association, he stepped down in June 1971 when Mr. Abu Bakr Morimoto was chosen president. During these years, there were various developments in the Muslim society of Japan and about a dozen Islamic organizations came to being in various places of Japan. This gave rise to the need



Prof. Saitoh (4th from right) with Dr. Tawfiq Oweida, Secretary General of the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, Cairo (6th from right) and Japanese Muslim students studying in Cairo.

for coordination among all these organizations so as to accelerate the Islamic activities in a rather unified way. In June 1976, when Sheikh Towfiq Oweida and Sheikh Muhammad Al-Fahham visited Tokyo, a decision was made to organize a coordinating council of all these organizations in their presence, with Prof. Saitoh as its coordinator. This council came to be known as "Nippon Isuramu Dantai Kyogikai" as mentioned earlier. This invested him with an extremely heavy responsibility of coordinating in the activities of these organizations, and no other person than Prof. Saitoh could take that responsibility. Prof. Saitoh is also the Vice Chairman of Arab-Japan Association.

### A typical Muslim family

True to his role as a Muslim leader of Japan, Prof. Abdul Karim Saitoh's personal and family life is also typically Islamic. To maintain Islamic way of life in an absolutely non-Islamic environment is not an easy task and it needs a strong will as well as devotion to one's faith. Abdul Karim Saitoh has both. His devoted wife, Mrs. Karimah Kimi Saitoh, is the

first Japanese Muslima to perform Hajj in 1966 with her husband. She and two daughters of the Saitohs are also earnestly putting efforts for the education of the Japanese Muslims. Here it may be noted that Mrs. Saitoh is an official in the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Headquarters.

Prof. Saitoh has undergone some personal tragedies. His eldest son, Said Ryoji, met his tragic death in Medina on 14 December 1965 when he was a student of the University of Medina in Saudi Arabia. It was due to the collapse of the 4-floor apartment where he was living. Just at that time Prof. Saitoh was visiting Medina and staying with his son but he was safe, maybe, by a miracle of Allah. His son died instantaneously. Because of this accidental death, Said Ryoji was honoured with the funeral ceremony of a **mujahid**. Prof. Saitoh's another son, Mohamed Rikijiro, was admitted to the University of Medina in 1966, but later took transfer to the University of Cairo. He is still continuing his study there.

Here, it needs to mention that, in Japan, when a person embraces Islam, it is not always possible for him to get all the members of his family converted to his new religion. This is because there cannot be any force or duress for conversion to a certain religion, under the Japanese Constitution. In the circumstances, Prof. Abdul Karim Saitoh's family has set a great example for others in a non-Islamic society.

### ADDRESS:

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JAPAN

## ► DECLARATION OF COOPERATION FOR ISLAM ◀

WHEREAS the Holy Quran and the words and actions of the Last Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) call upon all the Muslims to be united,

WHEREAS it is expedient that all the Muslim organisations work in close cooperation for the sake of Islam in Japan,

WHEREAS it is necessary that there should be coordination among the activities of all the Muslim organisations in Japan,

WHEREAS it is the call of time that all the Muslim organisations have mutual understanding, mutual respect and broad-based common policy,

WHEREAS the Muslim organisations must set forth a good example for others to follow,

WHEREAS Dr. Towfik Oweida, Secretary-General of the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, Egypt, urged upon us to form a fresh coordinating body,

WHEREAS this basic idea was unanimously adopted and agreed by all the Muslim organisations in a meeting held on Jamad-us-Sani 16, 1396, (June 14, 1976) at Hotel Okura, Tokyo,

**NOW THEREFORE WE, THE UNDERSIGNED REPRESENTATIVE OF OUR RESPECTIVE ORGANISATIONS, HEREBY UNANIMOUSLY AGREE, DECLARE, AND BIND OURSELVES TODAY THE 28th JUNE, 1976, as under, in the name of ALLAH:—**

We shall devote all our energy and resources for the propagation and spreading of Quran, Hadith and Islamic literature by all suitable means,

We shall work for the general uplift and general welfare of Muslims and for creating brotherly feeling among them all,

We shall support and cooperate with each other for the cause of Islam and defend it against all enemies,

Each of the undersigned organisations will be independent to carry out its own activities and works according to its own rules and regulations without any interference from any other organization,

Each organization will extend its cooperation to the other only to the extent it is needed and desired by the other sister organization,

We shall, from time to time as and when necessary, consult each other in matters of Islamic importance and shall help each other as far as possible,

We shall encourage each other's organization in Islamic activities and each organization shall refrain from any damaging campaign against the other,

We shall form a common coordination committee or so to achieve the above-stated objectives of mutual cooperation,

Any dispute or misunderstanding among these signatory organizations will be resolved and settled through the said coordinating body which will be of consultative nature,

**ALL THE UNDER-NOTED ORGANIZATIONS ARE BOUND BY THIS DECLARATION.**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. INDONESIAN ISLAMIC COMMITTEE           | 8. ISLAMIC CENTER-JAPAN                      |
| 2. ISLAMIC CULTURE SOCIETY, Japan         | 9. ISLAMIC WELFARE CORPS.                    |
| 3. ISLAMIC SOCIETY IN JAPAN               | 10. JAPAN ISLAMIC CONGRESS                   |
| 4. JAPAN MUSLIM ASSOCIATION               | 11. MUSLIM STUDENTS ASSOCIATION              |
| 5. TURKISH ASSOCIATION                    | 12. TOKUSHIMA AND NARUTO ISLAMIC ASSOCIATION |
| 6. ISLAMIC DIRECTENT                      |  |
| 7. ISLAMIC FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION (Kyoto) |  |

**THIS DECLARATION IS MADE AT TOKYO ON JUNE 28th, 1976. MAY ALLAH BLESS IT.**

**ABDUL KARIM SAITOH..COORDINATOR**

## The voice of Islam echoed in the 8th JRWF Congress, Tokyo

(Photo by courtesy: Kosei Shuppansha)



1. A bird's-eye view of the Grand Hall of Rissho Koseikai where the Congress was held.
2. Dr. M.M. Al-Fahhum, former Rector of Jamia Al-Azhar, speaking on Islam at the JAWF Congress.
3. Islamic delegation at the Congress (Sitting from left: Dr. M.M. Al-Fahhum and Dr. Towfik Oweida, Chairman of Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs. Standing 4th from right: H.E. Dr. Mohsen Abdel Khalek, Egyptian Ambassador to Japan)
4. Inside the Convention Hall.

# Inauguration Ceremony of Central Mosque, Seoul, Republic of Korea, on May 21-23, 1976



1. Entrance decoration of the Central Mosque.
2. Congratulatory speech by Sheikh Sobhi, Secretary General of Islamic Call Society, Libya.
3. Foreign Muslim delegates and Korean Muslim leaders with the Prime Minister of R. of Korea, Mr. Choi Kyu-Ha (center) at the Prime Minister's Office.
4. Panel discussions. Haji Sabri Shu, President of Korea Muslim Federation (standing left) explaining the situation.
5. First Jum'a Prayer at the Seoul Central Mosque.



# Korean Muslims Dedicate First Mosque Today

## 'Religious Revolution' Achieved By Burgeoning Convert Group

By Pak Yongpil

Today, Muslims in Korea express their devotion to Allah for the mosque and Islamic Center which will be opened in a gala ceremony to be attended by over 40 Muslim leaders from the Islamic world.

Standing on a hilltop on the southern outskirts of Seoul, the Islamic building was completed after two years of construction with donations mostly from Muslim countries.

In early days, some foreign Muslims came here but this religion was first systematically propagated by Turkish soldiers stationed here during the Korean War (1950-1953). In 1955, an imam, a prayer leader of Islam, for the Turkish troops came and started missionary work at a shabby tent-mosque in Seoul with some 20 Korean Muslims.

