

ISLAMIC CULTURE FORUM

8

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ISLAMIC CULTURE SOCIETY (JAPAN)



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ABU BAKR MORIMOTO

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ISLAMIC CULTURE FORUM

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AUGUST
1977

OVERSEAS
EDITION

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TO OUR READERS

Once more we express our profound gratitude to Allah, the most Merciful, that No. 8 issue of Islamic Culture Forum has come out. Every time we feel that this is the last issue of the magazine and there will be no more issues. Yet the ICF has continued its life for the last three years. We firmly believe that this was possible only due to Allah's Mercy and our readers' goodwill from all over the world. The very poor resources of Islamic Culture Society and the humble efforts of its members including I who is a 72 years old man lacking in money and sufficient knowledge of Islam except for sincere faith in Allah, could not have afforded publishing it had not we received Allah's mercy, our readers encouragement and the devotion of Brother Iskandar Chowdhury from the beginning of the publication. All these have given life to the magazine every time. But now again, the situation is such that there is no sure guarantee that a further issue will ever see the light. This is because the cost of publication, mailing charges and other costs have gone up so much so that the publication is feeling the real pain. Yet again we are leaving the matter to the mercy of Allah.

Japan is a strange country. It is materialistic to the brim in matters of economic activities so much so that it has earned the name of "Japan Inc," but in matters of culture, specially religion, it is extremely indifferent. Its intelligentsia feel it a virtue to reject religion in their daily life and behavior. Recently, the Prime Minister of Japan, during his ASEAN tour, expressed the view that there must be not only economic relations but also "heart-to-heart understanding" between the peoples of Japan and the Southeast Asian countries. This is a good thing, but can it be realized? When touring Malaysia, the Prime Minister visited the *Masjid Negara* (national Mosque) at Kuala Lumpur. This news was published in the English language press in Japan but not in the vernacular one. The black-out of this news by the Japanese vernacular press is an example of the Japanese people's rejecting their Prime Minister's visiting a holy precincts of a foreign religion in a foreign country.

A few years ago when I was President of Japan Muslim Association, I wrote letters to Rabetatul Alam Al-Islami, Mecca, describing the Association's financial plights and asking for its assistance. The Rabetata, as one of its supports, advised us to establish contact with the Japanese business firms who have heavy business relations with Saudi Arabia and to ask them to make some contributions to the Association. Accordingly, as President of the Association, I went to the companies and asked for their help. But most of the companies said that their relations with Saudi Arabia were purely economic, to earn profits and that there is no necessity or intention to make any contribution to a certain religion from that profit-money.

Since we started publishing Islamic Culture Forum, we have distributed its copies to many individuals, enterprises and organizations in Japan. Until now we have not received any positive response from any individual, organization or enterprise so far as financial help is concerned. For one thing, the very name 'Islam' is something which does not belong to Japan and the magazine is also in English which is not for any material gains for the Japanese. Therefore, they have no interest in such things.

Through this issue I want to make the following appeal to our brothers and sisters all over the world: If you happen to meet any Japanese in your country, please tell them: "If you care for our goodwill and friendship, you must show respect to our culture including our religion and also you must show sympathy to those who are working for Islam in Japan."

We have so far planned the publication of the ICF and distributed it free of cost for the purpose of letting the people of the world over to know that in order to spread Islam in Japan the Japanese Muslims must have close spiritual relations with the Muslims of the world at large and that there will be no useful purpose served only by being taught by and getting help from outside. Something useful must be done by themselves. But perhaps it is not possible for others to think and understand the situation here except for those who are in a similar position. Can one increase the number of Muslims from 100% to 101%? Can one understand that our ardent wish is simply to increase the number of Muslims from its below 0.1% to only 1% in Japan?

We pray to Allah to guide us in our endeavour. Amen!

Abu Bakr Morimoto

THE ISLAMIC WAY OF LIFE

M. Kaleel Raheeman

In the history of the world on numerous occasions, humanity has found itself on the brink of disaster due to spiritual stagnation and material dissipation, but Almighty God has in his infinite kindness always come to the rescue of mankind by directing one of his servants to proclaim the duties of man to himself and his Creator. Some of these messengers of heaven, who have come to us as teachers to reform and elevate us from the miasma of moral depravity have concentrated their efforts on a small sphere whilst others have come with a world-wide message, a message not confined to any race or nation but intended for all humanity. Such was Mohamed, the Prophet of Islam, who was born about 570 A.D.

The Prophet of Islam could not either read or write, nevertheless, Allah in His supreme wisdom had chosen him to spread his message. Mohamed was 40 years old when the divine call came to him in his retreat at Mount Hira, the cave to which he was in the habit of retiring for prayers and contemplation. The revelations which the Prophet received from time to time form the subject matter of the Holy Quran. Every syllable of the Holy Quran is of divine origin. These divine messages continued

throughout the 23 years of his prophetic life so that the last portion was not received till near the time of his death.

The whole of the religion of Islam is summed up in two short sentences La – ilaha ill – allah Muhammad – ur Rasulullah – There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah – and, therefore, the prerequisite for a person to be accepted into the fold of Islam is the acceptance of the above two component parts.

There is a misconception among many that the religion of the Muslims is known as Muhammadanism. This is a misnomer and the correct name is ISLAM. The root meaning of the word Islam is to enter into peace and a Muslim is one who makes his peace with God and man. Peace with God implies complete submission to His Will, and peace with man is not only to refrain from evil or injury to another but also to do good to him and both these ideas find expression in the Holy Quran itself as the true essence of the religion of Islam. “Yea, whoever submits himself entirely to Allah and is the doer of good to others, he has his reward from Allah on such shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve” (Q2 V 112). A Muslim not only believes in Prophet Muhammad but in

all other prophets who came before him.

The Holy Quran is the foundation of the religion of Islam. It expounds and explains all that is or may be needed by mankind for the complete fulfilment of life, that is, it makes provision for mankind's welfare — material, moral and spiritual. In this article, I propose to deal with some of the Islamic ways of life as given in the Holy Quran.

Prayer is most important in the life of a Muslim. The concept of prayer in Islam finds expression in many ways. The most important is the one known as "*Salat*" which is obligatory. It comprises five daily services at dawn, noon, afternoon, after sunset and at night. It is preferable to observe these prayers in congregation although most people for the sake of convenience perform it on their own.

It may be thought that five services daily are a little too much and may become burdensome. In fact it is not so. All five services taken together do not take more than about an hour and separately it takes about 10 to 15 minutes at the most. The frequency of the services has a special value, specially the first and the last prayers. You begin the day by seeking God's blessing and end it with a thanksgiving.

The prayers in between are mainly to remind man that in spite of his mundane pursuits he must pay homage to God. The Islamic concept of prayer is a direct pouring forth of the soul to the Creator and Islam does not recognize the notion of an intermediary between God and man. The acceptance of prayer is largely affected by the degree and the quality of each person's relationship to God which means the degree to which

the person responds to the guidance provided by God.

It is not enough for a Muslim merely to pray. He must also contribute according to his means to the support of the poor. *Zakat* is a fundamental principle of Islam. The basic concept underlying *Zakat* is that the absolute ownership of all things belongs to God alone and all ownership by the individual is subject to the moral obligation that all sections of society have a right to share in all wealth. The object of the Islamic economic system is to secure the widest and most beneficial distribution of wealth through institutions set up by it and through moral exhortation. In the wealth that is produced three parties are entitled to share, the workman whether skilled or unskilled, the person who supplies the capital, and the community as representing mankind. The community's share in produced wealth is called *Zakat*. After this has been set aside for the benefit of the community the rest may be divided between the remaining parties entitled to it. The *Zakat* is assessed on both capital and income. Its incidence varies with reference to different kinds of property but on the average it works out to two and a-half per centum of the capital value.

Next, Fasting is obligatory on every adult Muslim of good health. A person who is observing the fast is required throughout the month to abstain from food, drink and sexual intercourse between dawn and sunset. Fasting is observed during the lunar month of Ramadan. The revelation of the Holy Quran began in that month. The fast is not a penance, it is a physical, moral and spiritual discipline. The fast places every one,

rich and poor alike, on the same level. The rich and the poor both experience the pangs of hunger and thirst and to the rich specially hunger and thirst cease to be mere expressions and becomes an experience shared in common. The result of this is that the participant is in a better position to appreciate the sufferings of the poor. It is the duty of every Muslim during this period to intensify his communion with God by spending as much time as possible in prayer and being of service to each fellow being. **He who abstains from food and drink but does not strive to safeguard himself from moral lapses starves to no purpose.**

Every Muslim is also required to perform the *Hajj* in Mecca at least once in his lifetime. Like the month of fasting the time appointed for the pilgrimage — ten weeks after the festival of the breaking of the fast — is fixed according to the lunar calendar and rotates through the year. The pilgrimage thus falls in all seasons of the year. The pilgrimage draws Muslims together at Mecca from all parts of the World. The first house consecrated to the worship of God was at Mecca. Abraham and Ismail raised the foundation of the house, and Abraham was commanded to proclaim unto mankind the pilgrimage. The pilgrimage thus begun through Abraham became a well recognized religious institution. The object of the pilgrimage is that the participants shall derive social benefits by meeting his brothers and sisters from all parts of the world and join in the worship of God. The congregation at Mecca is only for the Muslims of the world over and is essentially for religious purposes but at times the general welfare of the Muslims of the World

are discussed after the religious obligations are completed. The main observances of the pilgrimage are as follows:

Firstly at a certain point, that is, after entering Arabia or even prior to that the pilgrim discards his usual clothing and puts on the *Ithram* which in the case of the male consists of two pieces of white unsewn cloth draped and fastened round the body in such a manner that the head, the hand, the right shoulder and the arms and the face and the ankles are left uncovered. The simplicity of the garb signifies the equality of all in the presence of God. No distinction is apparent in this seething mass of humanity. All draped in white, the king and the subject, the master and the servant, the white and the black, the yellow and the brown, are all one without any difference. The pilgrim, once he has entered the state of *Ithram*, is ready to perform the other ceremonies and the first step is to proceed to Mecca and go round the *Kaba* or Sacred House seven times reciting certain prayers. Thereafter, the services connected with the pilgrimage are held in a valley, a few miles outside Mecca, at Meena and Musthalipha and on the plains of Arfat. It is at Arfat where the Prophet delivered his farewell address that all pilgrims gather on the actual day of the pilgrimage which is the day prior to the day on which the *Hajj* festival is celebrated in other parts of the World. The pilgrimage is obligatory only upon those who can afford the journey which means that not only must he be in a position to defray the expenses of the journey but also be able to make provision during his absence for those dependant on him and for conduct of his worldly affairs.

These four – Prayers, Fasting, Zakat and the Hajj in Mecca – constitute the minimum requisites that an individual must observe if he is a true follower of the religion of Islam.

Islam is neither a mystical doctrine

nor a philosophy. It is simply a programme of life which God has decreed upon his creation and its supreme achievement is the complete coordination of the spiritual and material aspects of human life.

A lawyer by profession, M. Kaleel Raheeman, 44, is an Islamic worker of repute as well as a writer on Islamic subjects. He is President of "AL AM'L", a non-political social service organization in Sri Lanka. The organization has a Bereavement Fund, to look after the troubled dependents of Muslim bread-earners. The "AL AM'L" has its head office at the Islamic Secretariat, 27 Fareed Place, Colombo-4 and another office at 17 Mosque Road, Periyamulla, Negombo, Sri Lanka. The organization invites correspondences from all over the world. – Editor

BURMA

State seal



Burmese letter

တဖန်ရခိုင်ပြည်ကိုအင်္ဂလိပ်တို့ကမြှောက်ပေးပြန်ရာပုန်ကန်ထကြွမှုဖြစ်ပေါ်လာသဖြင့်မဟာဗန္ဓုလသွား၍နှိမ်နင်းရပြန်လေသည်။ သူပုန်တို့ရှုံးနိမ့်သည်ကိုမြင်ရသောအင်္ဂလိပ်အစိုးရမှာမိမိတို့၏အကြံပျက်လေသဖြင့်နောက်ဆုံး ဌအင်္ဂလိပ်အစိုးရကိုယ်တိုင်ဗမာနိုင်ငံကိုတိုက်ခိုက်ရန်ပြင်ဆင်လေသည်။

Map of Burma



ISLAM IN BURMA



Burma, the land of Beautiful Pagodas, has a population of thirty millions, out of which three millions are Muslims. Sule Pagoda situated in the centre of Rangoon, the capital of Burma, is flanked by a mosque and a church. Religious harmony prevails throughout the land. Throughout its history, religious toleration is noted as a characteristic feature of the Burmese people.

Early Contact of Burma with Islam

Burmese history proper begins with the 11th century. Incidentally, it was during this period that Burma first came into contact with Islam. Anawrahta (1044–77), the founder of the kingdom of Pagan, had around him able henchmen. One of them was Byatta (Bu Atwa) a Muslim. He and his brother Byatwi (Bu Atwi) were the two surviving Arab sailors whose trading vessel wrecked in the Gulf of Martaban. They reached the Burmese shore and served in the Mon kingdom of Thaton. After some time, the Mon king, Manuha, fell out with them and killed Byatwi. Byatta, the other brother, fled and took refuge with Anawrahta. He became a body-guard to the Burmese king. He had two sons, Shwepyingyi and Shwepyinngge, born of his native wife. These two sons became

legendary heroes. They were “put to a cruel death because they were remiss in bringing each a brick, as the others did for the construction of Taungbyon Pagoda at Mandalay. They are now famous spirits worshipped at the annual festival there, and the religion of their father is indicated by the fact that nobody connected with the shrine will touch pork.”

After a lapse of a period of two hundred years, we have another glimpse of Muslims in Burma. It was during the reign of Narathihapate (1254–87), the last important ruler of the Pagan dynasty, that the famous battle of Ngasaungyan (1277) between the Mongol army and the Burmese took place. The Mongol army was under the command of Na-Su-La-ting (Nasir-ud-din), son of the governor of Yunnan. The Burmese threw in some 40,000 men and the Mongols only 12,000. Yet it ended in a signal victory for the Mongols. The Burmese were brave and hardy but were irregular levies. The Mongols were the trained soldiers of a world conqueror. Of the 12,000 seasoned horsemen and archers sent by the governor of Kublai Khan, many were Turkish Muslims. The Mongols invaded Burma three times. There were heavy

losses on both sides, but Burma was no match against the devastating Tartars. At the third encounter, Burma had to submit a white elephant as a tribute to Emperor Kublai Khan, through the governor of Yunnan. Now, this governor Hu-Hsin (Husain) was the brother of Nasiruddin, the commander of the first invasion. However, no perceptible Muslim influence remained as a result of these encounters.

There were already some Muslims in Burma serving the Burmese monarchs as body-guards and as mercenaries during the Pagan dynasty. But it is doubtful whether Muslims existed as a community in this period. The Burmese chronicles are replete with legendary accounts of ship-wrecked sailors, traders and soldiers. At this time, Arab and Persian maritime trade was at its height. Europeans had not arrived in this part of the world. Muslim shipping activity continued until the end of the 15th century. Arab and Persian vessels touched in on Burmese ports to pick up provisions and water or for necessary repairs. Sometimes, they were forced to stay as long as six months for the monsoon to end. Sailing ships those days depended upon favourable winds. During this sojourn some took native wives. But when continuing on the journey, they were not allowed to take their Burmese wives and children along with them. Some Muslim traders chose to settle down to make Burma their second home. Some ship-wrecked survivors had to seek refuge on the shore and remained to settle. Since intermarriages were a common feature then, we may assume that the descendants of these various intermarriages formed the nucleus of the Burmese Muslims. Their

number swelled later with the arrival of immigrants from abroad.