But the activities of the Korean Muslims were not so remarkable until the inauguration of the Korea Muslim Federation in 1960 with Haji Sabri Suh as its president.

Being entirely different from the native beliefs of Korea both in its creed and ritual practices, Mohammedanism was not readily accepted by Koreans even after the formation of the federation. Most Koreans felt more or less an affinity with Christianity, Confucianism, and Buddhism because of their relatively long history in Korea.

However, the off-and-on contact of the Korean people with Moslems began, according to the Korean history, in the latter part of the Koryu Kingdom, through the intermittent visits of Arab merchants.

Few people outside the country know that a bloodline between Koreans and Muslims about 700 years ago. Historical research and genealogical studies reveal that at least one Korean family originated from a naturalized Arabian. The progenitor of the Tokuks Chang family was a naturalized Arabian. The Arabian forefather of the Chang family came to Korea in 1341 from China (during the Yuan Dynasty) as a member of the viceroy's entourage on the Mongolian princes who became the queens of King Chungjong of the Koryu Dynasty.

The Arabian later married a Korean woman and the king gave him a Korean name, Wang Sang-yeop. He gave his descendants the name of all laws. Historical records show that these naturalized Arabians were not discriminated against for their ancestral origin and they assimilated rapidly, producing a number of high-ranking government officials and literary men.

But the Muslim creed during that period failed to find favor with the Koreans, who were

completely imbued with the Oriental belief of Buddhism which they believed to be incompatible with that of the Muslim.

"Every religion in the world has suffered severely during its evangeic mission with persecution and martyrdom," said Haji Sabri Suh. "But it is no so in Korea. We made a religious revolution, with not a single drop of bloodshed in this non-Islamic nation."

He is one of the two early Muslims who made a pilgrimage to Mecca and other Arab countries in 1959. Currently there are a group of 15 Korean students who are studying Islamic affairs with scholarships in Arab countries such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Libya and Kuwait.

Islam, as a matter of fact, is an attractive title. Whoever possesses this attitude, no matter what race, community, country or class he belongs to, is a Muslim. Within any race and in all ages there have been good and righteous people who possessed this attribute—and all of them were and are Muslims.

### Practical, Conservative

The Islamic religion is closely connected with daily living rather than with church services. In this regard, the religion is the most practical one in the world. Similar to the traditional Korean family life, Muslims are also conservative in their life patterns.

Islam lays stress on the virtues of justice, equality, moderation and tradition and it gives due respect to prophets of all religions and shows tolerance to all faiths which teach the worship of God, said Mohamed Sulaiman Lee, director general of the Korea Muslim Federation.

As for the lack of understanding of the doctrine of Mohammedanism, he explained that it is a complete mistake to think that the religion favors violence. Although the prophet Muhammad has been usually represented as a man of violence with a sword in one hand and the Koran in the other, he never liked to resort to violence, he noted. The prophet only fought for the "holy" war, he claimed.

On completion of the Masjid and Islamic Center in Seoul today, the Muslim Federation has set up a two-state plan to overcome difficulties and effectively propagate Islam in Korea. The aim of the first stage is to increase the Muslim population and enlighten them by mass communication, on the basis of Arabic Language Institute and the organization of Muslim

(Continued on Page 11)



Korea Herald Photo

The signboard at the entrance of Korea's first mosque reads the Central Mosque of the Korea Muslim Federation.

## World Muslim Leaders to Attend Ceremony

Over 400 Muslim leaders from the Islamic world will open the newly dedicated mosque and Islamic Center in Seoul today.

Standing on a hill top in Hanam-dong, the mosque, seating over 500 persons and the Islamic Center in traditional domeshaped Islamic architecture has been completed after two years of construction at a total cost of \$400,000 mostly in donations from Arab countries.

With the construction of the Masjid and Islamic Center, Korean Muslims, whose number is

estimated at over 4,000, have achieved a long-cherished dream.

The Korea Muslim Federation started construction in 1974 in accordance of a decision at the World Muslim Congress at Mecca in 1968.

For its construction, President Park Chung Hee donated the 5,000 square meter site in 1970, while Muslim leaders from Arabic countries such as Saudi Arabia, Libya, Kuwait, Abudhabi, and Qatar extended financial support amounting to over \$4,000,000.

Among the leading personalities who are invited to the opening ceremony are Tunku Abdul Rahman, former prime minister of Malaysia; Mohammed J. Dihan, president of Tihad Co. in Saudi Arabia; Ismail Khan, secretary general of the World Muslim Congress in Pakistan; Sheikh A. Al-Aqad, director of Islamic affairs of Kuwait; Adel Faidel, undersecretary of state council for Islamic affairs of Egypt; and Haji Umar B. Muhammad, minister of education of Brunei.

The first-page view of "The Korea Herald" issued on 21, May 1976.

## MULSIM ORGANIZATIONS IN THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

(May, 1976)

### The Korea Islamic Foundation

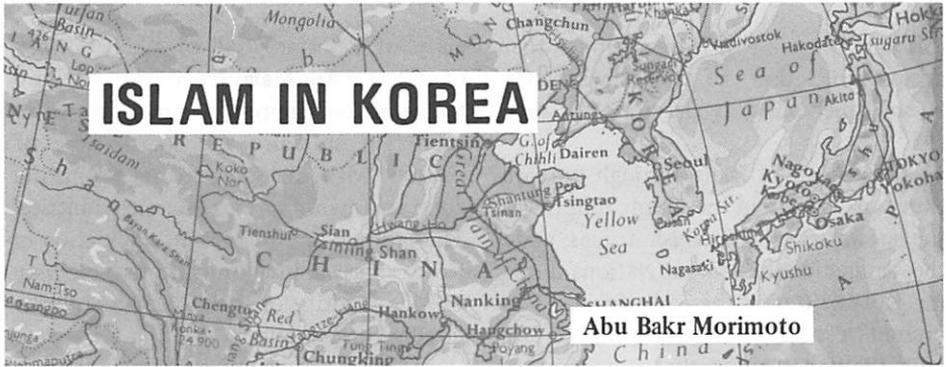
Suleiman W.S. Lee (Director-General), Haji Mohammed D.Y. Yoon (Imam), Osman Kim (Inspector), Abdul Aziz I.C. Kim (Routine Director), and Haji Sabri Suh, Abu Bakr Kim, Yusuf Yoon, Muhammad Kwon & Haji Mohammed Yoon (Directors).

### The Korea Muslim Federation

Haji Sabri Suh Jung-Kil (President), Abdul Aziz Kim Il-Cho (Secretary-General), Sulaiman Lee Haeng-Lae & Ahmed Moon Chung-In (Deputy Secretaries-General), Qamaruddin Moon Sae-Joo (Incharge of Missionary Dept), Muhammad Kim Moo-Chang (Incharge of Cultural Dept), Zeid L. Chong-Hyun (Incharge of Public Relations), Abdul Rahim Sin Man-Jong (Incharge of Youth Dept), and Khadija Do Yong-Hee (Incharge of Ladies Dept).

### The Korea Muslim Students Association

Hamid Choi (Chairman), Umar Yoon (Vice-Chairman), Qadir Lim (Secretary), Jamil Song (Incharge of Public Relations), Abdul Aziz Lim (Incharge of Missionary Dept), Shukor Min (Incharge of Friendship Dept), Mahdi Chun (Incharge of Information Dept), Nasir Kim (Incharge of Academic Dept), Hadi Song (Incharge of Publication Dept), and Sofia Chai (Incharge of Girls Students).



**NOTE:** The following is a brief account of Islam in Korea where the first established mosque was opened in Seoul on 21 May 1976 in a ceremony with about 40 Islamic leaders from around the world participating. The mosque is a marvel of Islamic edifice in the heart of this out and out non-Muslim but friendly country in the Far-Eastern horizon of Asia. The opening of the mosque heralds the dawn of a new era of Islam in this Asian horizon. We fervently hope that our Korean brothers will keep up the reverberation of Islam, which I saw in Seoul during the opening ceremony.—Editor.

Korea is believed to have come in contact with Islam during the Sin-Ra dynastic reigns in that country (668–935 A.D.) through the arrival of some Arab traders. But there is no documented testimony to establish this fact. The first established historical account regarding the early Arab visitors to Korea describes that about one hundred Arab traders visited the country in the month of September of the 16th year of the reign of King Hyun-Jong (1010–1031 A.D.) who belonged to the Go-Ryeo Dynasty (918–1392 A.D.). From this account it may be said that the first advent of Islam in Korea took place as early as 1026 A.D. These early Arabs brought with them advanced Saracenic medical science and culture and also introduced some folk crafts from the South-East Asian countries. All this earned high admiration of the King and his court, and the Arabs were treated with high regard.

Thus, the Arabs first initiated sea-trade between Korea and other Asian coastal countries until the advent of the Portuguese in the later centuries. The Arabs also ran land-trade with Korea via the continental Chinese trade routes, from West Asia. In course of time, many of these Arab traders settled in Korea and their descendents lived for about a thousand years in the Pyung-Taek area of the country.

From this account, it is obvious that although Islamic people had contact with Korea from about a thousand years ago, there is no historical trace of any kind of Islamic propagation in that country because there was no spread of Islam throughout these centuries.

However, one legacy of the early Arabs still remaining in the annals of Korea is that it was the Arab traders who gave

this land the name of Korea through their mis-pronunciation of what was "Go-Ryeo," the ruling dynasty of their time.

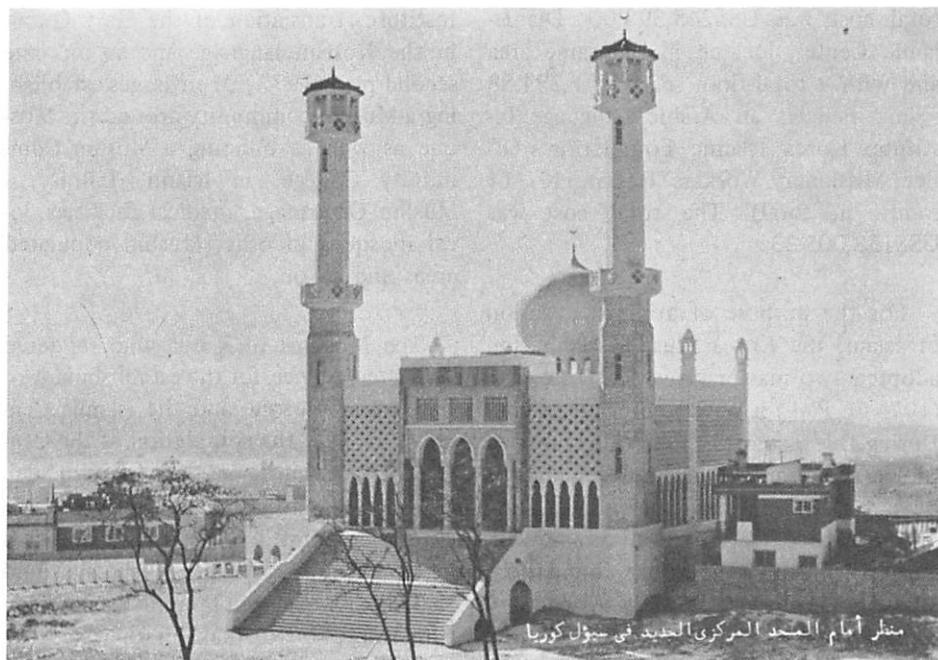
The spread of Islam through propagation started only in the recent times, with the arrival of the Turkish forces under the banner of the United Nations during the Korean War in the early fifties of the present century. The Turkish soldiers built the first mosque, though temporary, for their own prayer. However, their Islamic life attracted many Koreans who established contact with the Turks. These Koreans became Muslim and they founded the nucleus of the Islamic call movement in Korea. It is also a point of interest that even though a country becomes secular in its political practices, the spirit of Islam never dies out from the people's heart. This has been proved by the Muslim soldiers of secular Turkey through their role in introducing Islam in a non-Muslim country. And this is also a clear testimony that examples of the Muslims personal and community life have a greater effect than stereotyped propagation activities.

Once the nucleus of Islamic life was established, new encouragements from various quarters came forth. Through the sincere work of foreign religious leaders like Syed Mohammed Jamil of Pakistan the number of new Muslim converts in Korea gradually increased. Support and help also came from Islamic leaders like Dato Haji Noah of Malaysia, Dr. Mohammed Tawfiq Oweda of Egypt, Dato Syed Ibrahim Bin Omar Alsagoff of Singapore, and Islamic organizations like Rabitatul Alam-al-Islami in Mecca, Holy Quran So-

ciety of Pakistan, Call of Islam Society of Libya, All Malaysia Muslim Welfare Organization, Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs in Cairo and so on, and, of course, with encouragements from the governments of various Islamic countries. The latest figure of Muslim population in Korea was about four thousand (May 1976), majority of them belonging to the intelligentsia group.

The Muslims of Korea have three main organizations: the Korea Muslim Federation which was first organized in 1963 and reorganized in 1966 and is led by Haji Sabri Suh; the Korea Islamic Foundation which was established in 1967 as a registered religious body; and the Muslim Student Association. All the three organizations conduct the Islamic religious work through mutual cooperation. Apart from the regular religious and social functions, the organizations also take special interest in the education of the younger Muslims. For that purpose, 53 young Muslim Koreans have so far been sent to various Islamic countries for Islamic education and experience in Islamic way of life provided with the logistic support from the host countries. The countries, in alphabetical order, are: Egypt, Indonesia, Libya, Malaysia, Morocco, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.

Since the days of the Turkish soldiers of the UN forces in Korea, the Korean Muslims had been praying in makeshift mosques, and strongly felt the necessity of a permanent "House of Allah" in their country. They had been striving in different ways to find a site for such a permanent central mosque and construct its



Front view of the Seoul Central Mosque.

building. The present site of the new Central Mosque and Islamic Center which were inaugurated on 21-23 May was first selected through negotiations with the Government of Korea in September 1961 when a Malaysian Goodwill Mission visited the country. After long negotiations, the Government finally agreed to grant the present site to Korea Muslim Federation in May 1969, and President Park Chung Hee formally donated the 5,000 sq/m land for the construction of the Mosque and the Center.

For the construction of the Central Mosque and the Islamic Center, while the Korean Muslims gave their dedication and President Park's Government gave the

lands, the Islamic countries including Abu Dhabi, Kuwait, Libya, Morocco, Qatar, Saudi Arabia (in alphabetical order) and others as well as some Islamic leaders such as Prince Nawaf Ibn Abdul Aziz and Adnan Kashoki provided most part of the finance. The planning for construction started in October 1972 and actual construction in October 1974. Construction of the Islamic Center was completed in February 1975 and that of the Central Mosque in May 1976.

The Central Mosque with the main prayer hall, two conference rooms and two office rooms has a floor space of 1,564.92 sq/m and is situated at 732-21 Hannam-Dong, Yongsan-Ku, Seoul. The

total cost was US\$245,398.00. The Islamic Center, located in the same area and with a total floor space of 1,334.88 sq/m, includes an Arabic Language Institute, Korea Islamic Foundation's Office, Missionary Workers' Room, etc. (14 rooms in total). The total cost was US\$158,005.33.