In the Chinese travellers' accounts, there is mention of Persian colonies on the borders of Burma and Yunnan as early as 860 A.D. The Persian traveller Ibn Khordahbeh, and the Arab, Suleiman, both of the ninth century, paint a glowing picture of the Burmese kings. One mentions that the king had fifteen thousand elephants, the other gives an ampler description and gives the figure of fifty thousand.

It is of interest to note that Syriam, a thriving seaport near Rangoon of those days gets its name from the Muslim sailors. To the Arab and Persian sailors it was Sir-i-am or head of the river. However, Burmese historian, Colonel Ba Shin, himself a Muslim, has some doubts about the contact of Islam with Buddhist Burma through the sea route. He contends that in the 10th century the Arabs and the Persians knew little about the regions north of Sumatra, except for the Andaman Islands. But considering the reports of early Muslim writers and accounts of later European travellers describing the Muslim trade colonies in Burma, we may infer that Colonel Ba Shin's thesis is not, after all, well-founded. And taking into account the curious Buddermokans along the sea coasts of Burma, stretching from Akyab to Mergui, we may assume that Islam had contact with Burma via the sea. Buddermokan or Badar-makam (the house of Badar) according to Sir Richard Temple, are the shrines of Pir Badar of Chittagong. Properly known as Badruddin Aulia, he was revered throughout the coast from Assam to Malaya as the Saint of the Flood.

From the 9th to the 16th century, Muslims dominated the seas. After this period Muslim maritime trade dwindled with the appearance of European sailors in the area. The long contact with Arabs and Persians left some traces in the Burmese language as shown below:

Arabic Loan Words

English	Burmese	Arabic
Tar	Kattara	Qatiran
velvet	Kattipa	Qatifah
pen	Kalon	qalam
Distilled spirit	arak	araq
Flag	alam	alam
Broker	dalam	dallal
Monsoon	Mustsun	Mausum

Penetration of Islam by the Land Route

The land of Arakan lies on the eastern coast of the Bay of Bengal. Arakan has direct overland access to the Indian Sub-continent. From Chittagong in Eastern Bengal Islam penetrated into Arakan.

Colonel Ba Shin, when describing the advent of Islam to Arakan says, "We are on firmer grounds when we talk about the penetration of Islam by the land route via Bengal and Arakan. These Muslim contacts are the most important in the long run. In fact, Arakan had been the bridgehead for Islam from where it radiated gradually and peacefully to all parts of Burma."

The dialect of the people of Arakan is different from that of the Burmese. They had their own independent kingdom. The advent of Islam to the banks of Brahmaputra during the reign of Muhammad Ghaur in 1202 A.D. and the establishment of an independent Sultanate of Ghaur in Bengal in 1345

did not have any direct effect on the neighbouring Kingdom of Arakan. The tidal waves of Islam stopped on the borders of Burma. Till the fall of Pagan dynasty in 1287, the people of Arakan were more or less left to themselves. But in 1364, a new and formidable kingdom of Ava was founded. As a result of this growing new power, the Kingdom of Arakan was forced by circumstances to turn westward, toward Bengal.

As expected the kingdom of Ava launched an attack on Arakan and drove King Naramekhla into exile in Bengal. He took asylum at the Court of the Sultan of Ghaur. This attack of Ava on Arakan paved the way for Muslim domination in Arakan for a century (1430-1531).

With the assistance of the Sultan, Naramekhla regained his throne and founded the new capital of Myauk-U. His Muslim followers and soldiers settled down near it. They built the Sandi Khan Mosque which to this day survives at the village of Kawalaung.

For a century the Buddhist kingdom of Arakan remained feudatory to Bengal and it became customary for the Sultans of Bengal to confer Muslim titles on the kings of Arakan.

The practice of assuming Muslim titles remained even after they broke away from the suzerainty of the Sultans of Bengal. This may be attributed to the desire of the Arakanese kings to style themselves as Sultans. They modelled their court on that of Ghaur and Delhi. By this time there was a sizeable Muslim community in Arakan. As a result of this impact of the Muslim civilization, Arakanese culture progressed. The ad-

The 9 Arakanese kings who had such titles were: —

1. Min Khari
1434—59 Ali Khan
 2. Basawpyu
1459—82 Kalima Shah
 3. Dawlya
1482—92 Muhammad Shah
 4. Basawnyo
1492—94 Muhammad Shah
 5. Yanaung
1494 Nuri Shah
 6. Salingathu
1494—1501 Shaik Abullah Shah
 7. Minyaza
1501—23 Ilias Shah
 8. Minsaw-O
1525 Jalal Shah
 9. Thatasa
1525—31 Ali Shah
-

ministrative arm of the court became efficient and its military strength increased. Minbin who assumed the Muslim title, Zabauk Shah, took good advantage of the unsettled state of Bengal, invaded and occupied Chittagong and other parts of Eastern Bengal. Until 1666 this part of the Mughal Empire was in Arakanese hands.

The increasing contacts of Arakan with Bengal, friendly or otherwise, brought in many Muslims who came either as captives and slaves or as mercenaries to serve the king. From Arakan Islam spread to other parts of Burma.

The most important event in Muslim contact with Burma was the flight of Shah Shuja, the brother of the Mughal Emperor, Aurangzeb, to Arakan in 1660. Defeated by Aurangzeb, Shah Shuja fled

with his family and a retinue of five hundred followers and sought refuge in Arakan. Sandathudamma, cordially welcomed him and promised to convey him to Mecca as requested. But, soon this friendship was marred by greed. The king had a capricious eye on Shah Shuja's beautiful daughter and the enormous wealth he brought. In desperation Shah Shuja tried to overthrow the king with the help of the resident Muslims. He was assured of the help of some of Sandathudamma's own troops. But the news of the plot leaked out and the plan was nipped in the bud. Before he had time to organize for resistance, the Arakanese pounced on the Muslims and slaughtered them. Shah Shuja's fate was shrouded in mystery; we do not exactly know what happened to him. However, there were attempts to rescue the princess and his other relatives. But all these attempts were unsuccessful. Of the Shah Shuja's followers, the few who were spared became archers and body-guards of the king. They were later known as Kamans, or 'Kamanchis', meaning bow and archer, respectively, in Persian.

In 1666, the Mughal army sent by Aurangzeb cleared the Arakanese strongholds in Chittagong and Ramu. After this period, the Arakan kingdom declined. With the death of Sandathudamma in 1684, Arakan was engulfed in internal disorders and strifes. The Kamans now became king makers. They set up puppet kings and dominated the Arakanese scene from 1681 to 1710.

Muslims under Later Burmese Kings

In Burma proper, with the aftermath of Tartar invasion and internal disorder, the Burmese once again regained their

glory under the Toungoo dynasty, during the reign of Tabinshwehti (1531–50) and Bayinnaung (1551–81). In the reign of Bayinnaung, we have another glimpse of Muslims. The king, in departing from the traditional policy of toleration to adherents of other faiths, forcibly put a stop to the sacrificial slaughter of animals during the “Idd-ul-Adha” by Muslims.

By then the Muslims emerged as a sizeable minority community. And the descendants of those Muslim settlers who were employed by the Burmese kings in various military services, and who were thoroughly domiciled as naturalized citizens and assimilated with the majority race, are today known as Burmese Muslims. In a manuscript discovered in the Royal Library of Amarapura in 1801, a list of 37 settlements is mentioned. Of these, 12 are shown to be those of Muslims. It is interesting to note how the 3,000 Muslims who migrated from Arakan had been employed in the military service of King Sane.

In the latter part of the 18th century through the 19th century, Muslims took active part in the literary life of the nation. U Nu who served king Bodawphaya produced many literary works, both in verse and prose. His “Book of 35 chapters” is a standard book on the teachings of Islam in the Burmese language. Another literary figure was Haji Hman. As a poet he stood on par with other poet laureates of the period.

Muslims during the British Period

With the last Anglo-Burmese war of 1885, Burma became a British colony. This changed the social and economic

structure of the country. Immigrants poured in, and among them were many Muslims especially from neighbouring Indian sub-continent. Thus Muslim population swelled.

In the census of 1881, Muslim population was shown at 168,881. In the next census taken in 1891, the report mentions of the ‘Mohamedan Burmese’ and says that they are found amongst the Arakanese and the *Zerbadis*, who are descendants of Muslim fathers and Burmese mothers, who dress and speak like other Burmese and highly offended if not considered to be Burmese. Here, we encounter the term ‘*Zerbadi*’ for the first time, as applied to Burmese Muslims. The census figure of 1901 enumerates the Muslim population at 339,446.

During the British regime, the indigenous Burmese Muslims were treated as a distinct race and the census authorities referred to them as *Zerbadis*. However, the Burmese Muslims resented this nomenclature. They would prefer the term Burma Muslims. The word *Zerbadi* is of Persian origin and means ‘below the wind’ i.e. leeward. When and why this term came to be applied to Burmese Muslims is not clearly known.

Burma Muslim Society was founded in 1910 to represent the interests of the Burmese Muslims as a minority community. U Ba Oh, a well-known philanthropist, became its life president in 1936. It disappeared with the Japanese occupation and was never officially revived after the war. In 1912, Mr. M. Fakhruddin, the first Secretary of the Society, started a weekly called “Burma Muslim News” in Burmese language for the propagation of Islam.

The Post-War Period

Burmese Muslims took active part in the struggle for independence of Burma. Many took part in the resistance movement and sacrificed their lives for the country. Burma Muslim Congress, thus emerged as a religio-political organization representing the broad spectrum of Burmese Muslim population. U Rajak, its President, became a minister in the first post-War interim cabinet, and together with General Aung San, the Father of Burmese Independence, he is loved and remembered as a martyr. A few years after independence, Burma Muslim Congress was dissolved because its constitution was no more compatible with the political creed of its ally A.F.P.F.L, the then ruling political party.

In independent Burma, Muslims sought full expression in their religious and cultural life by reviving old organizations and institutions and establishing new ones. Among the prominent ones, we may mention the following: Muslim Free Dispensary and Medical Relief Society, Muslim Central Trust Fund, Jamiatul-Ulama, Islamic Religious Affairs Council, Burma Muslim Organization, Kuran Translation Bureau, Rangoon University Muslim Student's Association, Muslim Students Society of Rangoon and Maymyo University Muslim Old Students Association, All Burma Muslim Students' and Youth Association, etc.

Muslim Free Dispensary and Medical Relief Society was founded in 1937 and true to its slogan "for the poor of all communities" it has to its credit a long record of service.

Muslim Central Trust Fund was established in 1952. Its activities are divided into three sections: (1) for scholarships

(2) for higher Islamic studies and (3) for Mosques and Madrasas. From among the needy Muslims, the trustees select the deserving cases and extend financial help. The Fund also finances the Translation Bureau for its work on translation of the Holy Quran into Burmese.

Kuran Translation Bureau has translated the Holy Quran into Burmese and publishes it in parts. So far, only eight volumes have been printed. The remaining 22 parts still await publication. Each volume contains not only verse translation and commentary, but also every Arabic word is given its Burmese equivalent. Due to financial and other difficulties, the whole translation of the Holy Quran with exhaustive commentary has not yet reached the Burmese Muslim masses.

The first Burmese translation of the Holy Quran by Saya U Kaloo (Maulvi Noor-ud-Din of Mandalay) was done in 1930 with the financial aid from the Muslim philanthropist, the late U Ba Oh K.I.H. There was also a second edition. In 1941, he published the Arabic Dictionary. It was the Burmese rendering of late Hafiz Ghulam Sarwar's Quranic Dictionary (LOGAT-UL QURAN).

The Rangoon University Muslim Students' Association was founded in 1932. It keeps apart from other organizations and holds social and religious activities, like going on excursions and picnics, arranging religious lectures, publishing annual magazines.

There are today many Muslim organizations; some of them often at loggerheads with one another. But the redeeming feature is the steady gain made by the *Tabligh* movement. Religious revival in the name of *Tabligh* is

reaching all the corners of Burma, changing the individual lives of many Muslims. There are 105 mosques in Rangoon alone, and over 2,000 in the whole of Burma. The *Tabligh Jamaat* is actively engaged in striving to make these mosques alive with religious activities. This movement, initiated by Moulana Hyas of India, has gained world-wide acceptance and has become very popular in Burma.

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► ACKNOWLEDGEMENT ◀

(Continued from No. 6 issue)

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Muslim Propagation Centre,
(HK Muslim News),
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Islamic Trust,
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San Juan, TRINIDAD

The Islamic Echo,
31 Draycott Place, London S.W.3,
UNITED KINGDOM

U.K. Islamic Mission,
148 Liverpool Road, London N1 1LA,
UNITED KINGDOM

The Muslims of the Soviet East,
103 Hamza Street, Tashkent 700055,
U.S.S.R.

BOOK REVIEW

3 USEFUL BOOKS

- (1) **TOWARDS UNDERSTANDING THE QUR'AN** by Sayyid Abul 'Ala Maudoodi, published by Islamic Research Academy, C-163/10 Mansoor, Karachi-3905, Pakistan. 39 pages. Price Rs.2.00.

This booklet seems to be a hasty collection of the pages of THE CRITERION, the journal of Islamic Research Academy, containing an article in two installments by Sayyid Abu 'Ala Maudoodi.

The shortcomings of book-production aside, the contents of the pages are treasures for the readers. One of the great Islamic scholars, thinkers and leaders of the time, Maulana Maudoodi's work needs no introduction or emphasis. The present article is the translation of the introduction of his masterpiece, TAFHIM-UL-QUR'AN, in Urdu. The reader would immensely benefit from this article in the same way as from his another masterpiece, TOWARDS UNDERSTANDING ISLAM. Every English speaker who wants to understand the meaning of the Holy Quran must have a copy of TOWARDS UNDERSTANDING THE QUR'AN.

- (2) **ISLAM: FAITH AND PRACTICE** by Manazir Ahsan, published by The Islamic Foundation, 223 London Road, Lechester, LE2 1ZE, United Kingdom, 1977. 48 pages. Price not mentioned.

Sometimes back a short review of The Islamic Foundation's THE CHILDREN'S BOOK OF ISLAM PART I was published in this page and it was hoped that subsequent parts of the book will come out. Though not the same book, ISLAM: FAITH AND PRACTICE also gives a brief but clear conception of the basic tenets of Islam in beautiful language and style. The chapters include Islam: its meaning; the articles of faith: oneness of God, prophethood and life after death; Islamic way of life; festivals and festivities in Islam; marriage and family; ethics and etiquettes; dress, dietary rules; death and burial; Islam and the present world; and an appendix giving Muslim population of the world and a map of the world showing Muslim

population.

The English-speaking new and non-Muslims as well as children and adult alike, will immensely profit from the book to have a general idea about Islam. With graceful printing and cover, the book has the added attraction of a 70cm x 35cm map of the Muslim population of the world.