For the purpose of brisk propagation of Islam, the Korea Muslim Federation adopted two master plans. The first plan (1974-76 Plan) is now coming to its end. During this plan, the Federation launched propagation through the mass media, its own publication activities, intensified Muslim students activities, Arabic language diffusion, scholarship foundation, student exchanges between Korea and Islamic countries, operation of a Muslim

Institute, translation of the Holy Quran in the Korean language and so on. The second plan (1977-80) envisages establishing a Muslim community around the Mosque as well as building a Muslim Community College, an Islamic Library, a Muslim Orphanage, medical facilities, local mosques in other Muslim populated areas and so on.

The Muslims of Korea who rendered dedicated service for the establishment of the Center Mosque and the Islamic Center, hope that the completion of the Central Mosque will make their faith in Allah firmer and that the Mosque will provide a turning point for the spread of Islam in their country. All the Muslims around the whole world join them in their aspirations and pray to Allah for their success.

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## TRADITIONAL RELIGIONS IN THE KOREAN PENINSULA

According to the history of Korea, the people of Korea believed in natural indigenous religions like animism, shamanism and so on before the advent of the foreign religions. When new foreign religions such as Buddhism and, in a much later time, Christianity were introduced in the peninsula, a part of them became mixed up with the local religions still remaining the same even today. The shamanist religion called *Mudang* (witch) is one of the mixed religions.

The first foreign religion introduced in Korea was Confucianism which flourished in neighbouring China under the aegis of Confucius (551-478 B.C.) himself. Confucianism entered Korea during the first century A.D. It spread all over the country and specially during the period of Lee Dynasty (1392-1910), Confucianism exerted a great influence as the state religion of the country. Thus Confucianism became the base of the Korean culture and its influence is still very strong.

During the fourth century A.D., Buddhism which was preached by Gautama Buddha in India also entered Korea and during the Go-Ryeo Dynastic rules (918-1392 A.D.), it spread far and wide in the Korean peninsula. Its cultural influence also is very strong even today.

Roman Catholic Christianity was first introduced in 1593 by the Portuguese missionaries and during the eighteenth century many Koreans became Christian. But it was banned by the contemporary dynastic rulers and many Christians were persecuted. In 1884, when the policy of isolationism was ended, Protestantism also found its way into Korea and has since been flourishing unabated.

In Korea today, apart from the above-mentioned main religions, there are several other local religions with large numbers of adherents. One of them known as Chon-do-kyo is quite popular among the Korean people.

The following table shows the present position of religions in the Republic of Korea:

Buddhists 7,980,000 (22.8%); Protestants 3,460,000 (11.4%); Catholics 790,000 (2.2%); Muslims 3,300 (0.01%); Other religionists 8,700,000 (25%); and Non-believers 14,000,000 (38.5%). The total population of ROK is 34,933,300 (from Korea Muslim Federation Report 1974).

# PROBLEMS OF MUSLIMS IN U.S.

Dr. Muhammad Abdul Rauf

Nancy James, American woman from Indianapolis, a city 800 miles away from Washington, D. C., sent a letter indicating her interest in Islam. She had come across a book and was fascinated by what she read about that religion. She said that this led her to read more and more, spending nights over nights reading and researching about Islam, the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Mohammed, and was very deeply impressed. She found Islam, Nancy said, simple, easy, logical, sensible and practical. She had been a Christian for many years. She was in fact born a Christian. But she said that she became tired of the confusing preaching about the doctrine of the trinity and with all the mysteries in which Christianity was shrouded. When she discovered that Muslims believed also in Jesus Christ, in his mother and in the Bible, she remarked, it was too good

to be true! She concluded her correspondence with a request for some advice as to how she could become a Muslim. As done in similar cases, a letter of welcome was sent to her, together with forms to fill out. In the forms, under her signature in front of witnesses, Nancy acknowledged and asserted her belief in God, in His Unity and in His other attributes. She testified to the validity of the mission of all the Prophets and the finality of that of the Holy Prophet Mohammed. She also acknowledged the existence of the Angels and the validity of the Day of Judgement. Moreover, she pledged to live as a Muslim, according to the teachings of Islam and the guidance of the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Mohammed. She pronounced the words of *La Ilaha Illa 'Llah, Mohammedur Rasulu 'Llah.*

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Dr. Mohammed Abdul Rauf is an Arab scholar rendering service in the cause of Islam in a predominantly non-Islamic society like America. He is the Director of the Islamic Center in Washington D.C. He is also Honorary Director of the Motamar-al-Alam-al-Islami (World Muslim Congress) and as such represents the Motamar in the United Nations. The present article is a paper read in the recent International Seerat Congress held in Pakistan. The problem that Dr. Rauf has taken up is common to all other Muslims, indigenous or foreign, living in a non-Islamic society. We, in Japan, are specially concerned with this problem because we are a very insignificant minority—Editor.

On receiving her forms of acknowledgement, her name was entered in the Register of Muslims. A certificate was sent to her, together with some more Islamic books. She was given the usual advice regarding ablution, keeping prayers and observing the other tenets of Islam, as expounded in the literature. Ever since contact was maintained. She called or wrote asking questions or making inquiries. She adopted the Muslim name, Nafeesah, and has been to Mecca on pilgrimage more than once.

The story of Nancy James is one of frequent recurrence. Many Americans, men and women of all ages call, come or write and convert to Islam daily. Hardly does a day pass without having a new Muslim registered at the Islamic Centre in Washington. Some times two, three, four, or even as many as ten are registered in a single day. Similar developments are taking place in other Muslim centers and organizations scattered in the American scene. Large cities have more than one center and mosques. There is hardly a town or a village in America in which a Muslim family is not found.

This is certainly good news. Islam is expanding peacefully in America. Its roots are being struck more and more deeply in the soil of the Western Hemisphere. Islam has come there to stay. The number of its American adherents runs into millions. At a time of spiritual vacuum, doubt, confusion and boring materialism, Islam is found to provide the new adherent with psychological respite, with a sense of direction, a firm conviction, and makes life meaningful.

Islam transforms his life, helps him build up an integrated character based upon his awareness of God and acceptance of the Islamic value system.

We rejoice when we see our faith rapidly growing and widely expanding in the West, especially in America. Yet this success poses a great challenge to us, not only to those of us serving in the field, but also to the Islamic leadership in the mainland of Islam. Islam in America faces difficulties and hardships, which calls for collaboration and enlisting all available resources. When an invitation was received to attend this historic conference on the Seerat on behalf of the Islamic Centre of Washington, D. C. U.S.A., for which I am grateful, I felt it would be best for me to present the conferees with some of the difficulties encountered by American Muslims and seek your cooperation in drawing some guidelines for workers in the field.

I do not particularly mean difficulties encountered by some in getting jobs or the fear of losing their jobs when they are discovered to be Muslims. I do not mean the difficulty of observing the ritual duties of our religion such as prayers the times of which conflict with the office hours. I do not mean the prejudices suffered by Muslim prisoners whose number now runs into tons of thousands in confinement across the United States. Whether it is because of the prison discipline or the attitude of the prison authorities, Muslim inmates may face obstacles when they wish to hold group prayers. They may also suffer greater hardships in observing the Islamic dietary law and in fasting the month

of Ramadan. Until now, and in spite of the large numbers of Muslims in America, there is no adequate Islamic school that would take good care of our children who are being alienated from the faith and the traditions of their parents and are helplessly exposed to harmful ideologies and corruptive influences. The weekend religious classes held by communities across the US and Canada are certainly useful but by no means sufficient.

Muslims in America especially suffer from our failure to agree on a calendar of Muslim dates. The beginning of the fasting month and the approach of the days of 'Idul-Fitr and Idu'l-Adha are occasions of much arguments and disputes and confusion.

What I particularly have in mind to bring to the attention of this important conference are the dilemmas in which we are faced with the hard choice between the preservation of the faith of Islam at the cost of condoning breaking the law in some respect, or sticking to the letter of the law at the risk of losing the faith itself.

Let me now return to the story of Nafeesah James. Until her first journey to Mecca on pilgrimage, which took place in the company of other Muslim women some years after her conversion, her marital status had not been known. During that journey, however, it was discovered that she was the wife of a non-Muslim American with a number of children. When she was advised that a wife on her conversion to Islam should separate from her non-Muslim spouse, she assured that she was trying to per-

suaude her husband to become a Muslim! She added that she was trying to avoid having a love relationship with him as much as she could. In other words, Nafeesah was not eager to part with the man to whom she was happily married and whom she had spent a good part of her life. Also the welfare of their children called for the continuity of their conjugal tie. She was thus torn between her domestic obligations and her loyalty to her faith and the requirements of its law. Again, the American court does not regard conversion as a ground for divorce, and if she should sue her husband for divorce she would involve herself in an endless, very costly legal tangle.

The dilemma of Mrs. Nafeesah James is experienced by many other American women who, fascinated by the beauty of our faith, convert or wish to convert to our religion, but hesitate to break up their homes.

A similar confusion arises in the case of Muslim youth. Many parents complain that Islamic centers fail to provide extra-curricular activities in which young Muslims of different sex can participate and get acquainted, thus letting them drift into more serious situations, away from the watchful eyes of their parents and the Mosque authorities. The result, they say, is that Muslim boys marry non-Muslim girls, and our girls are left unmarried for too long. Worse still, children of such mixed marriages may grow in the religion of their mother. Even if they adopt the religion of their father, their faith, except in special cases is shallow and confused. In view of its serious results, the subject of mixed

marriages deserves sober reflection.

I am seizing the opportunity of this auspicious gathering of the leading scholars of the motherland of Islam held to honour the memory of our Holy Prophet in a young energetic Muslim nation, to submit to you the current experience of our faith in America, which I am sure will earn your sympathy and understanding. One wonders whether the Seerat, which is implicit of the notion of "dynamic growth" and flexible human concern, in contrast to the concept of law, of which the idea of "finality" is a basic element, could shed greater light in understanding our problems. A thorough study of the Seerat, especially of parallel dilemmas encountered by the Holy Prophet, the way the noble Mes-

senger of God handled them, may help us more in our contemporary difficulties. The condition of Islam in America today is not dissimilar to the condition of the nascent Islam in Mecca. Islam was then a strange phenomenon, endeavouring to carve its way in a permissive pagan society, Islam in America is an unfamiliar experience coming to coexist and seeking to flourish in a permissive materialistic soil. The experiences of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, his wisdom in tackling conflicts, and his methods of treating human situations, can certainly provide inspiration and guidance in treating Islamic problems arising in the American setting.

[By courtesy: THE MUSLIM WORLD  
Vo. 13, No.37, April 3, 1976]

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## APPEAL

Japan is well-known in the world as an economic giant. This is a fact that Japan is one of the most industrialized and economically affluent country. But affluence of Japan does not necessarily mean that the Japanese Muslims are also affluent. Moreover, their number also is only in a few thousands. Most of them are common salary-earners living from hand to mouth. The most glaring example is Islamic Culture Society whose membership is constituted of mainly intellectuals who are usually economically hard-up everywhere.

Among its various activities, Islamic Culture Society has been making efforts to publish its journal Islamic Culture Forum to cater to your inquiry about Islam in Japan. Five issues of the Forum have been published by the Society undergoing enormous hardships. The sixth issue has long been in the dark room of the press. It has not been able to see the daylight because we couldnot pay the press dues. Similarly, various other manuscripts also cannot be published for want of funds although they are ready for publication.

In the circumstances, we fervently appeal to you to come to the rescue of Islamic Culture Forum from dying. Unless immediate help comes forth, Islamic culture Forum will inevitably meet an untimely and lamentable death after only two and a-half years of life in spite of the fact that its thousands of readers in about 90 countries of the world desire its long life.

Praying to Allah, the Merciful and the Compassionate, to give us strength to follow His path and to save Islamic Culture Forum from dying. AMEEN!

December 1976

Abu Bakr Morimoto  
President, Islamic Culture Society &  
Chief Editor, Islamic Culture Forum

# ISLAM ON FORWARD MARCH IN JAPAN

—Activities of Islamic Center-Japan—

Abdur Rahman Siddiqi

The only Islamic organization in Japan, jointly run by the Japanese and foreign Muslims, Islamic Center-Japan is located at a distance of 8 minutes walk from the Tokyo Mosque. The Center is housed in a three-roomed mansion near Higashi-kitazawa railway station on the Odakyu line. The locality is one of the most respectable and clean areas of Tokyo, directly connected by railway and bus services with central Tokyo.

The Center opens daily from 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. but it seems it is working day and night. Any time you visit, you find someone translating or revising a new book to be published, or busy in mailing Islamic literature to a remote village of Japan free of cost.

## PUBLICATIONS:

Publication of high standard, simple, and authentic literature on Islam seems to be the speciality of the Center. All

its publications are in Japanese either translation or original.

The latest list of books already published by the Center include the following:—

“Why Fast”?

“Fasting”

“Zakat”

“Hajj”

“Salaat”

“Moral Teachings of Islam”

“Muhammad” (Peace be upon him)

The following books are now under print:

“Family Life in Islam”. Already published.

“Status of Women in Islam”.

“Polygamy in Islam”.

The following publications are under preparation, translation or compilation:—

“Islam in Japan”.

“Prophets and the Finality of Prophet-

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## Note:

Mr. Abdur Rahman Siddiqi, a Pakistani brother, contributed his article, “Basis of Economic Cooperation between the Islamic Countries and Japan” which appeared in No. 1 issue of the Forum. A commerce graduate from the Hitotsubashi University in Tokyo, Mr. Siddiqi is well-versed in the Japanese language and possesses a good understanding of Japan – its land and its people. This year he has been despatched by King Abdul Aziz University, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, to help Islamic movement in Japan, and has since been engaged in the work actively in cooperation with the Islamic Center-Japan. In the present article, he has expressed high hopes and lofty ideals. Though his path will not be so easy, we sincerely pray to Allah for his success – Editor

hood”.

“Quran & Hadith”.

“The Understanding of Islam”.

The famous book “Towards Understanding Islam” by ABUL ALA MAUOODI, which was previously translated into Japanese and brought out jointly by the Japan Muslim Association and Muslim Students Association – Japan, in 1965, is also being rechecked and revised by the scholars at the disposal of the Center.

The Center is regularly bringing out an Islamic magazine, “ASSALAM”, in Japanese, the only one of its kind. Like all other literature, the “ASSALAM” is also widely circulated free of charge. Each publication of the Islamic Center carries also the names and addresses of all other Muslim organizations in Japan.

Frankly speaking, the Center has provided a sound academic basis for Islamic propagation activity by supplying the most required medium – literature in Japanese language. May Allah bless those who are working in His path.

#### DISCUSSION MEETINGS:

The Center holds frequent meetings for the Japanese Muslims as well as for non-Muslims. In such meetings discussions are held on Islam in Japanese and English. The energetic and well-educated Muslim team of the Center explains various aspects of Islamic teaching to the audience. The team at the Center also includes workers and *Muballigh* sent by Saudi Arabia and Libyan Arab Republic. Many of them speak at least one or two of Arabic, Urdu, Chinese, Bengali, Turkish, Persian languages in addition to English and Japanese. Most of the team workers were educated at

Japanese universities years ago. They mix with the Japanese people, and explain Islam in simple language and in a convincing and dignified manner.

The Center has a large research library of over 2,000 books in various languages. Most of these books were sent by Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Pakistan, Iran, Sudan, Jordan, Egypt, Algeria, Libiya, Morocco, Iraq, Qatar and Islamic organizations of U.K. & U.S.A. However, much more is required.