- (3) **THE NOTION OF EVOLUTION THROUGH AGES** by Shaikh Sharafuddin, published by Bangladesh Books International Ltd., Ittefaq Building, 1 RK Mission Road, Dacca-3, Bangladesh. First Edition 1977. 128 pages. Price (paper-binding) Taka 20.00 and (cloth-binding) £1.00.

The book is a brief historical survey of the origin and development of the notion of biological evolution from the earliest time to the present age and is the improved and enlarged form of a paper read at the Asiatic Society, as the author says. Divided in 10 chapters and two indices, one general and the other bibliographical, Professor Sharafuddin deals in Chapter I: the phases of culture, interrelationships among religion, philosophy and science and notion of evolution in different cultures; Chapter II: origin of the notion of evolution in primitive cultures; Chapter III: notion of evolution in Hindu culture through rebirth and re-incarnation; Chapter IV: notion of evolution in Sankhya School of Kapila in ancient India; Chapter V: notion of evolution in Zoroastrianism in ancient Persia; Chapter VI: notion of evolution in ancient China; Chapter VII: notion of evolution in ancient Greece; Chapter VIII: notion of evolution in Islam; Chapter IX: modern scientific conception of evolution; and Chapter X: modern philosophical conception of evolution.

The notion of evolution in various cultures in different ages as well as in the same age is a very wide subject to be dealt with in a small book. One must possess a thorough knowledge of the subject and also the techniques to describe it in brevity and precision, at the same time, academically accepted. Prof. Sharafuddin has fulfilled these conditions in a sophisticated style and lucid English. A chart of Arabic and allied alphabets as well as of his native tongue Bengali is of added interest. The book will be a good addition to the collection in the libraries. Good printing and binding.

Iskandar Chowdhury

TIMURID PERIOD TILES IN TURKESTAN, AFGHANISTAN AND IRAN FROM THE SECOND HALF OF 14th TO THE BEGINNING OF 16th CENTURY

by Gönül Öney

[Dr. (Mrs) Gönül Öney, Professor at Ankara University, Turkey, is an internationally recognized art historian specializing in Turkish and Islamic Architecture. The present article is an abridged adoption from her CERAMIC TILES IN ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE published in "THE WORLD OF TILES" by Shino Toseki Co., Ltd., Kyoto, Japan. By courtesy of Mr. Masahiko Shibatsuji, President of Shino Toseki Co., Ltd. — Editor]

Following the death of the Il-Khanid ruler Abu Said Bakhadn in 1335, rulers from the Inju and Muzaffarid families assume power until the Timurid invasion in 1335. The Il-Khanid ceramic tradition is perpetuated during the reign of these rulers and no innovation of importance is noted. The great Mongolian Empire founded by Timur in 1370 had within a relatively short time, engulfed Turkestan, Afghanistan, Persia and Mesopotamia. Thus, Khorasan, Isfahan and Shiraz fell under Timurid rule. Timur, who was born in the town of Kish south of Samarkand, continued expanding the borders of his empire to the north of Caspian Sea and to Indus River in the south. He subsequently moved to Asia Minor where he defeated the Ottoman Sultan Bayezid the Lightning in a battle near Ankara (1402). During his rule between 1370 and 1404, Timur did not neglect the arts despite the fact that his reign was full of wars. He was keen on bringing artisans from conquered areas to his capital Samarkand. As a consequence, Samarkand was soon filled with

thousands of artists and craftsmen of all sorts from Persia, Syria and Asia Minor including tile makers. Mongols are well known as warring people. They were, at the same time, patrons of art. Thus, Samarkand began blossoming as a unique center where arts of different conquered regions came to be reflected in a glittering way.

Timur died in 1404 at the age of 71. He was on his way to conquer China, a country in which Mongolians were deeply interested, as also reflected in their art. Timur's magnificent tomb Gur-i Amir, richly ornamented by tiles, is in Samarkand. At the western border of the Timurid Empire, the rival Turcoman dynasties of Karakoyunlu and Akkoyunlu (The Black Sheep and White Sheep in English) continued the tile decoration in architecture in parallel fashion to Timurid examples as we observe in the Blue Mosque in Tabriz. Ahmet Jalairid, who ruled in northwest Persia and Mesopotamia between 1382 and 1310, can also be mentioned in the same context.

During the reign of Timur's son Shahruh, who ascended the throne after Timur, the capital was moved from Samarkand to Herat. The rule of Shahruh and his son Ulug Bey, whom he appointed Governor to Samarkand, brought to Khorasan and Turkestan numerous monumental and impressive works, richly decorated with tiling. Samarkand, Bukhara, Herat, Mashhad, Balkh, Tabriz and, in southern Iran. Yazd emerge as centers where these monumental works are mainly concentrated. This rise in power, glory and artistic flourish continue during the second half of the 15th century. However, following the death of Hussein Bayqara, the Timurid dynasty is evicted from Samarkand by the Shaybanis. The Timurid Empire, one of the most spectacular examples of meteoric rise to power in history, comes to an abrupt end. The Safavid dynasty establishes a new state in Persia (1502).

The Timurid Period Architecture, which is dispersed over a large area from Persia to Turkestan, reflects a continuation of the Il-Khanid tradition in a more developed, richer and more monumental manner. As the main decorative element, tiling shows a high degree of development which is reflected by coverage of larger surfaces, application of the so-called "cuerda seca" technique alongside faience mosaic and the use of more crowded and complex plant motifs. Stuccos, terra cotta and brick mosaic surfaces, which blend with tiling in Iranian Seljuk and Il-Khanid Period works, are largely replaced by tiling.

Ceramic tiling is mainly encountered in religious works such as mosques, masjids, medreses and mausoleums. Information on secular art during the

Timurid Period hardly exists.

While ceramic tiling makes a great leap forward in Timurid architecture, the pottery from the 15th–16th centuries is quite poor compared to earlier periods. The Sultanabad, luster from Kashan and the Chinese-influenced blue and white potteries are no longer produced.

In Timurid Period works, the decoration of outer and inner surfaces of domes, minarets, portals and iwans reach an unprecedented degree of richness. In addition to turquoise colour, cobalt blue, white and limited amount of black is used in Il-Khanid Period works; also limited use of yellow is observed and the brick red of the putty or the slip sometimes appears. The ceramic surfaces covered with glazed bricks, tiles, faience mosaic and cuerda seca tiles draw attention with contrasts between geometrical patterns and plant motifs.

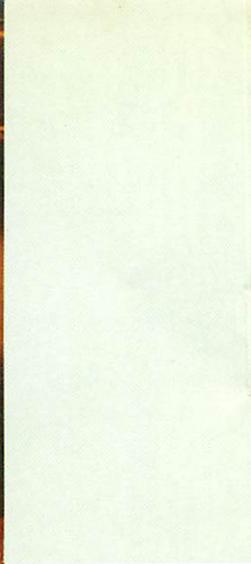
During the Timurid Period the outer surfaces of the onion-shaped domes, which are sometimes grooved, are in most cases covered with glazed turquoise bricks forming large patterns. The high drums are decorated with geometrical patterns, kufic inscriptions, complex plant motifs and writings in sülüs.

The Timurid Period minarets too are fully covered with tiling, presenting an even richer outlook compared to Il-Khanid Period examples. The number of minarets also increases. It becomes common to have 4 to 8 minarets in a single work. The brick tile decoration of the minarets consists of diagonals, zigzags, grooves, geometrical compositions filled with complex plant motifs, lozenges, forms developed out of kufic inscriptions, bordures with sülüs inscriptions.

Dome of Gur-i-Amir Mausoleum (Tomb of Timur), Samarkand.
Photo by Abu Bakr Morimoto







Rostrum of the Plenary Session of the Conference. ↑

Rostrum of the Muslim Workshop in the Conference. Mufti Babakhanov sitting in the centre. →

Hotel Ukraina where all delegates stayed. ↘

At the entrance of the Conference Hall, Kremlin is in the background. ↘



A WORLD PEACE CONFERENCE FOR RELIGIOUS WORKERS AND MUSLIMS IN U.S.S.R.



Abu Bakr Morimoto

In the beginning of this year, I received a letter from the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference: Religious Workers for Lasting Peace, Disarmament and Just Relations among Nations inviting me to participate in the Conference to be held on 6–10 June, 1977 in Moscow. At first, it was somewhat surprising to me to receive such an invitation from not too familiar a source. But later in February, a fraternal letter from His Eminence Mufti Ziyautdin Khan bin Ishan Babakhanov, Chairman of the Muslim Religious Board for Central Asia and Kazakhstan, made the point clear. For the last several years, I have had the honour of knowing Mufti Babakhanov through mutual correspondences and also through exchanges of “Islamic Culture Forum” and their “Muslims of the Soviet East” magazines.

Yet I was hesitant at the beginning whether I should accept this invitation or not. For one thing, my knowledge about the actual religious situation, particularly concerning Islam, in the Soviet Union had been extremely poor. On the other hand, so much we heard so many times for so long from so many sources that in a society under the Communistic system active existence of religions, specially Islam, was very much

doubtful and dubious. Therefore, when I learnt that a conference of religious workers was going to take place in Moscow, I was rather skeptical about such a possibility.

But soon I recollected that a very large part of the Soviet Union, a part nearly the size of the whole of the Middle East, is a Muslim land inhabited by tens of millions of Muslim brothers and sisters with a glorious tradition since the early history of Islam and have made rich contributions to the Islamic culture. Also flashed in my mind was an extensive study about the Muslims of Central Asia by the Japanese scholars during the intervening period between the two World Wars. The invitation to attend a conference in Moscow rekindled my interest in the Japanese reference materials published during that period about the Muslims of the Soviet Union, living in the very vast land from the Volga to the Pamir, from the Caspian to the Tien Shans where our Turkoman, Uzbek, Tajik, Kirgiz, Kazak and other Turkotatar brothers have lived through ages and flourished. When I see the deep green map of the Muslim world on the back of the “Rabetatul Alam Al-Islami magazine” published by the Muslim World League, Mecca, the vast stretch of deep green extending to deep inside

of the Soviet boundary makes me think that the tens of millions of Muslims there constitute a significant part of that country even though the country has a different system of State and society and that that system cannot ignore those Muslims who also form a part of the Muslim world nor can the Muslim world or Muslims in general ignore them.

Moreover, the interest of the Japanese Muslims for the Muslims of the Soviet Union must also grow due to the fact that the advent of Muslim life in Japan also finds its origin in the Turko-Tatar Muslims who took refuge in Japan in the wake of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia (See ICF No. 5: The Tokyo Mosque). This fact also greatly interested me in the Conference because the occasion would give me an opportunity to look for myself the life of the Kins of the Turko-Tatar Muslims living in Japan. All these convinced me to gladly accept the invitation and participate in the Conference.

Japan adopted a new constitution after its defeat in World War II 32 years ago. The Constitution of Japan which is known as Peace Constitution renounces war and the State policies have been those of peace and freedom. Therefore, the people of Japan are free in their thoughts including those of religion. The State now has diplomatic relations with all the countries of the world except North Korea. Furthermore, being the only nation experiencing the holocaust of atomic bombs, Japan and its people must think most seriously about world peace. Hence, wherever there is talk of peace we readily welcome it and try to contribute as much as possible both as Japanese as well as Muslim.

After my acceptance of the invitation, the Preparatory Committee sent to me information materials regarding the Conference. By going through the materials I found that it is clearly stated that there is no politics of doctrinaire propaganda and that a great number of the participants were eminent Muslim religious leaders from all over the world. And it was a great occasion for a get together of so many Muslims. Accordingly, I flew to Moscow by the Aeroflot on 4 June, 1977 and reached the same evening after a 10-hour non-stop flight.

Outline of the Conference

Named as "The World Conference: Religious Workers for Lasting Peace, Disarmament and Just Relations among Nations," the Conference was convened by its Preparatory Committee headed by Metropolitan Juvenally of Tula and Belev, Russian Orthodox Church. The Honorary Patrons were: His Eminence Mufti Ziyautdin Khan ibn Ishan Babakhanov, Chairman of the Muslim religious Board for Central Asia and Kazakhstan and other religious eminences.

The purpose of the Conference were, as stated in the title, for Lasting Peace, Disarmament and Just Relations among Nations, and accordingly the Conference was divided into three working groups.

The programme was as follows:

Monday 6 June: Opening First Plenary Session, Opening Address by His Holiness Patriarch Pimen of Moscow and all Russia, Report on Religious Workers for Lasting Peace, Disarmament and Just Relations among Nations by His Eminence Mufti Babakhanov (see P.24). Second Plenary Session, Co-Report on Lasting

Peace, Co-Report on Disarmament. Co-Report on Just Relations among Nations.

Tuesday 7 June: First Session of Working Groups, Second Session of Working Groups.

Wednesday 8 June: Third Session of Working Groups, Fourth Session of Working Groups.

Thursday 9 June: Fifth Session of Working Groups, Sixth Session of Working Groups, Third Plenary Session, Report of the Credentials Commission, Reports on the Works of Working Groups, Reports of the Workshops according to Religions, Discussion on the Drafts of Final Documents.

Friday 10 June: Fourth Plenary Session, Adoption of the Final Documents, Closing of the Conference.

The religions participating in the Conference were: Islam (126 delegates), Christianity (about 400 delegates from

Orthodox Church, Catholic Church, Protestant Church and Free Church together), Buddhism, Hinduism, Sikh, Judaism and Shintoism. Total number of participants were 663 from 107 countries.

The numbers of Muslim delegates from various countries were: Afghanistan (1), Bangladesh (6), Bulgaria (3), Chad (2), Cyprus (1), Egypt (2), Ethiopia (2), Gambia (2), Britain (1), Guyana (2), India (7), Iran (4), Iraq (2), Italy (1), Japan (1), Jordan (6), Lebanon (2), Libya (2), Mali (2), Mauritania (5), Mauritius (2), Morocco (4), Pakistan (2), Philippines (1), Roumania (1), Senegal (5), Sierra Leone (1), Singapore (1), Somalia (5), South Yemen (5), Sri Lanka (2), Tanzania (1), Togo (3), Tunisia (2), United Arab Emirates (1), Upper Volta (1), U.S.A. (1), U.S.S.R. (28), Yemen Arab Republic (1) and Yugoslavia (1). All together 126 delegates from 40 countries.

Number and Percentage of Muslim Population in U.S.S.R. (from two sources)

Name of Areas		'The Journal of Rabetat Al-Alam Al-Islami, 1397H		'The Muslim Standard' No. 21, 1977 Trinidad	
(Europe)	Tartar	2,275,000	65%	2,075,000	65%
	Bashkir	240,000	60	240,000	60
	Chuvash	900,000	60	900,000	60
	Mari	412,500	55	412,500	55
	Crimea	2,676,000	53	2,676,000	53
	Moldavia	650,000	52	650,000	52
	Udmurat	1,100,000	55	1,100,000	55
	Ukraina			5,657,000	12
		8,253,500	57.12	13,710,500	51.50
(Asia)	Azerbaijan (Kaukas)	6,200,000	62%	7,023,000	78%
	Kazakhstan	6,120,000	68	8,738,000	68
	Kirghizia	3,185,000	91	2,699,000	92
	Tajikistan	2,730,000	91	2,842,000	98
	Turkmenia	1,800,000	90	1,943,000	90
	Uzbekistan	7,480,000	88	36,669,000	88
	Siberia	2,500,000	25		
		30,015,000	65.25	59,914,000	85.67
Total		38,268,500	63.30	73,624,500	66.14

A SHORT SPEECH BY ABU BAKR MORIMOTO, PRESIDENT OF ISLAMIC CULTURE SOCIETY, Japan.