#### LOCAL CONTACTS:

The Islamic Center does not limit its activities to printing & publishing of literature and holding meetings only, its members visit Japanese universities, schools and local associations by prior appointments. They also call on the famous scholars of Japan and try to make them understand “What Islam is and what it is not”. This paves way for future work.

One invisible activity of Islamic Center-Japan is to provide or arrange support for the scholars or organizations who are rendering services to the cause of Islam. This may be moral or material, as the case may be.

Recently, the Center has organized a group of 15 Japanese scholars for research work on Islamic subjects. It is expected that some concrete results would be forthcoming in due course of time. It is also working on a plan to send some scholars to Muslim countries so that they see for themselves the way of life there, and thus understand Islam through direct contact with the Islamic society. The Center has organized another study group consisting of young Japanese editors and worked out a program of ten lectures for

them. The program is making satisfactory progress and the number of participants is increasing.

On Fridays the Center is thrown open to the Muslims and non-Muslims alike, who visit the mosque, so that they can visit the Center and obtain guidance and free Islamic literature for their own reading and for distribution. A large number of widely circulated journals from the Islamic world are available with the Center. They also serve as reference materials for the students who are studying about the Muslim countries and who want to write essays or dissertations on subjects relating to Islam in preparation for their examinations at schools or universities.

The Center now and then writes to the local dailies and magazines pointing out certain erroneous reports or misunderstanding printed by them. This places Islamic Center at the position of defender of Islam in Japan.

#### **TABLIGH:**

The Islamic Center undertakes extensive *TABLIGH* activities by sending teams of Muslims to various parts of Japan, such as Sendai, Kanazawa, Nagoya, Kyoto, Osaka, Hiroshima, Kobe, Naruto, Tokushima, etc. It also supplies free literature to its representatives in all those cities where required.

Recently with the efforts of Islamic Center, Hokkaido Muslim Association has been established after seven persons embraced Islam when the Centers representative visited that area.

The Center is helping the Muslims of Naruto city in South Japan in their efforts for establishing an Islamic Friendship University.

The Center also supplies Islamic literature to the Muslim brothers of Korea and the Philippines when asked for. It is always prepared to cooperate in the Islamic activities anywhere the world in all possible ways.

The Center not only cooperates with the Muslim organizations in Japan but also sends representatives and delegates to various non-Muslim cultural and religious organizations. Recently its members participated in the meetings held by "SOKA-GAKKAI" and "RISSHYO KOSEIKAI" — two of the most active groups of Buddhism. Such participations are bearing fruits and the representatives of Islam leave a lasting influence wherever they go. Certainly, it is with the help of Allah. It is because Islam is the most simple, the only true religion and its message is conveyed with wise dynamism.

By the grace of Allah, a large number of the Japanese people are turning their attention to Islam. Efforts of all the Islamic organizations are to be credited for this new trend. However, the Islamic literature provided by the Islamic Center has its own share of service as it has proved very successful in explaining Islam.

Working teams from the Center visit various local dormitories of the foreign students and trainees. The students and trainees are supplied with free reading materials on Islam and are reminded of their duties and responsibilities toward Islam and their respective societies.

Recorded tapes of speeches on Islam in Japanese and English also supplied by the Center.

The premises of the Center also serve as an emergency guest-house for the brothers who come from abroad for

*TABLIGH* work in Japan from time to time.

Despite lack of sufficient funds (mostly provided by Muslim countries) Islamic Center-Japan is engaged in sowing the seed of Islam in Japan where the people are 100% educated.

Credit for arranging supply of Islamic Calender and publication of monthly *SALAT* timetable also goes to Islamic Center. Apparently, these appear to be minor items, yet they are very significant in this country where Islam has just come to be known as a full fledged religion. We may expect solid results in the long run, *INSHA'ALLAH*.

#### **THE CENTER'S BASIC CHARACTERISTICS:**

Islamic Center-Japan is actually a continuation from "International Islamic Center" established in 1968. It is a non-political and purely non-commercial organization run by a Board of Directors elected by the members. There is one Secretary General, one Assistant Secretary General and a Treasurer with some office staff. The Board of Directors prepares policies and plans for the activities, and controls the finance.

It is really very satisfying to find that Islamic Center is not at all attached with any particular group. In fact, it has successfully melted the nationality and individualism in the brood-based pot of Islam. There is no personality cult no propaganda of any particular country or group. It is all about Islam.

#### **EXPANSION:**

Activities of Islamic Center are expanding so fast that it shall have to hire a bigger building, perhaps within

this year. It is only imperative that the Muslim countries and Islam-loving people all over the world support and encourage Islamic Center-Japan, the bulwark of Islamic activities in Japan.

The new building has already been purchased in the same area.

Note: Recently Arabic-Islamic classes have also been started at the Center.

#### **ADVANTAGES IN JAPAN:**

It may be pointed out here that Islam has definite advantages over certain other religions in Japan. Just to list four of such favourable points:—

1. Islam is regarded as a religion of Asian origin and the Japanese people have a strong Asian sentiment.
2. There are many Japanese customs, manners and qualities which are Islamic in nature.
3. The Japanese people believe and understand that Islam and Islamic countries do not have any colonial or expansionist intentions towards Japan.
4. There is no bitter past feeling between Japan and the Islamic countries.

Now is the time that an organization like Islamic Center-Japan should be encouraged to spread the understanding of Islam in Japan. Islamic Center-Japan is concentrating on quality and understanding rather than on quantity. Apparently, this seems to be its policy.

May Allah bless all those who are working for the cause of Islam in Japan.

For further details, please contact:—

**ISLAMIC CENTER-JAPAN.**

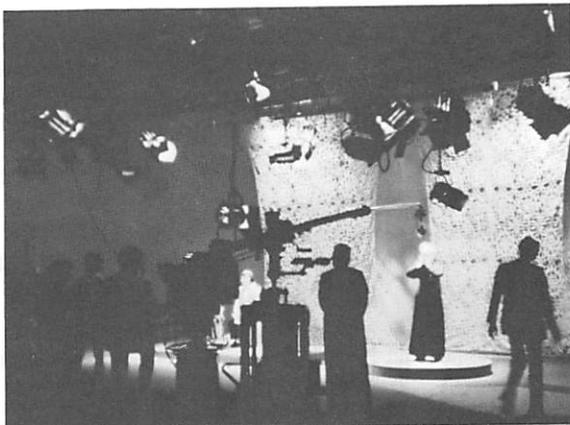
3-31 Uehara, Shibuya-ku,  
Tokyo 151, JAPAN.

Tel. (460) 6169

## ISLAM IN THE BROADCASTS IN JAPAN

*Allahu Akbar,  
Allahu Akbar,*

the call of Islam echoed in the studio of NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation) for the first time in its history on 31 May 1976. Filipino Imams Osman and Yahiya made the recitation for a cultural introduction broadcast.



### ► ACKNOWLEDGEMENT ◀

We acknowledge receipt with utmost thanks of publications or other reading materials from our benefactors. The following is the remaining list of names. If some names are missed, it is due to inadvertent error. We shall be highly obliged if pointed out.

MOSLEMISCHER SOCIALDIENST,  
A-1010 Wien, Werdertorg 4/II/13, Austria.

Dr. Muhammad Hamidullah,  
4, rue de Tournon, F.75006-Paris, France.

Mr. Tharik Chehab,  
Jl. Kemiri 8, Jakarta, Indonesia.

Dr. A.M. Naik,  
44, Jail Road, Bombay-9, India.

The Islamic Foundation,  
P.O. Box 30611, Nairobi, Kenya.

Students Islamic Movement,  
P.O. Box 14, Port-Louis, Mauritius.

Saudi Research & Marketing Co.,  
"Arab News," Binladin Bldg., Madena Road,  
P.O. Box 4556, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

Muslim Missionary Society of Singapore,  
31, Lorong 12, Geylang, Singapore-14.

National Liberation Front of Pattani,  
Pattani, Thailand.

Talabat-an-Nur,  
P.O. Box 1235, El Cerrito, California 94530,  
U.S.A.

Islamic Affairs,  
The Islamic Society of Georgia,  
172 Vine Street, S.W. #7, Atlanta, Georgia  
30314, U.S.A.

The Muslim Students Association of United  
States and Canada,  
2501 Directors Row, Indianapolis, Indiana  
46241, U.S.A.

The Minaret,  
183 Atlantic Avenue, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201,  
U.S.A.

The Islamic Party in North America,  
National Headquarters,  
Masjid Ul-Ummah (The Community Mosque)  
770 Park Road N.W., Washington D.C. 20010,  
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2551 Massachusetts Avenue N.W., Washington  
D.C. 20008, U.S.A.

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Kazakstan,  
Tashkent, U.S.S.R.

# READERS FORUM

## DULTZ LETTER

### I

With great interest have I read the many informative articles and letters in No. 5 issue of your young but already well-established magazine which is becoming a bridge to our Muslim brothers of the Far East.

I was so fascinated with the article, The Tokyo Mosque, and I just have to write to you to consider the following:

The first Tokyo mosque shall have to be kept up, if not operating since it perhaps has become too small or inconvenient in some other way, as a shrine or monument of Islam in Japan. I consider it rather wonderful for the Muslims of Japan to be able to pinpoint so exactly the entry of Islam into Japan, to have the first mosque there\* and to know of the leading influence of the late Kurban Ali as the founder of the Islamic community in Japan, whose great and tragic life ended as a prisoner in the Soviet Union, a prisoner of the unbeliever who had come from Europe to rule over his home and to stifle the light of Islam in Asia. Perhaps the Muslims of Japan could or even should consider asking the Soviet Union to have the remains of the late Kurban Ali being transferred to Tokyo for burial in the garden of the Tokyo Mosque so as to bring him to what had become his home, and to have the founder and his work, the Tokyo Mosque, together. But Allah knows best, may this will be done, insha'allah. (\*The Tokyo Mosque is not the first mosque in the whole of Japan. It is the second mosque established in 1938, the first being the Kobe Mosque which was established in 1935. The building of the Tokyo Mosque is old, indeed, but it is still being regularly used as the Muslims' prayer hall and center for religious teaching. —Editor)

### II

Two Fridays ago Libya had visitors from the Far East: the Imam and his delegation from the new Central Mosque and Islamic Center of Seoul, South Korea. I met them after the Friday prayers at the Gamal Abdun-Nasser Mosque in Tripoli, which also serves as the

premises for the headquarters of Libya's Call to Islam Society. The Imam from Seoul thanked the people of Libya and Sheikh Mahmoud Sobhi, Secretary General of the Society, for Libya's support and help to have this dream of establishing the Central Mosque and Islamic Center in Seoul come true by the grace of Allah. The guests distributed among us picture postcards viewing the beautiful mosque, a new edifice of Islam in the Far East, Elhamdulillah.

### III

Regarding discussion about the possibility of having the *khutba* in the language of the community, I like to say that prayers have to be said in Arabic and every serious Muslim, realizing the pre-eminence of Arabic, will try to learn as much Arabic as possible. Arabic being the language of the Holy Quran and of our Prophet of Islam (Peace be upon him) is to serve as the bridge between Islam and the Muslims as well as between Muslims in different parts of the world. Acknowledging and accepting this leading position and role of Arabic, it remains, nevertheless, to be mentioned that Allah created mankind belonging to different nationalities or races and with different languages. A believer can say Allah in any of the innumerable languages of the innumerable peoples living on this planet of earth. At the same time, the teachings of Islam have to be explained not only to the Muslims but also to others regularly in their own language or mother-tongue. Allah could have created us with one tongue, but He did provide us with a countless number of tongues. So, surely there cannot be anything wrong with teaching Islam to somebody in his own language. May we understand the teachings of Islam in our own language and may we try to make use of Arabic not only to pray but also to reach our brothers-in-Islam, wherever they may be.

### IV

This refers to the letter from Brother Molvi A.S. Desai appeared in the Readers Forum of the ICF No. 5 regarding photography in Islam and Muslim women in the mosque. I do not want to concern myself too much with the photography issue because, in a way, one has to agree that certain picture-making and distribution as in the case of heads of states, specially in the so-called third world, invite to the personality cult which surely is a kind of heathenly worship of humans. On the other hand, life in our world of today seems not to

be manageable without the tool of photography and the like. Brother A.S.K. Joommal's article on Music, Photography and Islam explains it very forcefully so. On the point of women to be or not to be in the mosque, I like to let you know that in most Islamic nations women are invited at certain times or into certain mosques to take part in the Islamic services (which, of course, does not have to mean that the practice is necessarily right). Here in Libya, women are regularly taking part in the Friday prayers at the Gamal Abdun-Nasser Mosque which is also the center of the Call to Islam Society. The women, of course, have to be properly dressed in accordance with Sunnah and pray separately at the rear-end of the prayer hall.

P.O.B. 289, Tripoli,

Libya Bashir Ahmad Dultz, Ph.D.

●●

I have seen your publication, Islamic Culture Forum, which was sent to me by a brother from Malawi.

I must extend congratulations to you for putting so much work in producing such an excellent and most useful booklet on Islam. May Allah shower His choicest of blessings upon you and guide all of us along the right path always.

The articles were most inspiring and I was thrilled to learn about Muslim brothers and sisters in Japan. If any one wishes to correspond with me, it will be a great pleasure for me to write.

6, Rushmere Lane, Ridgeview,  
P.O. Belvedere, Salisbury,

Rhodesia. Miss Noorjehan Fakeer Seedat

●●

We saw a copy of the Islamic Culture Forum May 1975 issue and thank the Almighty Allah for He had guided you well in having published the four pictures manifesting the present life of the minority Muslims in the Philippines.

I hope that in your prayers, you will have a vision of the pitiful situation of your Muslim brothers and sisters in Mindanao, the Philippines, and that you could join us in asking Allah, the Almighty, to guide the national leaders of our country to find an immediate solution of the trouble there. I pray that peace be attained in our country and all over the world.

Paris, France

Your brothers from the  
Philippines

●●

It is great pleasure for me to know about Japanese Muslim brothers as well as your magazine through a Muslim brother recently.

I am a Tunisian Muslim now studying at the Technical University of Berlin. We have an Islamic prayer room in the University compound. On Fridays we have the opportunity to meet Muslim brothers from various countries like India, Iran, Turkey, Pakistan, Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, Senegal, Bangladesh and other Arab countries. Unfortunately, we have not yet any chance to meet a Japanese Muslim brother. However, I shall be very happy if you please send me information about the Muslims of Japan, their number, areawise concentration of Muslim population, prospects for Islamic propagation and so on. Please also let me know your subscription rate.

With best wishes and praying to Allah for progress and success of your mission.

Eichhornstr. 5

Kamal Boulahia

1 Berlin 30, West Germany

●●

My dear Sister Jamila Qarar sent me the No. 3 issue of your really beautiful magazine. Please let me congratulate you most warmly on the very interesting and informative contents of your journals as well as the excellent make-up. It is so very important that also in our books and magazines Islam is represented at its best in every respect.

What also strikes me is the very international character of the Islamic Culture Forum – thus it is becoming a real bond between the Muslims all over the world. May Allah further bless your wonderful endeavours and grant you every success in this World and the World to come.