Assalam alaikum, Brothers and Sisters,

I take this opportunity to express my hearty thanks to the organizers of this World Conference of Religious Workers for Lasting Peace, Disarmament, and Just Relations among Nations for organizing this forum at this right time when the urge of the people of the world for peace and happiness is at the highest peak.

When I was given the choice, I chose Lasting Peace as the subject of my deliberation here. Why? The answer is that man in his inherent nature always seek peace both materially and spiritually. The essence of the whole nature is peace. When man has peace within him and without, he is sublime. All other qualities of man is most expressive when he is in peace.

In this forum, I greeted you by saying ASSALAMU ALAIKUM. 'Salam,' an Arabic word means 'Peace.' On this occasion, what else could be more appropriate to greet brothers engaged in the work for peace than the word 'Peace' itself? I find it really heartening that Muslims chose this very word to greet fellow men. Also, a meaning of the word 'Islam' is 'Peace.' I really feel proud to belong to this culture and heritage and to have been able to greet you here with the word 'Peace.'

I have another reason to chose the theme of Lasting Peace. As you are well aware, Japan is the only nation and the Japanese are the only people that experienced the devastations of the most lethal weapon of the age. This experience led the Japanese people to vow to continuously strive for peace both nationally and internationally. Therefore, when-

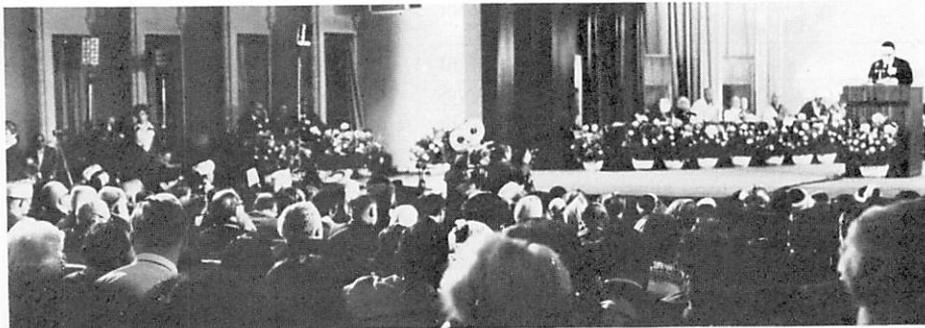
ever there is any talk, parley or conference on peace, the Japanese are most happy. As a Muslim as well as a Japanese, I take the double pride to attend this forum and profess peace for mankind.

Is there scope of peace for all mankind — all the down-trodden masses of the world? It is good to discuss Peace. But mere discussion in parleys cannot bring peace, the most sought after thing by man, unless there is the environment for peace. In a world where there is too much of inequality, discrimination, and exploitation, how can we expect peace? We do not want peace for the exploitation of the starving masses of the world, nor do we want peace of the graveyard. We want a world where all people can feel free from all kinds of fear and wants and poverty. That is the world what we want. I am glad that this forum has been organized in a country which professes equality among all men. If we can first establish equality, specially in economic sense, it is my belief that we shall be able to make a great leap forward towards what we are discussing today, the Lasting Peace.

Before winding up, on behalf of the Japanese people in general, and the Japanese Muslims and Islamic Culture Society, Japan, in particular, once again I thank the organizers for this noble endeavour and I hope follow-up programs will continue not only in this part of the world but also other parts with the most ardent desire for Lasting Peace.

Brothers and Sisters, thank you very much for giving me your patient hearing. Wassalamu alaikum.

June 8, 1977



Tour of Muslim Areas in the USSR

After the end of the Conference, 40 delegates from the foreign Muslim delegations were invited by the Muslim Religious Board for Central Asia and Kazakhstan to visit some centres of Muslim culture in Central Asia. The delegates were divided into three groups for visiting three different areas. The group to which I belonged consisted of 16 delegates from foreign countries and four Conference Secretariat officials and interpreter. We visited Kazan, Ufa, Tashkent and Samarkand.

First we went to Kazan, the centre of Tatar civilization and culture. On 13 June in the morning, we flew from Moscow into Kazan in an hour. At the airport we were received by the Bishop of the Russian Orthodox Church in Kazan and other local groups. Putting into Tatarstan Hotel, we set out for a round in the city which has many edifices of the past glory.

On 14 June, we visited a very large animal farm of fur production. At noon, we offered our *Zuhr* prayer at the Kazan Mosque together with a large number of local Muslims. After prayer, we participated in *Janaza* of five Muslims. (See colour photo)

On 15 June, we set out for a cruise in the historic Volga River and had a nice view of the landscape which stretched to the horizon and which gave an idea of the vastness of the land. At noon, we again offered our prayer at the Kazan Mosque and again we participated in the *Janaza* of another three Muslims. To my scared inquiry I was told that these *Janaza* are not extraordinary for the number of old Muslims

and reduced mosques in this area. In the afternoon, we attended a welcome reception arranged by the Russian Orthodox Church of Kazan for us.



Kazan Mosque

On 16 June, we were invited to visit the Local Government Office of the Autonomous Republic and attended a reception given by President Batien Salikh of the Republic. In the afternoon, we went to Ufa, the capital of Bashkir and after a tour of the city in the following morning, we visited the local mosque at noon and attended a luncheon given us by the local Muslim brothers.



On 18 June, we flew into Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan and the biggest city in Central Asia. After checking in at Hotel Uzbekistan in the morning, we went to visit the Islamic Library which has a vast collection of Islamic literature of the past. At noon, we offered our *Zuhr* prayer at the nearby mosque together with a large number of local Muslims and then attended a luncheon. In the same afternoon, we also visited the Uzbekistan Exhibition of Economic Achievements.

On 19 June morning, we went to see a cotton collective farm not very far from the city. We offered the *Zuhr* prayers with the Muslim farmers and then joined a party with them. There, to my inquiry about Islamic education of the younger generation, the *Imam* said that there is no school system for Islamic education nor is Islam taught at the public education system, but whoever wants instruction regarding Islam,

he or she can come to the *Imam* and learn. Also, the parents themselves also impart Islamic education to their children. In reply to my question whether the Holy Quran and other religious books can be freely published, I was told that it is not possible. Also about circumcision of the Muslim male children I was told that it is strictly practiced as a symbol of Muslim.

On 20 June, we visited the Uzbekistan Art Museum which is full of old Muslim arts. After that we offered prayer at the mosque and had lunch at a reception.

On 21 June, we flew into Samarkand. After looking around the city in the morning. In the shade of trees by a irrigation pool in a nearby oasis, we attended a luncheon given us. In the evening we attended a large dinner party at the Uzbekistan Restaurant. Through the open window was peeping the moon of 4 Rajab reminiscing the flourishing and prosperous Samarkand of Timur's time.

On 22 June, I fell ill and couldnot go with the rest of our group to visit the museum in Bokhara where the original manuscript of the Hadith compiled by Imam Al-Bokhari is preserved. Parting with the group, I flew back to Moscow in that evening. In Moscow, I took two days' rest and then returned to Japan on 26 June. Owing to the illness, I could not maintain my schedule of visiting a few other countries on my return journey to Japan by a southern route.



Muslim headgear in Central Asia

MESSAGE OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS DR. KURT WALDHEIM

I wish to extend my warm greetings to all those participating in the World Conference: Religious Workers for Lasting Peace, Disarmament and Just Relations among Nations. The topics which you will discuss at this Conference relate closely to the vital goal of the United Nations — to maintain international peace and security. While the achievement of this objectives will ultimately be the task of governments, the commitment and active participation of people in all parts of the world is an essential prerequisites.

It is, therefore, very gratifying to note the increasing support that the United Nations receives from a wide spectrum of non-governmental organizations dedicated to the goals of disarmament and of world peace. In reaffirming the value that we at the United Nations attach to efforts such as yours, I wish you every success for your important deliberations.

Your Excellency, Mr. Secretary-General

We, the representatives of the major world religions, participants of the World Conference: Religious workers for Lasting peace, Disarmament and Just Relations among Nations, were most gratified and happy to receive the Message you found possible to address our Conference.

We unanimously wish to express, Your Excellency, our warmest feelings of gratefulness for the support and understanding of the tasks we have set ourselves during this peace-creating Forum.

Standing on the common ground of our religious and ethical principles, we aspire to increase our common inter-religious contribution to the cause of lasting peace and security and to consecrate our efforts and influence so as to serve the present and future interests of generations to save mankind from wars of extermination, from the burden of arms, from enmity and hatred. At the same time, we sincerely aspire to create conditions the world over that correspond to the human dignity of every human being.

We applaud and fully support the manifold and beneficial activities of the United Nations Organization, aimed at achieving the same noble goals.

Being well aware of your interest in international changes and of your personal contribution to the cause of peace, disarmament and justice, in that framework, the attention you give to peace-creating religious activities, we send You, Mr. Secretary-General, cordial wishes of spiritual peace, good health, well-being and great successes in your personal labour and the activities of the United Nations Organization for peace, international detente and the better future of mankind.

Moscow, June 6, 1977

Juvenaly,
Metropolitan of Tula and Belev

OPENING SPEECH

BY MUFTI ZIYAUDIN KHAN IBN ISHAN BABAKHAN AT THE WORLD CONFERENCE: RELIGIOUS WORKERS FOR LASTING PEACE, DISARMAMENT AND JUST RELATIONS AMONG NATIONS IN MOSCOW ON JUNE 6, 1977

■

Praise be to Allah, the Almighty, Lord of the Creation, Who made His servants responsible for their future, greetings to His Prophet, His associates and household

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

May I greet you, dear participants in this high religious forum, on behalf of your believing brothers and sisters of the Soviet Union, on behalf of your Moslem brothers and sisters, in particular, and wish you every best wish and success in this blessed meeting. We thank you, dear participants in this high meeting of religious workers, for coming here, despite long distances, to combine your efforts with the efforts of the believers throughout the world directed to the solution of the most important issue of our time — the establishment of peace among nations — to give a precise definition of the concrete tasks facing us, and to coordinate carefully our actions in order that they be in agreement with our religious teachings, fruitful and purposeful. I wish you utmost success and profound religious inspiration at this high meeting.

Nowadays, as never before, has grown the role of followers of different religions in the wide movement of peace-loving public forces for lasting peace, disarmament and just relations among nations. The responsibility of religious workers for the future of mankind, for the survival and for the preservation of Nature as it has been created by the Most High, should become particularly prominent today. By making man the most reasonable creature on earth, the Most High has laid upon him the responsibility for the preservation of life and every creation on the Earth. This responsibility is worded in the Holy Koran like this: "... We offered Our trust to the heavens, to the earth, and to the mountains, but they refused the burden and were afraid to receive it. Man undertook to bear it..." (33:72). As is pointed out by the above verse, Man undertook to bear the great responsibility, which the heavens, earth and mountains, for all their seeming might, had refused to carry. At the same time, Man has turned out to be capable of a far greater potentials as it might seem at first sight. Indeed, he has become a possessor of a titanic power in our days. It is Man that decides the fate of life on the Earth. Our Conference should help people to realize their responsibility for their own fate better.

In accordance with its motto, our Conference is to discuss a wide range of problems of vital importance to mankind, arranged by the International Preparatory Committee under the three sections: 1) Lasting Peace; 2) Disarmament; 3) Just Relations among Nations.

1. RELIGIOUS WORKERS FOR LASTING PEACE

Throughout human history the followers of different religions were committed to manifest high humanist ideas of authentic culture, genuine freedom and all-embracing mercy. Whereas in the past periods of history the believers used to direct their moral efforts for humanist ideas to become established within their own respective religions, as applicative to certain communities, countries and regions, nowadays, with the unprecedented sweep of communications, with the barriers to contacts among people of different races and nationalities coming down, the responsibility of religionists for humanization of human society, for the destiny of peace on earth grows up to fantastic dimensions. The major criterion of that responsibility is the degree of the dedication by religious workers to the consolidation of peace and justice among all people of the Earth. It is this particular degree of dedication that indicates the principal virtue with which we have to stand before the Most High on the Judgement Day. It is wonderful that nothing brings different religions closer to one another than their concepts of peace. The identity with which different believers understand the dimensions of peace is so remarkable a fact that the teaching about peace can rightfully be called interreligious. Islam attaches utmost attention to the preservation of peace on earth considering the achievement of peace and order as the prime weal for mankind, since the Most High created the Earth primarily as a dwelling-place of peace. That is why the Koran commands: "Do not corrupt the earth after it has been purged of evil. Pray to Him with fear and hope..." (7:56), and further on: "The Most High calls you to the abode of peace". The Holy Koran contains the direct call of the Most High Allah to peace: "Oh, people, enter peace". Highly raising the authority and meaning of peace in the eyes of His servants, the Most High Allah called one of the paradises "a palace of peace". The Holy Koran mentions peace over twenty times.

Other religions in their respective dogmas also give priority to the concept of peace as a moral obligation of the believers to strive after its establishment.

Associated with the concept of peace are such categories as truth, knowledge, freedom, security, justice. Peace, as an ideal divine order is what all the believers aspire to, is the goal of their moral exertions. The achievement of a harmonious moral order in the individual and social existence is impeded by evil in its manifold revelation, bringing disharmony into ethical order of life on the Earth. Evil distorts the main ideas of peace, replacing truth by falsehood, knowledge by ignorance, freedom by slavery, righteousness by immorality, security by fear. Thus, the world as the divine order, turns to a chaos of despair. Efforts against the evil to become triumphant, for the strengthening of the main principles of the world, fill the life of the believer with a deep religious meaning. In his life, both personal and within a community, he proceeds from the commands of his conscience reflecting the will of the Most High, as well as from the teaching of his religion. Within every particular religion the believers unite their peace efforts with those of their brothers in faith. Both on the regional and global scale the believers engage themselves in the interreligious cooperation aimed at the establishment of a lasting, just and universal peace on earth. This aspiration, shared by the followers of different faiths, for the unification of their peace efforts, naturally, flows from the very nature of their religious outlook. It is not without purpose that a verse of

the Koran says: "Help one another in what is good and pious, not in what is wicked and sinful" (5:2) One can note with satisfaction the comforting fact that for the past decades the spirit of mutual understanding and cooperation on the interreligious basis became extended to the widest masses of believers. An example of the interreligious cooperation in the service to peace is the involvement of representatives of different religions with the manifold initiatives of the World Peace Council. The activities of such organizations as the Asian Buddhist Conference for Peace, the World Council of Churches, the Christian Peace Conference, can serve as another evidence to the effective cooperation of the believers for peace. Well-known is the experience of cooperation acquired by the organization "Religion for Peace", by the Interreligious Congress in Manila, etc.