8891 Tandern, Bergstr. 6

West Germany

Fatima Heeren-Sarka

●●

I am a student and would like to become a member of your Society. I shall be much obliged if you kindly put my name on your mailing list. I also take this opportunity to introduce to you two of my German friends who are interested to study about Islam. If you can, please send them your publications in English or German language. They would like to become members of your Society, too.

"Hakeem Villa," 39 Arab Road,

Beruwela, Sri Lanka.

Amjad R. Marikar

●●

●●

Ours is a centre committed to the dissemination of Islamic message. Though yet in its embryonic stages, we have managed to get some literature from U.S.A., U.K., Tanzania, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Pakistan, Oman, etc. for our Centre.

We shall be highly grateful if you kindly put our Centre on your permanent mailing list. We also like to request, through the courtesy of ICF, Islamic organizations all over the world to donate Islamic literature to us.

Quranic Research Centre,  
10/1, Kamangar Pora,  
Srinagar-190002, India.

S.Z. Hussain,  
Circulation Director

●●

Your letter really gave us the pleasant and proud news of your Islamic activities in Tokyo. I am glad that you are associated with the Japanese medical clinic. I showed your letter to some of my intellectual friends, and they all appreciate your real way of Islamic life. Let us pray to Allah that He should show us the right path and guide us to follow the path of truth. Please convey my regards and remember me to all your associate friends.

I am keen to come to Tokyo and awaiting for the opportunity. If I come to Tokyo, I shall be pleased to speak on Comparative Religion and Islam or on Mental Health there through your Islamic Clinic associates. When I had been to London and on the European tour, I tried to see all the Islamic cultural centres and mosques. Recently, the Bohras of Bombay held an Islamic colloquium at International Taj Hotel, and religious scholars and *muballighs* from the world over, specially the Arabic countries, came to take part or observe. Heads of Islamic universities were also invited. Dr. Sayedana Burhanuddin, the head of the Bohra community, donated Rs. 21 lakhs (2.1 million rupees) to one of the leading Muslim institutions in Bombay for Islamic studies and promotion of Arabic language. If some of your friends happen to come to Bombay, please ask him to contact me so that I could give some literature and books concerning Islam and social activities in our country, for the purpose of enabling the Muslims the world over coming in touch with one another. I shall also be pleased to get some information in the Islamic field from you about other parts of the world.

I wrote a paper on Problems of Muslims in India for the 5th All India Muslim Educational

Conference held in Calicut, Kerala. I also received a paper from Prof. Syed Ali Ashraf of King Abdul Aziz University, Mecca, on the Islamic Concept of Knowledge. And, when I talked about you to Prof. Ghulam Ahmed, Principal of Burhani College of Commerce, Bombay, he showed keen interest in having correspondence from your Islamic Culture Society. He is a renowned economist and also an Islamic scholar.

42, Jail Road, Dongri.

Bombay-400009, India.

Dr. A.M. Naik, S.E.M.

(Dr. A.M. Naik is a reputed medical practitioner of Bombay. More than that Dr. Naik is a dedicated Muslim leader rendering yeomen's service to the poor through his profession. He is also a noted Islamic scholar, thinker and journalist. I had an opportunity to meet him in Bombay. By talking to him, by seeing him working among the poor in the Bombay slum, I got the conviction that a man like Dr. Naik is what is called a Muslim. Then relatively a new Muslim, my faith in Islam deepened more and more by seeing and knowing a Muslim in the person of Dr. Abdulkarim M. Naik.

Though written in April 1975, the above letter from Dr. Naik reached me in May 1976. Even after a lapse of more than a year, the contents of the letter remain ever fresh. —Editor)

### ATTENTION

To avoid undue complications of international remittances, please deposit your contribution or other monetary transactions relating to Islamic Culture Society, Japan, to your nearest branch of Bank of Tokyo or please ask your banker to make local mail transfer to the Bank of Tokyo branch or its agent in your country for credit to the following Account:

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Tokyo, Japan.

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Thank you.

Executive Director

Islamic Culture Society, Japan

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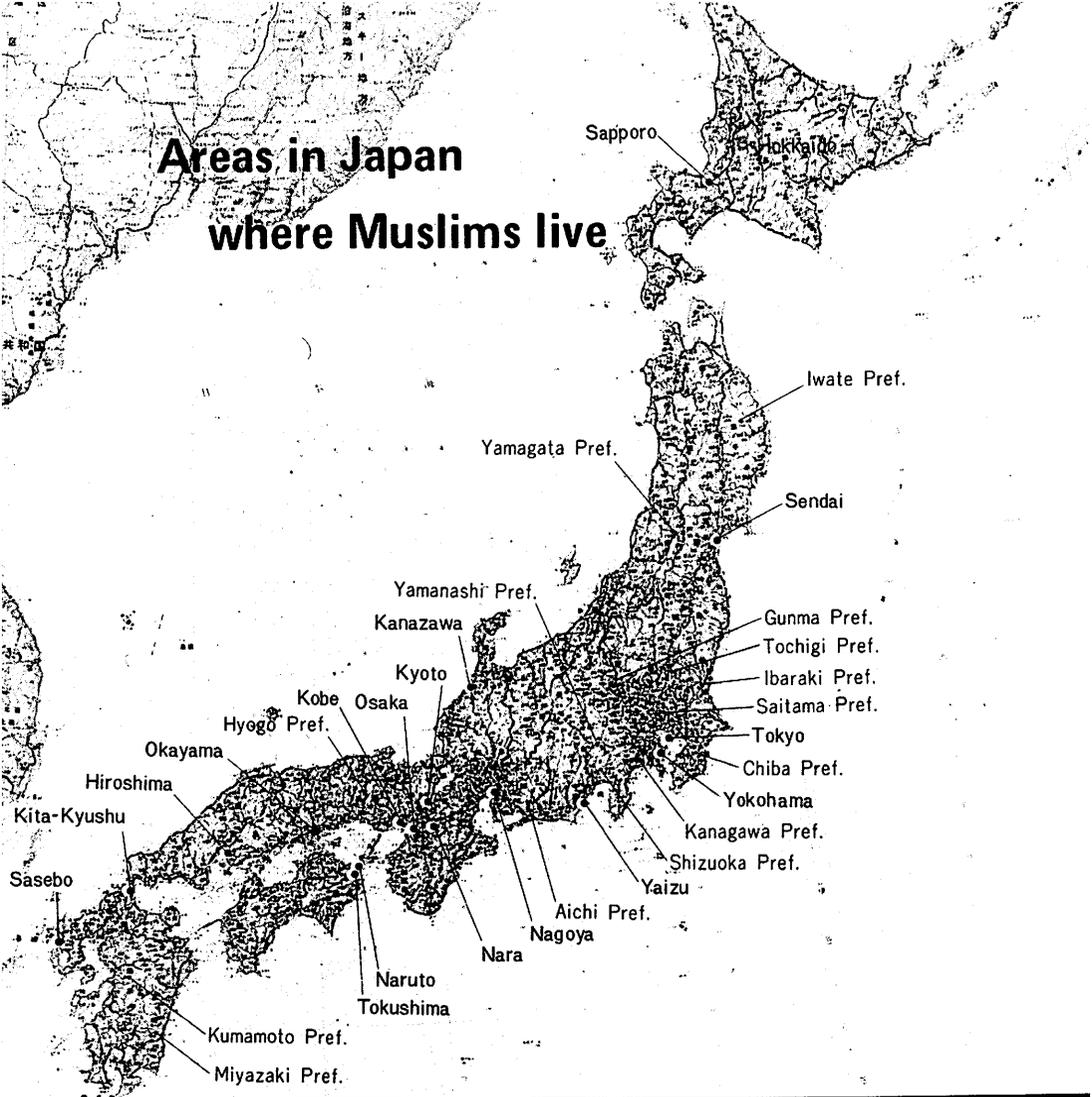
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