The Moslem believers of the Soviet Union in the recent years have been initiators of several conferences dealing with the solution of a number of international problems of similar concern to the followers of different religions and to the whole of mankind. Among those conferences were: the 1970 International Conference on the problems of strengthening world peace and liquidation of the conflict in the Middle East; the International Conference on the political settlement of the Middle-East crisis and on the necessity of the immediate withdrawal of Israeli troops from the occupied Arab territories (Tashkent, 1973); the 1974 Conference of Experts dedicated to the 12 centenary of the famous compiler of the utterances of Mohammed, Abu Abdulla Mohammed bin Ismail Bukhari – may Allah bless him – which was carried out under the theme: "Imam al-Bukhari and Contemporary World"; the 1976 International Conference dedicated to the 30th anniversary of the Moslem Board of Central Asia and Khazakhstan, in the course of which the question of consolidation of peace and friendship among nations occupied an important place.

I would like to lay a particular emphasis on the firmly established tradition of interreligious cooperation for peace among the Churches and Religious Associations of the Soviet Union. The first great experience in this connection was given by the Conference of all the Churches and Religious Associations of the USSR dealing with the problems of the defence of peace which took place at the Trinity-St. Sergius Lavra in May, 1952. The experience was furthered in the summer of 1962 at the meeting of the religious participants in the Moscow World Congress for Peace and Disarmament who held it also in Zagorsk. In July 1969, the Lavra, for the second time, became the venue of a conference of all religions in the USSR which was carried out under the theme: Responsibility of Religions for Peace and Cooperation among Nations. In October 1973, also at the Lavra, took place a meeting of over 300 religious participants in the Congress of Peace Forces pending in Moscow at the time. That meeting proved to be very fruitful for the unification of peace efforts undertaken by representatives of different religions of the world. It was at that particular conference that the idea to continue this kind of interreligious cooperation found expression which has brought to the convocation of the present World Interreligious Conference for peace. We all know what a wide response among the religious workers throughout the world found the idea of the Conference and how successful the preparations for it have been carried out by the International Preparatory Committee.

I think there is no need to speak in detail about the process of the preparation

for our World Conference, which by the mercy of Allah, was called in due time bringing together authoritative and competent representatives of different religions from many countries of the world. In this way, our Conference is a wide step furthering interreligious cooperation for the good of the world. It manifests that this cooperation is growing out to the global scale. Buddhists, Christians, Hinduists, Judaists, Moslems, Shintoists as well as followers of other religions from all over the world have now come together in Moscow to put to their brotherly discussion on the burning problems of the preservation and consolidation of peace as well as practical ways to increase interreligious contribution to their solution. An important topic for our discussions will be the first part of our Conference's motto – "For Lasting Peace". Working Group I is to discuss the whole complex of the questions comprised in this theme.

II. RELIGIOUS WORKERS FOR DISARMAMENT

The second part of our motto – Disarmament – will be the topic for discussion in Working Group II. That group will be dealing with one of the most important aspects of peace-making, that is the questions of cessation of arms race, of disarmament and struggle against militarism.

Religions stand unanimous in their aspiration for security as a pre-condition for the life of every man and every nation, and for the establishment of love and mercy as the only law regulating relations of people. Narrating the life-story of Abraham, the Koran says, "Lord," said Abraham, "make this a land of safety" (14:35). The Most High Allah connected the peaceful current of life with moral qualities of people themselves. Depending on the righteousness of the believers is the future destiny of human society. In reference to this, the Holy Koran says that "... the righteous among My servants shall inherit the earth". (21:105)

At present the continuous stock-piling of arms is, in our opinion, the most serious threat to universal peace. In the era of missiles and nuclear weapons war, which earlier had been a means of continuation of a state policy, becomes devoid of its meaning as such, because the scope of mutual elimination of the parties at war can be justified by no purposes. Arms race is not only a potential threat to peace. Now, at peaceful time likewise, it brings sufferings to millions of people turning them deprived of their share, swallowing incalculable material resources. Provided that every modern military aircraft costs as much as if it were made of gold, or even more sometimes, one can imagine what astronomic funds go to armament. Besides, millions of most healthy and skilled members of the society are employed in active service and military industry. Should that manpower and those means be channeled to peaceful construction, many of the current social problems will be solved. At the present time about a milliard of people live starving, or are very close to death of hunger; about a milliard of people remain illiterate, whereas Allah told us to be considerate for the needs of every particular human soul. Further arms race will inevitably be followed by further crises in many parts of the world. Therefore, no politician, nor public figure, and moreover, no religious worker should forget about unavoidable perish of humanity unless immediate measures to curb arms race are taken. Now humanity has no other alternative but the resolute cessation of the process of armament and transmission over to gradual

realization of disarmament under a strict international control.

No doubt, the solution of the disarmament problem is a difficult task. But should the solution be further delayed, the realization of disarmament would become more difficult. Here is an evidence to that: the threat of nuclear war will grow immeasurably, if the countries which at present do not have nuclear weapons start to produce and accumulate them. The Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear weapons, with about a hundred signatories to it now, has done a lot, but we, religious workers, nevertheless, should continue to seek the signing of the treaty by all nuclear powers. We would welcome the conclusion of a treaty on complete and general nuclear test ban with all the nuclear powers as the parties to it. We find the treaty on not being the first to use nuclear weapons against each other useful for all the participating States of the All-European Conference. Out of humane considerations commanded by our religions, we should strengthen struggle for complete prohibition and liquidation of chemical weapons.

III. RELIGIOUS WORKERS FOR JUST RELATIONS AMONG NATIONS

Finally, the concluding part of the motto of our Conference – Just Relations among Nations – will be the topic of discussion in Working Group III.

The principles of justice occupy an important place in the teachings of all religions. The Koran warns those who commit iniquity, like this: “And when the guilty face their punishment, their torment shall never be allayed, nor shall they ever be reprieved”. (16:85)

The teachings of other religions contain similar ideas.

With the reference to the above said, all the religions call upon every human being, whatever his colour or nation, to be bearer of justice. Every man is equally enabled by the Most High for this mission of all human justice.

It is well-known that all religions always suggested maintenance of just relations among nations as a secure guarantee for harmony and peace. The lack of justice among nations is considered by religions abnormal, since all people of the Earth in an equal degree have the right to live, to make use of all life's benefits, to enrich knowledge as well as the right to independent existence and to self-determination.

Justice, as a norm of ethics, as its principle, is an inherent sign of peace. In the international sphere, with different political and social systems, with great and small states, both industrial and those which only started their industry, both of great experience in independent existence and newly independent from colonial yoke, the principle of justice in the first place implicates the establishment of and guarantees for equal relations among all countries and respect for the sovereign equality of all states, both great and small, old and new.

Speaking about just relations and cooperation among nations, we imply that those should comprise all spheres – economic, scientific, cultural, technical and others. Such cooperation has become of vital importance for the countries as a powerful factor defining the development of science, facilitating technical progress, economic growth and spread of cultural values among the widest masses of people.

HUMAN RIGHTS

All the religions are committed to show concern for social justice and to educate their followers to be respectful to human rights.

When dealing with the problem of human rights it is necessary to show reasonable impartiality. In contemporary society it is equally important to implement civil, political as well as economic, social and cultural rights, as recorded in international pacts on human rights. That goes without saying. In real historical conditions, when elementary human rights are violated in many parts of the world (up to denying the right to human dignity, or even to life itself) it becomes necessary to seek in the first place the implementation of most important economic and social rights.

Indeed, as long as the main social problems remain unsolved in many countries, man continues to suffer deprivations, despite the high level of the contemporary civilization. As far as an unassuming estimation goes, 50% of the population in the world today suffer from malnutrition, with most part of them close to starvation. Over 100 million people do not have permanent job. Presumably, over 800 million people will remain illiterate by 1980. In many developed, let alone developing countries, very critical is the housing problem, while one-third of the population in the Third World live in slums. In many countries the working people are deprived of political, and economic rights as well as those of trade unions. In a number of countries little care is shown for children, elderly people, invalids, and insufficient attention is given to provide a normal future for the young people. Women in many countries undergo humiliation. During military conflicts, when the principles of humanism and international law are rudely violated, the infringements upon social and political human rights grow immensely in size. Therefore, the defence of human rights and their ensuring should be an important sphere of our religions' activity.

RACISM

Racism is the most infamous reflection of human cruelty in regard to other peoples. Prophet Mohammed (May Allah bless him) said: "There is no superiority of red skin over the white skin, neither of the white man over the black man, superior is he who is more righteous".

None of the religions blesses the division of people according to their race.

However, there are people and States in the world who elevate racism to the rank of state policy, thus placing the non-white population in the conditions of increasing police repressions. In Zimbabwe where the power is usurped by racist Ian Smith was introduced racial legislation, analogical to the laws of apartheid, and the policy of terror is being pursued against the indigenous population of the country. Namibia is a colonial country. The indigenous population of that country is subjected to a double oppression and exploitation – by the local white minority on the one hand, and by South Africa, the invader-country, – on the other. The racial policy of South-African Government taking a new shape at present in the form of the so-called Bantustans is growing particularly dangerous for the destiny of the world now that it receives a manifold backing from a number of Western powers and Zionist Israel, procuring arms of modern types, thus increasing the threat of the possible development of nuclear weapons by that country.

As is known, a resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1975 classified Zionism as a "form of racism". Indeed, at the very beginning of the Jewish colonization of Palestine at the end of 19th century Zionism took the form of racism, developing contempt and hatred of the Jewish immigrants towards the Arab population of Palestine whose place they were going to occupy.

As participants of this high forum, we are called upon to condemn racism as a phenomenon incompatible with any religion and opposing the will of the Most High. On the basis of our religious conceptions we should concentrate on the strengthening of international cooperation in the struggle against racism because the remaining racial prejudices and discrimination have a ruinous effect upon the course of historical process and weaken international solidarity for peace, justice and progress.

ECOLOGY

The condition of the environment in which man is living has always be an important object in the focus of attention of religions. Keeping the environment clean was of concern to religionists even at the times when the world knew nothing of the industrial wastes polluting the atmosphere. Back in the early days, the religions disapproved the breaking of the balance in Nature. Teaching people to keep clean their environment, the Most High reminds them: "We send down blessed water from the sky with which We bring forth gardens and the harvest grain, and tall palm-trees laden with clusters of dates, a sustenance for men; thereby giving new life to some dead land. Such shall be the Resurrection". (50:9-11) The Earth has been created to procure infinitely for life, Allah defining it as the habitat for humankind and for everything alive. With reference to this the Holy Koran says: "He said: 'There you shall live and there you shall die, and thence you shall be raised to life' ". (7:24-25)

With this question being so important for the life of people and every creation on earth, every country should be respectful for the rights of other countries, in particular, for the sovereign right of every nation to handle their own natural resources. In short, taking care of the environment and natural resources is to lead to the optimization of interrelation of Man and Nature and serve as an additional stimulus for further consolidation of the principles of peaceful coexistence and for a complete exclusion of war from the life of mankind.

MIGRATION

This problem is connected with the population problem and feeds on the lack of full employment in less developed countries. It is also connected with the desire of the monopolies and multinational corporations to seek excess profits with minimum material expenses. Though the monopolies pretend that by employing migrant workers, they make the situation in the developing countries easier, in fact, the increasing manpower becomes just a cheap source of labour power enriching the masters of the capitalist world. As a result, the developing countries lose a qualified manpower and educated specialists, who could serve to the cause of the national and social progress in their own countries. Migration in the present-day scope is observed by some as a new displacement of peoples. The human

stream flowing from Africa and Southern Europe to the north is indeed very massive. A great number of migrant workers have concentrated in Western Europe. According to approximate estimation, the permanent number of foreign workers living there reaches 10 million people who have been forced to leave their homes, not to mention the 2-3 million of migrants who have come to Australia in search of job. As was already mentioned, the circumstances lead to the alienation of the intelligentsia and workers from the developing countries from their native milieu and from the problems of their people. Moreover, these people and their families in the new place of residence do not find proper living conditions, practically speaking they are deprived of elementary human rights. Though in the countries to which migration flows, much, as a rule, is spoken of the democracy for all, this democracy is not intended for migrant workers. Therefore, we, religious workers, should seek to ensure that immigrants may enjoy the rights equal to those of the indigenous population of the countries where they came to live.

TASKS FACING RELIGIONS STRIVING AFTER THE ESTABLISHMENT OF JUST RELATIONS AMONG NATIONS

Prophet Mohammed (May Allah bless Him) once said that "He, who seeing injustice does not stop it, has nothing to do with us". The Holy Book of Christians points out that Lord tells man to do justice and to love kindness (Cf. Mic. 6:8). Other religions likewise call for justice as the chief principle to regulate the life of human society.

We, religionists, are deeply committed by our religions to the ideas of justice to be established among people and in the international relations, and therefore, we should pay special attention to the problems which were the topic of our meditation in order that genuine justice may be established in the relations among nations. The essence of our religious convictions demands that we should not close our eyes to injustice. We should, in this respect, weigh up not only the common contribution made by all religions but also the contribution of every particular religion. We should address ourselves to the governments, to the governmental bodies and to people of goodwill to witness before them our good intentions in seeking truly just relations among nations.

CONCLUSION

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

The schematic survey of the problems offered above for our consideration together at the World Conference is not sufficiently complete and wants further elaboration. I hope these blanks will be filled in by the special reports on the themes of the Working Groups. I suggest that what I offered to your attention in this report be further creatively developed by the participants of our forum. However, I do not consider that this report should be taken as a framework to be strictly confined within, thus predetermining the forthcoming discussion.

I believe that our reports and discussions in the Working Groups in which many of you are surely to be actively involved, will open before us a truly world-wide panorama of the life of the contemporary mankind, suffering and grieving, hoping

and believing at the same time. I hope that in the course of discussion we shall come to clearer understanding of our tasks in the service to the needs of humanity, that our work together will become a source, inspiring world's religions for more enthusiastic joint efforts for lasting peace, disarmament and just relations among nations.

I pray for the blessing of the Most High that we may enjoy the unanimity of thought and spirit, the mutual understanding of brothers, and the patient love to one another.

Looking forward to the forthcoming results of our work, I would like to note that we alone, no matter how representative and numerous our forum may be, will be unable to implement its decisions, perfect as they may turn out. We will need support and cooperation of wide masses of believers, and of all people of goodwill in general. We, of course, are open to such cooperation.

Concluding my report, I pray to the Most High that He may bestow His blessing upon our Conference, and guide us along the way of fruitful service to the great cause of universal peace.

Amen.

(Abridged)

Partial MAP OF THE MUSLIM WORLD (adopted from RABETAT AL-ALAM AL-ISLAMI magazine, Mecca). Darkly shaded parts show the predominantly Muslim areas.





Muslim delegates at a reception by Russian Orthodox Church in Kazan. ↗

Local Muslim women in colourful attire at the gate of Ufa Mosque. →



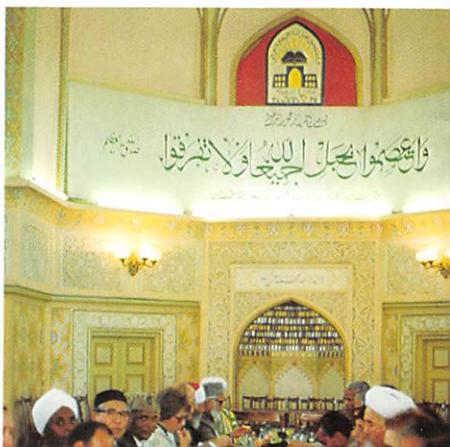
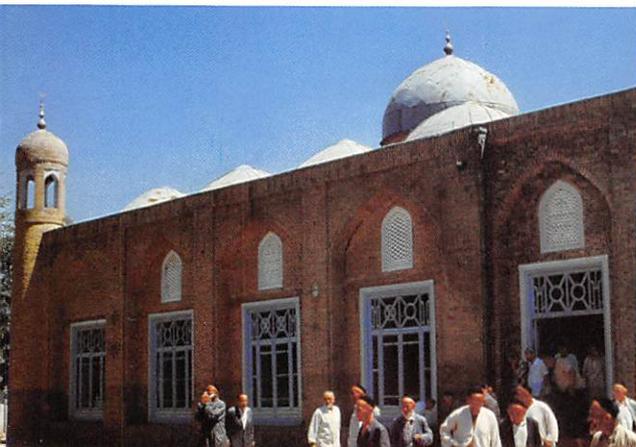
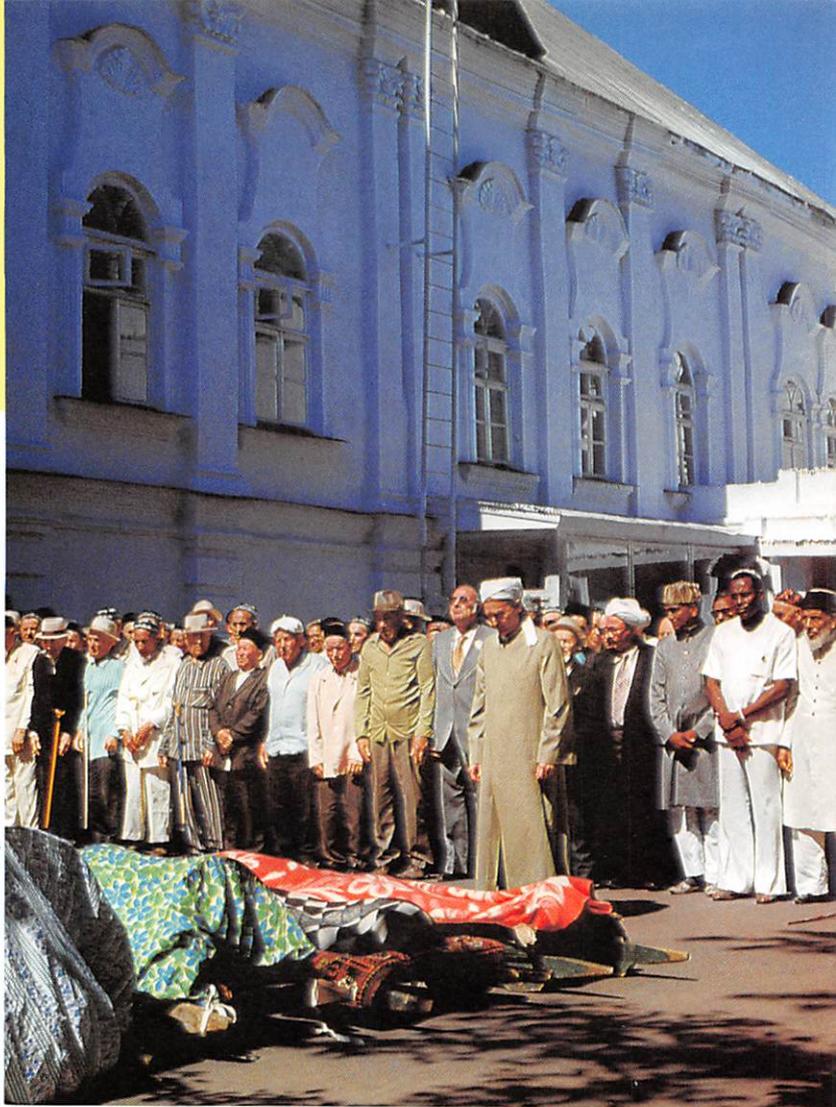
At Zuhr prayer at the Ufa Mosque. ↘



Janaza prayer at the Kazan Mosque. →

Muslim delegates at the Old Tashkent Mosque. ↘

Outside view of the Tashkent Mosque. ↓



FOREIGN RELATIONS DEPARTMENT OF MUSLIM RELIGIOUS BOARD FOR CENTRAL ASIA AND KAZAKHSTAN – ITS ACTIVITIES

Dr. Yusufkhan Shakirov



The writer

The establishment of the Foreign Relations Department of Muslim Religious Board for Central Asia and Kazakhstan was really a very great and important event in the life of the Board. The Holy Quran teaches us that: "The believers are naught else than brothers." Our Prophet Muhammad (may peace be upon him) said: "Muslims are like one body. If a part of this body suffers from illness, all the body feels sick." Verily wise are these words of our Prophet. The opening of our Foreign Relations Department was connected with the care about our fellow-men, our Muslim brethren, with our desire to strengthen friendly ties with them.

We, Soviet Muslims, must be constantly kept informed about political, economic and cultural events, about the religious life of Muslims everywhere in the world. This is our brotherly and moral duty. We are happy when our coreligionists are successful and we want to support them when they are having hard times. We want to share their griefs and joys. We must support them materially and morally. In order to achieve these aims, we must strengthen and widen our brotherly contacts with Muslims living in different countries in

the Islamic World. In course of the last 15 years, our Department accomplished a large number of useful deeds welcome to Allah. I want to cite here some examples and tell about a series of important events.

In 1961, Mufti Ziyautdin Khan bin Ishan Babakhanov, President of the Board, visited Morocco. His visit reciprocated by a visit of an Islamic delegation from Morocco, headed by the late Allal Al-Fassi, one of the renowned political, religious and social leaders of Morocco and founder of the Istiqlal Party. The delegation stayed a month in our country and visited such important cultural and industrial centres as Moscow, Leningrad, Volgograd, Baku, Dushanbe and Tashkent. During this visit, members of the above-mentioned delegation got acquainted with all the spheres of life and the rich culture of the Soviet people.

This is what the leader of the Moroccan delegation told us: "We saw the life of Soviet people, the life of Muslims of your country and your heroic labour. I bow my head before the achievements of your labourers, before your tireless struggle for world peace, for the happiness of people. Verily you are happy people."

These words were pronounced 15 years ago. And if Allal Al-Fassi were alive now and could see the changes which have taken place since his visit, there would have been no limits for his surprise. I shall never forget the statement which Allal Al-Fassi had made before he left our country. He told me: "Our reciprocal visits will contribute to the strengthening of friendly relations between our two countries." And so it happened.

In course of the last 15 years, such prominent Muslim leaders from Morocco as Ahmad Barkash, Abdullah Kanoon and others were our guests. All of them were favourably impressed by the life of Soviet Muslims. Mufti Z. Babakhanov and members of his delegations were several times guests of the Moroccan Muslims.

Mufti Z. Babakhanov visited Morocco in 1968 on invitation from King Hassan II. He took part in the festivities held in honour of the 1400th anniversary of the revelation of the Holy Quran. King Hassan II decorated our Mufti with the highest order of the country for his prominent role in strengthening peace and friendship among nations.

Beginning from 1962, Muslims from our country have been admitted to the famous Karauin University in Morocco. It is another meritorious deed of Allal Al-Fassi. This seat of learning continues to play a great role in the preparation of highly qualified cadres for Muslims of our country. Soviet Muslims who have graduated from Karauin University occupy responsible posts at our Islamic centre — Muslim Religious Board for Central Asia and Kazakhstan.

The delegation of Soviet Muslims led by Mufti Z. Babakhanov, showed great respect for the fond memory of Allal Al-Fassi with its presence at his funerals. Speaking at the mourning ceremony, Mufti Babakhanov paid tribute to the meritorious deeds of the deceased in strengthening friendship and cooperation between the two friendly countries and between Muslims of Morocco and the USSR, in particular.

Many worthy sons of the Islamic World received their education at the famous Al-Azhar University in Cairo. This oldest Islamic educational institution has a millennial history. About 30 years ago, we established friendly relations with this great university in Egypt. It must be noted that since the victorious revolution in Egypt these ties have been consolidated. From the year 1953 on, Soviet pilgrims have been proceeding to Mecca via Egypt where they have met prominent Islamic leaders of that country. Scholars from Al-Azhar University have played an important role in the establishment and consolidation of our contacts. Thanks to their enormous work, their trusteeship students sent by the Muslim Religious Board for Central Asia and Kazakhstan have been regularly studying at this famous higher religious educational establishment. The visit to our country of the Islamic delegation headed by Sheikh Muhammad Al-Fahhan, Rector of Al-Azhar University, was an important event in the development and consolidation of our contacts.

The delegation stayed in our country for two weeks. Its members got acquainted with various aspects of the life of Soviet Muslims, participated in various religious ceremonies, performed prayers,

read sermons in our mosques. Sheikh Khalil Al-Rusari, one of the members of the delegation and a well-known Quran reciter, conquered the hearts of our Muslims with his voice of rare beauty.

Having returned to his country, the head of the delegation gave an interview to the "Rose Al-Yusuf" correspondent. This is what he told about his impression: "Islam exists and flourishes in the Soviet Union, and Muslims strictly observe all rituals prescribed by the *Shariah* Law.

Not only religious leaders of Egypt, but also the progressive intellectuals of that country began to show interest for the life of Soviet Muslims and their religious activities. Egyptian writer Abdullah Hawwar who visited the Soviet Union in 1970 wrote a book entitled "Seven Days with Soviet Muslims". This book which reflects the real life of our Muslims enjoys wide popularity among readers.

In 1973, we received as our guest Dr. Saud Djalal, a former Professor of Al-Azhar University and correspondent of the newspaper "Al-Gumhuriya", who made a tour of the Central Asian Republics, got acquainted with religious and social life of Soviet Muslims. The result of his trip was described in a series of articles published in the press of his country under the title "Several Days together with Soviet Muslims".

Among our guests were also the leaders of the Muslim Young Men's Association in Cairo, who came to our country on our invitation.

Several years ago, we established friendly relations with Islamic organizations in Lebanon. Many Muslim delega-

tions headed by Hasan Khaled, Grand Mufti of the country, visited us since. Muhammad Amin Dugan, writer and journalist, who accompanied Mufti Hasan Khaled in one of his trips, published a book: "The First Journey" about Soviet Muslims. Other delegations as well from Lebanon visited the Soviet Union, including the one headed by Musa Sadr, President of the Shii Supreme Council and a prominent religious and social worker of his country. Members of this delegation were deeply interested in the activities of both Shii and Sunni Muslims living in the Soviet Union.

In 1958, the Muslim Religious Board invited a delegation from the Syrian Arab Republic to visit the Soviet Union. Our invitation was accepted and the delegation headed by Abu Yusr Abidin. Grand Mufti of Syria at that time, arrived in the Central Asia. Twice we played host to the Syrian Muslim delegations led by Mufti Ahmad Kufaru who, speaking about his impressions, stated: "Uzbek Muslims are real Muslims. With their heroic labours, they contribute to the progress of their fatherland and, at the same time, they zealously perform their religious duties. It is just the way of life our religion Islam requires to observe."

More than 10 years elapsed since our Board has established brotherly ties with Muslim organizations in Tunis. In 1963, our first guests from that country were Muhammad Al-Arabi, Rector of the Ibn Khaldun Madrasah, and Mustafa Kamal At-Tarzi, present Head of the Department of Religious Affairs, who have visited the USSR several times.

We received many times Muslim delegations from Jordan, headed by the late Abdullah Gosha who was one of the prominent religious leaders of his country. A delegation of Soviet Muslims visited Jordan on invitation from Sheikh Abdullah Gosha.

A new page in the relations between Jordanian and Soviet Muslims was opened when a delegation led by Abdullah Al-Hayat, Minister of Awqaf, came to the Central Asia in May 1976. The members of the delegation stayed two weeks with us and had a wide scope to observe the life of Soviet Muslims. Having returned to his country, the head of the delegation gave an interview to the "As-Shaab" newspaper. In particular, he stated: "The Jordanian delegation visited the Soviet Union on invitation from the Muslim Religious Board. It got acquainted with the achievements of the USSR, visited a number of mosques, and saw the monuments of Islamic culture in Tashkent, Bukhara and Samarkand. We observed how hundreds of thousands of Muslims performed their Friday prayers in spite of the fact that Friday is not a day off in the USSR. We met many Muslims and invariably felt that the majority of them possessed a real Islamic spirit, adhered to Islamic dogmas and morals and performed religious rites."

Our relations with one of the Muslim organizations in Iraq, Dewanul Awqaf Society, have been successfully developing for many years. The President of the Society, Mr. Nafe Kassim, and members of his delegation visited our country twice. The Soviet Muslim delegation led by Mufti Z. Babakhanov reciprocated these visits.

Friendly relations with Muslims of the Yemen Arab Republic were established in early 1960. It gives us pleasure to note that Mufti Ahmad Zabarū of that country played a very important role in the development of our contacts. Muft Ahmad Zabarū visited the USSR several times. He actively participated in the Islamic conferences held by Soviet Muslims. In early 1976, he attended the meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference of Religious Workers for Lasting Peace, Disarmament and Just Relations among Nations, which is due to be held (actually took place in June — Editor) in 1977, and was elected Vice-Chairman of the Committee. In summer 1976, he arrived again on invitation from our organization. It was a "family visit" as he himself described it. He was accompanied by his wife and two sons.

If we take only one year, namely, the year 1976, we shall see that it was a bright example of the rapid development of our friendly relations with our brethren in faith from foreign countries. The following Islamic delegations headed by prominent Muslim dignitaries visited our country: Professor Abdul Aziz Al-Hayat of the Sharia Faculty of the Jordan University; His Eminence Mufti Sheikh Muhammad Abduh Hashem of Jordan; Mr. Hamdan bin At-Tah, Minister of Religious Affairs, Mauritania; Sheikh Musa Ibrahim, Muslim leader of Chad; Mr. Omar Ismail, a prominent religious worker and President of Islamic Society of Niger; Mr. Inayatullah Iblag, Member of the Supreme Council of Juridical Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Afghanistan; Maulana Alauddin Al-Azhari, President, International Islamic Organization on the

Revival of Mosque, Bangladesh, and many others.

The sunny and hospitable Uzbekistan which is rightly called the "Beacon of the East" gave warm and cordial welcome to Islamic delegations from Algeria, Libya, the Yemen Arab Republic, Togo, Mali, Upper Volta, Uganda, Gambia, India, Pakistan, the Philippines, Malaysia, Bangladesh, Iran, Afghanistan, Somalia, Sudan, Guyana, Mauritius, France, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Poland, Guinea, Sri Lanka, Senegal and Mauritania.

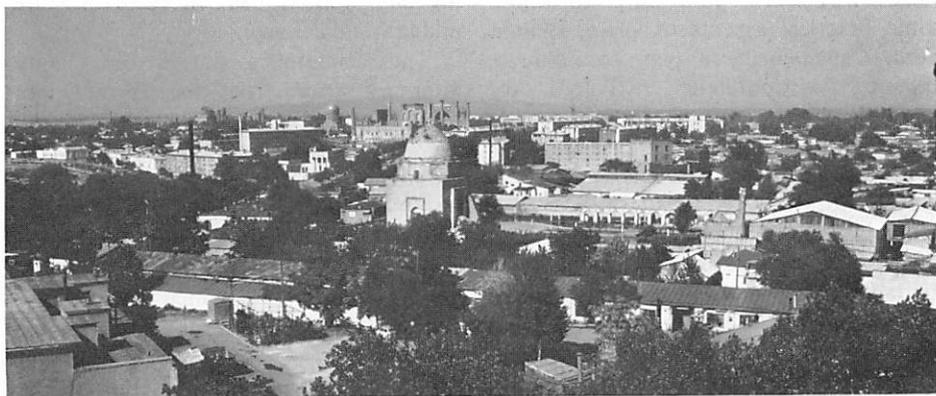
All their members highly praised the goodwill and sincere sympathies which were demonstrated by the people of our great country towards them. Mr. Ben Abdullah, Editor-in-Chief of the "Dawatul Haq" magazine of Morocco, published a detailed report of the visit of

the Moroccan delegation in his journal.

I have told you only about a few visits of our foreign friends. Soviet Muslim delegation led by Mufti Z. Babakhanov, his Vice-President, the late Ismail Makhdum Sattiyev, Yusufkhan Shakirov, Abdel Ghani Abdullayev and others have visited almost all the Islamic countries, countries of the Arab World as well as countries where our Muslim brothers live as minorities. Speaking before numerous congregations attending our mosques, members of the Soviet delegations shared their impressions. They also published articles in our magazine "Muslims of the Soviet East." Soviet Muslims were very pleased to hear and to read their reports which filled their hearts with deep sympathy towards their brethren in faith living abroad.

(The above is a part of the lengthy article OUR CONTRIBUTION TO THE CAUSE OF PEACE AND FRIENDSHIP AMONG NATIONS — a short survey of activities of the Foreign Relations Department, Muslim Religious Board for Central Asia and Kazakhstan, contributed by Abdu Kahar Gapparov, Head of the Department. Dr. Yusufkhan Sahkirov, now Vice-President of Muslim Religious Board and Mufti Babakhanov's closest assistant as well as former Head of the Department, was educated at Madrasah Mir-Arab of Tashkent and Jamia Al-Azhar of Cairo, as mentioned in Mr. Gapparov's article — Editor)

Samarkand



A SHORT REPORT ON ACTIVITIES OF ISLAMIC CENTRE-JAPAN

ISLAMIC LAW CONFERENCE IN TOKYO

Abdur Rahman Siddiqi

Islam in Japan is still regarded as a religion of the Arabs followed generally by many people of Asia and Africa. People here have yet to comprehend that Islam is a great universal religion. No doubt the scholars understand that Islam is "one of the great religions" of the world. Any author who writes about world civilizations certainly includes a note on Islam and its impact on the world as a whole. However, very few people understand that Islam is a complete code and conduct of life. It is a fact that Islam is not only an ideology but also a practical way of life, a guide in all spheres of life regardless of time and space. It needs to convince people that any other -ism or system is nothing compared to the heavenly and eternal teachings of Islam as contained in the Holy Quran and explained in the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), the final and the last of the messengers of Allah.

In order to provide the people in Japan a better opportunity to know some practical aspects of Islam, Islamic Centre-Japan made a plan to hold an Islamic Law Conference in Tokyo. Accordingly, it started negotiations with the Rabitatul Alam al-Islami (Muslim World League), on the one hand, and the Institute of Comparative Law of the Chuo University in Tokyo, on the other, asking their cooperation for holding such an Islamic Law Conference. The Rabita agreed to support and the Chuo University Institute of Comparative Law agreed to sponsor the Conference. Both agreed,

the Conference took place for four days from 4 July to 7 July 1977 at the great hall of the Chuo University.

Among the foreign Muslim scholars participating in the Conference were H.E. Sheikh Mohammad Ali Al-Harakan, Secretary General of Muslim World League, Mecca, who spoke on "The General Conception of Law in Islam and The Sources of Islamic Law"; H.E. Dr. Marouf Al-Dawaleebi, President of Muslim World Conference, speaking on "The General Conception of Law in Islam as Compared with Other Systems"; H.E. Dr. Mustapha Ahmad Al-Zarqa, Professor of Shariah at the University of Jordan, Amman, giving a talk on "The General Conception of Law in Islam"; Dr. Mahmoud Al-Babily, Professor at Al-Imam Ahmed bin Saud Islamic University in Saudi Arabia, speaking on "Islamic Law and Commerce – The Characteristics of Islamic Economy"; and Dr. Fathi Osman, Professor at the Al-Imam Mohammad bin Saud University, Saudi Arabia, dealing on "Appointment of Head of State under Islamic Law".

The Conference started on 4 July after recitation from the Holy Quran by Prof. Ally Hassan El-Samny and, with the opening speech by Dr. Shuzo Toda, President of Chuo University, followed by an address of welcome by Professor Masao Arai, Director of the Institute of Comparative Law of the Chuo University, greetings by Haji Umar Mita, scholar and Japanese translator of the meaning of the Holy Quran, and Mr. Khalid Kiba, Secretary General of the Islamic

HIH Prince Mikasa exchanges greetings with Sheikh Muhammad Ali Al-Harkan and Shaikh Safwat Al-Saqa Amini at the Islamic Law Conference Hall.



Centre-Japan. Later, in the evening, the dignitaries were received in a grand reception arranged by the Chuo University, also attended by HIH Prince Mikasa*, Mr. Shigeo Hori, Speaker of the Japanese House of Representatives and other high officials of Japan.

On 5 July forenoon, Secretary General Sheikh Mohammad Ali Al-Harakan of Muslim World League received a large delegation of leading religious and cultural organizations and university professors. All who attended agreed on the importance of mutual visits and discussions among the leaders of various cultures, ideologies, and so on.

Dr. Marouf Al-Dawaleebi granted an interview to the Mainichi Daily News, the English edition of famous Mainichi Newspapers, which gave a prominent coverage of the interview, explaining Islamic Law.

In the same evening, representatives of the Tokyo Mosque Repair Committee called on the Secretary General of Muslim World League. The Secretary General and other delegates heard the case of the Mosque repair presented by Professor Abdul Karim Saito and Mr. Enver

Apanay. On behalf of the Secretary General, Assistant Secretary General Mr. Safwat Saqqa Al-Amini advised all the organizations to work for the Mosque repair in a concerted way and assured full support of the Rabita to all such efforts. He also announced a donation of US\$10,000 (ten thousand US dollars) towards the repair of the Mosque.

On 6 July morning, before the delegates proceeded to attend the scheduled Islamic Law Conference at the venue of the Chuo University, a delegation of Islamic Architects Society in Tokyo led by its President called on the Secretary General of the Muslim World League and apprised him of their plans and projects for spreading Islamic education in Japan. The Secretary General also received Haji Umar Mita and Mr. Abu Bakr Morimoto, President of Islamic Culture Society, in connection with the publication of a revised and reset mean-

* His Imperial Highness Prince Takahito Mikasa, a younger brother of the Emperor of Japan and 4th son of the late Emperor Taisho, was born in 1915. He studied at the Tokyo University, Faculty of Letters, specializing in Oriental Studies. He founded "The Japan Society of Oriental Studies" and is now its President Emeritus. He widely travelled in many Muslim countries including Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Egypt and Pakistan and has deep scholarly knowledge and understanding of Islam. He is also the author of a number of books, articles and translations in the field of Oriental Studies. He was the Chairman of International Conference on Religion and History of Religion. - Editor

ing of the Holy Quran in Japanese. The local Meiji University welcomed the foreign dignitaries on its campus in Tokyo on the same day attended by its President, Deans of the Faculties, members of the Board of Directors and senior professors.

In the evening, a group of leading lawyers of Tokyo led by Professor Atsumi called on the Islamic Law Conference delegates from overseas. They discussed, among other things, application of Shariah Laws in various aspects of life. It was a lively and interesting exchange of opinions between the specialized scholars of Islamic Law on the one hand, and of Japanese Law, on the other.

July 7 was the final day of the four-day Conference. Earlier in the morning, the foreign delegates visited the Supreme Court of Japan where they were welcomed by Chief Justice Fujibayashi, an authority on Jurisprudence in Japan. Later in the evening, after the main programme of the Law Conference in the afternoon, the delegates attended a

reception given by the Japan-Arab Association, and then inspected the Arabic classes conducted by Japan Muslim Association. Thereafter, Secretary General Sheikh Al-Harakan received a full session of the Council of Islamic Organizations in Japan, which is the coordinating body of Islamic organizations in this country, and discussed the problems faced by the Islamic movement here.

At the closing session of the Conference, the President of the Chuo University, the Assistant Secretary General of Muslim World League and a representative of the Islamic Centre-Japan made a Joint Declaration read in Japanese, Arabic and English, respectively. Finally, Dr. Masao Arai, Director of the Institute of Comparative Law of the Chuo University and Chairman of the Islamic Law Conference summarized the results of the deliberations in the Conference.

The Islamic Law Conference also adopted a follow-up action plan as under:

1. Publication of all deliberations at the

SUMMARY OF SPEECHES AT ISLAMIC LAW CONFERENCE

4 July, 1977

Sheikh Muhammad Ali Al-Harkan was the main speaker on this first day. Speaking on "THE GENERAL CONCEPTION OF LAW IN ISLAM AND THE SOURCES OF ISLAMIC LAW", the great scholar of the Muslim world emphasized that all the prophets of Allah followed one and the same religion, Islam, but the system was not the same since the society was still being prepared for the final prophet of Islam, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), who gave complete teaching to us. Sheikh Al-Harkan declared that Shariah of Islam is the immutable Law of Allah and is the most practical and fit for all parts of the world at all times. On the sources of Islamic Law, Sheikh Al-Harkan explained that the Holy Quran is the fundamental source followed by the *Sunnah* of the Prophet, *Ijma* or the consensus of the learned Muslims and *Ijthad* or individual opinion based on disciplined and careful study of religious savants.

5 July, 1977

Dr. Marouf Al-Dawaleebi was the main speaker on this second day. Speaking on "THE GENERAL CONCEPTION OF LAW IN ISLAM AS COMPARED WITH OTHER SYSTEMS", Dr. Dawaleebi surveyed the whole field of Shariah Islamiah from three angles: internationalism or universality; humaneness; and solicitude for interest of life and transformation development of man's need. He also explained that the earlier Shariahs were for a particular people at particular time but Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) Shariah is for all people at all times.

6 July, 1977

On this day's session, Dr. Mustapha Al-Zarqa, speaking on "THE GENERAL CONCEPTION

Conference.

2. Publication of a bibliography on Islamic Law in the Japanese language.
3. Translation and preparation of basic and fundamental books or textbooks on various aspects of Islamic life.
4. Establishment of a personnel exchange programme at various levels.

Dr. Masao Arai, Chairman of the Conference, presenting the plan, rightly emphasized that the process of mutual understanding of one another's culture has to be strengthened and enhanced by continuous and tenacious efforts.

The plan was approved by the Islamic Centre-Japan. The Rabitatul Alam Al-Islami (Muslim World League), Mecca, also approved the idea and the details are being finalized through mutual consultations between all concerned.

In fact, the success of the first ever Islamic Law Conference in Japan has proved that Islam stands a good chance here. No doubt there have been some activities in the past and there was a time some fifty years back when Muslims

were given due recognition by the Japanese authorities. But the situation changed in the post-War years when the process lose its tempo due somewhat to the lack of concerted efforts on the part of the Muslims themselves and also due to some other reasons.

Now it can, however, be said without fear of contradiction that the latest contacts between the Muslim countries and Japan have generated new enthusiasm and insight among the Muslims in Japan. It is also a fact that the Japanese Muslims need to deepen further their knowledge about Islam, its concepts and way of life. Here comes the responsibility of organizations like the Islamic Centre-Japan.

In addition to holding seminars, discussions, lectures and conferences, the Centre has so far published 19 books on various aspects of Islam.

The interest shown by the Japanese intelligentsia in Shariah Islamiyah is yet another indication of the potential for future work on Islam in Japan.

(Continued on page 44)

OF LAW IN ISLAM", explained the meanings of Islam and its Sharia from the academic point of view. He proved the capability of Islam for curing all the evils in thought and action of the human society. He pointed out that the reformation can be achieved by Islam because of (i) its sound faith based on knowledge and logic which liberates human thought; (ii) application of the faith which creates strong relationship between the Creator, Allah, and the human being; and (iii) the system of social and legal justice which is comprehensive and strikes balance between the rights and the obligations. He said that based on these three pillars Islam is a religion and a State at the same time.

Also in the same session Dr. Fathi Usman, speaking on "THE APPOINTMENT OF HEAD OF STATE WITH HISTORICAL AND JURISTIC HERITAGE OF ISLAM", compared "Ba'i'a of the Imam" in Islam with the Social Contract Theory and other modern political thoughts. He said that the Imam or Caliph of Islam is not an absolute authority but he only acts within the boundary set by Allah and His Messenger. The Islamic society calls for a group of faithful and sincere people. Islam creates such a pure society and supplies with a code and system of authority to run the society on proper lines.

7 July, 1977

In this last day's session, Dr. Mahmud Al-Babily, speaking on "ISLAMIC LAW AND COMMERCE", explained to the audience comprising mainly of businessmen that Islam has allowed all the transactions which deal in lawful goods and which are done lawfully. The cardinal point remains that Islam permits trading and forbids usury. Trading can be done in writing or verbally, according to Islam.

ALLAH AKBAR 50-MILLION

— Activities of Islamic Welfare Corps & Fatiha Foundation —

Mohammad Daawud Sawada

The motto of “ALLAH AKBAR 50-MILLION” means to devote our efforts to spread the teaching of Islam to the whole population of Japan and to bring 50-million Japanese people to Islam.

Since the beginning of February last year, many Japanese have declared their faith in Islam on every Friday at the Tokyo Mosque, under the leadership of Mohammad Sawada. These new Muslims started developing the movement very energetically and dynamically for spreading the teaching of Islam to the Japanese people through the activities in the welfare field in the name of Islamic Welfare Corps.

The number of Muslims was increasing day by day. Then in the beginning of 1977, these Muslim brothers established 10 Islamic organizations — Islamic Architects Society, Islamic Constructors Association, Islamic Bee Keepers Association, Islamic Real Estates Association, Islamic Institute of Electronics Research, Islamic Educational Committee, Islamic Women’s Association, Islamic Ikebana (Flower Arrangement) Society, Islamic Businessmen Association, Islamic Photo Club — for the purpose of bringing the majority of the Japanese people to Islam through the activities in their respective fields on a national scale. As a result of the efforts of these organizations,

the number of Muslims belonging to these organizations has reached up to 10,000.

So, these Muslim brothers have decided to reorganize their organizations and to establish the “Fatiha Foundation” with 21 departments, with the aim of obtaining a far greater success in spreading the teaching of Islam in Japan. The 21 departments of Fatiha Foundation are as follows:

1. Educational Department
2. Welfare Dept.
3. International Trading Dept.
4. Political Dept.
5. Consultant Dept.
6. Architectural Dept.
7. Construction Dept.
8. Real Estates Dept.
9. Medal Dept.
10. Provisions Dept.
11. SAL-SABIL & Mineral Water Dept.
12. Bee-Keeping Dept.
13. Photographic Dept.
14. Publishing Dept.
15. Women’s Dept.
16. Old Age Dept.
17. Youth Dept.
18. Children Dept.
19. Recreation Dept.
20. Travel Dept.
21. Ikebana Dept.

At the same time, it has now become a very important problem for these new Muslims as how to perform duties according to the 5 Pillars of Islam, especially to offer SALAATUL-JUMA.

There is only one mosque in Tokyo, which is located in the south-western part of the city. Almost all the new

Muslims in Tokyo who belong to our organizations live in the north-eastern part of Tokyo. For these brothers, it is very difficult to go to the Tokyo Mosque on every Friday. It takes more than one hour from their offices to the Mosque. For some, it takes one and a-half hour. Moreover, nowadays in Japan, many companies have adopted the system of so-called 2 holidays a week — on Saturday and Sunday. Therefore, Friday is the final work and busiest day in a week. So, it is quite difficult for these new Muslims to leave their offices for 4 hours or so. In spite of this fact, since the beginning of February last year, Mohammad Sawada, founder of these organizations and other leading members used to go to the Tokyo Mosque on every Friday to offer the JUMA prayer together with other Muslims. But the rest of the new Muslim brothers were facing a very difficult situation.

They could not offer JUMA prayer without their leaders. So, recently they have decided to offer the JUMA prayer at the organizations' headquarters at Ueno.

Quite fortunately, we have very spacious headquarters premises — a 5-storied building which we named “ALLAH AKBAR FATIHA BUILDING”, because this building exists only for the Muslims to worship and glorify the only God, Allah. All the members who work in this building are Muslims. All the people who enter this building must become Muslim someday.

Moreover, the name of this building is “FATIHA BUILDING”, because we hope we will open a new page in the history of Islam in Japan by the efforts of all Muslims in Japan. Every member

who works in this building starts work with SURA FATIHA in mind.

Plan of Establishing the Islamic Fatiha University

We are now planning to establish an Islamic Fatiha University in Tokyo which will be started, Insha Allah, in 1400 A.H. It goes without saying that the projected Islamic University will become a bastion of Islam in Japan. We want to set up a Literary and Law Department in which we shall teach Arabic Language, Islamic Law, Islamic Culture etc. at the first stage. Then we shall establish the Economic, Educational, Agricultural, Scientific and Medical Departments year by year. It is natural that this projected Islamic University will be very helpful to the Japanese people not only for studying the teaching of Islam but also for improving the friendly relations between Muslim countries and Japan in the true sense of the word. Furthermore, we will set up a dormitory for the students from Muslim countries. We will appeal to the leaders of the educational, economic, cultural, and political fields in Japan, asking their support to this very ambitious project of establishing the Islamic University. The most important thing is that the project of establishing such an Islamic university would provide opportunity to almost all the Japanese people to participate in the project for the cause of Islam. We hope that many leaders including those in the Japanese Government will come to understand the teaching of Islam deeply and some of them will come to declare their faith in Islam, Insha Allah, through the movement of establishing such a Islamic university.

Actually, as a first step toward implementing our program, we have opened a Fatiha Arabic Language Institute in April this year. This Fatiha Arabic Language Institute will turn into the Literature Department of the projected Fatiha University in future. In connection with this Fatiha Arabic Language Institute, we can not forget the fact that by the grace of Allah, more than half of the students who studied Arabic Language in this Institute have become Muslim.

HALAL Meat Center and Islamic Restaurant

We began to run a Halal Meat Center (Halal beef, mutton, chicken) and a Restaurant in May last year, but we had to close down the Halal Meat Center

and Restaurant for various reasons, especially for the economic reason. We hope, Insha Allah, that we shall reopen the Halal Meat Center and the Islamic restaurant someday in future with the support of Muslim brothers. We think it is the duty of the Japanese Muslims to supply Halal Meat to all other Muslims in keeping with the teaching of the Holy Qur'an.

Finally, at the strong request of the Muslims in Japan and abroad, we have established the "International Trading Co., Ltd." with the aim of engaging in trading business between Muslim countries and Japan, because, as I mentioned in the beginning, we have come to have Muslim brothers in almost all the fields of work in Japan.

(Continued from page 41)

The impact of the first Islamic Law Conference in Japan is still fresh in the minds of the Japanese scholars and other segments of the intelligentsia. The large number of inquiries through letters and visits to the Islamic Centre-Japan indicate that we have to work a lot and work more vigorously. The circumstances in Japan are not against us. It needs only determination and concerted efforts to achieve our goal in this country.

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH THE MOST BENEFICIENT AND THE MOST MERCIFUL

DECLARATION

This Conference of Islamic Law, organized by the Institute of Comparative Law in Japan, Chuo University, Tokyo, in cooperation with the Muslim World League, Mecca and Islamic Centre-Japan, held July 4-7, 1977, 18-21 Rajb 1397 Hijra, in the light of lectures presented

in this Conference and in the light of discussions which followed, hereby declares that:

Islamic Law, with its comprehensive principles and directives on the questions of religion, morality, economics and law is worthy of thorough study in world universities. Muslim World League and the Institute of Comparative Law in Japan feel a need for full cooperation between them for furthering the understanding of Islamic Law in Japan and for taking practical steps to fulfil this need.

This Conference on Islamic Law expresses its thanks to His Imperial Highness Prince Mikasa, President of Chuo University Dr. Shuzo Toda, Director of Institute of Comparative Law in Japan Dr. Masao Arai, and all participants for making this event successful.

This Conference also commends the people of Saudi Arabia who are working towards implementing Islamic concepts of solidarity, unity, welfare and non-usurious economic system to present Islamic concepts to the world.

READERS FORUM

On Islamic Movement in Japan

May Allah bless you for publishing the Forum continuously. It tells us a lot about the Islamic movement in Japan and about the Islamic organizations in that country. I could perhaps say without fear of contradiction that your Forum in English and ASSALAM of Islamic Center, Japan, in Japanese are the only two authentic and reliable magazines published in Japan by the Muslims.

Right now I am concerned with your editorial in Islamic Culture Forum No. 7, April 77, addressed to us – the readers. This seems to have been written with a sincere love for the Muslims. I was highly moved by the depth of idea underlying it. It is so thought provoking that I could not hold my pen back. However, there are some points which I would like to pass on to the readers through you, with your permission.

Sir, "Long history of Islamic tradition" is not a requirement for a Muslim to preach Islam boldly. It is understanding of faith, conviction, determination and sense of responsibility which are the essentials for conveying the message of Islam to others. It is not at all necessary for a Muslim society to wait for a few hundreds of years to pass, before preaching Islam. I, therefore, would suggest you not to be discouraged by the smallness of the number of Muslims in Japan. Please continue your efforts to organize them and do your duty as much as possible. Allah will reward you all. As a leader of Muslims, your responsibility is great, we assure you of our co-operation.

Now about the other point. Preaching of Islam or promotion of understanding of Islam in Japan can not wait till a 'Saint' comes out there. I say so with full respect to the great Muslim saints, *Ulama* and scholars of all ages wherever they might be. Islam is already on the forward march in Japan. We have to move and move fast. The horizon, as you know, is not completely dark. Some activities are there. Much more is required of course. The situation 15 years back and now is not the same. This I say with my personal experience in Japan. You have enumerated some basic qualities for a "Sainted Muslim or *Mufti* who

can be a symbol of ideal Islamic life, not just a preacher from the Muslim world", e.g. –

1. "He must settle down in Japan."

It seems you insist that he must be a foreigner. Let us try to bring out Japanese leadership which would be more effective. Let a Japanese be that 'symbol' of Islamic life, if a SYMBOL is at all necessary. Let us not insist that the person you speak of must be a foreigner. It is never fair to thrust outside leadership, I think. Let us create leadership rather than import it.

2. "Such a person must show example rather than uttering only concepts."

Nothing could be close to truth than this. In the past we suffered much due to careless talks not only in Japan but throughout the Muslim world. I am 100% with you on this matter. None should disagree. Actions speak louder than words.

I personally feel that in Japan the problem is not that of lack of a "Mufti," but it is the lack of conviction and strong will-power to practice Islam. As you know, a saint, a scholar and a *Mufti* can explain, teach or indicate what is good and what is bad. The real action and initiative lies with the believer himself. No saint can do anything unless we are ourselves prepared to honour our contract with Allah. Let me add, Sir, that there are no magic pills in Islam and no saint can play miracles unless we are prepared to change our habits and outlooks of life. This, I think, is a universal fact. I certainly do not negate organized, united and sincere efforts for uplift, recognition and education of Muslims in Japan. You know that there is no priesthood in Islam. I am afraid your idea of "Saint" may be interpreted to mean that all the religious powers lie in the hands of a single person. I wish you could explain a little more, to avoid any misunderstanding.*

In the last but one paragraph of the said wonderful editorial you have expressed your fear that in future "There may be persecution of the Muslims." I feel this is a purely hypothetical supposition. Let us see the history. The Christians were persecuted in Japan around 1549 A.D not because their number was large but because they violated law of the land which prohibited propagation of any religion other than that of the Emperor. They were persecuted because entry of foreigners was banned (or highly restricted), and they wanted to force their way into Japan. Also, there were efforts of forced Christian conversion in

those days of which you are speaking. History of Islam is full of such illustrious souls who sacrificed their health, home and life for the sake of Truth. In the days of our prophet Mohammad (P.B.U) – to say “LAILAHA ILLALLAHO MUHAMMADUR RASOOLULLAH” meant to hold fire on the palm. It is due to those great sons of Islam that we are Muslims today. Isn't it? Now if the Japanese society is not caring for Muslims or not creating “any hinderance” or “not persecuting them (Muslims)”, it is not because of their less number. It is because of the social set up, cultural evolution and constitutional changes of the country.

I remember, in your Forum No. 6 you have quoted Japanese Constitution. That explains that the state has nothing to do with the religious activities of the people. So it can be safely said that there is no possibility in foreseeable future that the Muslims (local or foreigners) will be persecuted unless there is a great social change which reinstates the old pre-World War II order of life in Japan. This I feel next to impossible.

I really appreciate you when you say that “True and strong faith” as well as “solidarity” can save the Muslims from all possible dangers and harms if and when they come.

Let us all work for strengthening the faith and solidarity among all the Muslims. I wish to close with the remarks that let us not look for remedies abroad, let us urge the Japanese Muslims to rise to the occasion. I really appreciate your desire to see the number of Muslims in Japan grow faster. This is a natural desire of a Muslim. Actually, such a desire shows the warmth of *Iman* – Faith – in a Muslim's heart. I am, however, not sure how much haste is advisable. You know in Japan there are cases where some people tend to give unauthentic figures about Muslim population in this country. We feel sorry that there is no authentic census of Muslims in Japan. The Japanese Muslims are said to number from 5,000 to 25,000. I feel we should increase the number of Muslims but not in such a way that we lose the quality side. Quality and quantity have to go hand in hand. This, I feel, is a point which we, the workers of Islam, must take care.

With these words I wish you success and hope your efforts will be crowned with blessings from Allah.

3-31-11 Uehara,
Shibuya-ku, Tokyo

A. R. Siddiqi
Director (Education)
Islamic Centre, Japan

Editor's Note: I fully agree with Brother Siddiqi's views expressed in the foregoing letter. Himself engaged in the Islamic work in Japan, Brother Siddiqi has first hand knowledge about the situation in Japan and as such can express his views with authority. And I sincerely appreciate his kind attention to our humble opinion.

At the same time, I still stick to my point that we need some foreign Muslims to guide us in our day-to-day Islamic life not by precepts only but by their character, their way of living, their love for both Islam and humanity. Of course, such persons must grow up from within Japan. Yet we must not forget to accept that Islam is still a 'foreign' religion so far as the Japanese thinking is concerned. It has no root in this land. Therefore, we cannot ignore the usefulness of our foreign brothers who must play the role of a touchstone. Situations in the past and in the present may not be the same but human behavior has common attributes in all ages and moral values never change. We view Islam through the behavior of the Muslim more than we learn through theoretical knowledge. My notion of a 'Saint' or 'Mufti' is that Muslim who by his personal behavior can love people, earn love of the people and convince people. Maybe, Brother Siddiqi is that Muslim of our dream.

Of course, the Japanese Muslims must come forward to provide leadership in the Islamic movement in this country. And it is sad that there is lack of enthusiasm among the Japanese Muslims. At the same time, I think I am not wrong to say that there is still less scope or less congenial environment for the Japanese Muslim to show more enthusiasm because Islamic movement has remained more or less a 'foreign' activity mostly done by the foreign Muslims depicting that Islam is a foreign matter to the Japanese.

Let us take the example of the Tokyo Mosque. A mosque, as everybody knows, is the House of Allah and it is the duty of every Muslim to take care of it. And every Muslim has the right to think and act for its well being. He must have a sense of participation in all matters of the mosque. But so far as the management of the Tokyo Mosque, the Japanese Muslims have no sense of participation except the sense of a 'guest' who is an 'outsider'. This fact has remained all through its history. We are glad that a new Imam has come. But we are sorry that we cannot understand him nor can he understand us.

Once again I want to stress that to become successful in the Islamic movement in Japan it is necessary to grasp the Japanese realities – to understand the Japanese mind and other aspects of Japanese life. To sow seeds of something in a land one must take into consideration of the properties of the climate and of the soil of that land.

Abu Bakr Morimoto

●●

I was pained and flabbergasted by the tone of the letter sent to you by Molvi A.S. Desai of Cape Province, South Africa on the question of photography and women in mosques (ICF No. 5 p.30-31).

The most despicable lines of this letter are "If people do not see light they must exit from Islam with grace", which in the context of the issue at hand was tantamount to saying you better do as Mr. M.S. Bhula says or you better leave the fold of Islam. What arrogance! What conceit! What presumptuousness! Where is the Islamic Spirit!

I may tell Mr. Desai that it is only ALLAH who can decide whether X, Y or Z is a good or bad Muslim, not the people who claim to be the Saviours of Islam and Islamic Ideals. Does not Mr. Desai realize that here are a set of dedicated converts to Islam trying in all sincerity to do something for the cause of Islam amidst tremendous odds?

Apparently, he has taken upon himself the roll of Martyr(?) to the Islamic cause and requests people who do not see eye to eye with him to make their exit with grace. If only he had a spark of Islamic Spirit in him he would not have written to you in this tone. On the contrary, you have in a cultured and dignified way replied to Mr. Desai in your editorial of the same issue which speaks volumes for the true Islamic Spirit practiced by you.

It is the uncouth and uncultured attitude of people like Mr. Desai that make well meaning people very bitter and makes our new brothers feel – Is this Islam! Are these Muslims! Lest I be misunderstood I wish to specifically state that I am not advocating that women should go to the mosque nor that photography should be permitted, but I am in whole-hearted agreement with the fine article written by Mr. A.S.K. Joommal on page 13 of the same Islamic Culture Forum magazine No. 5. Not only is his article a very instructive one but it also shows that there is no room in Islam for fanaticism and extremism and that we Muslims must have our priorities in

order.

23 Police Park Avenue,
Havelock Town,

Colombo-5, Sri Lanka **M. Kaleel Raheeman**

(NOTE: We would like to draw Brother Raheeman's attention to the letter of Brother A.S. Desai on page 39 of ICF No. 7, April 1977, in which he denied writing of the letter referred to by Brother Raheeman. We also want to point out that signatures in the two letter differed although both beared the same name – Editor)

●●

My hearty thanks for your kindly sending me Islamic Culture Forum which I enjoyed to my heart's content.

Through your column, I would like to request for pen-palls from United Kingdom, U.S.A., Germany and other African countries. My interests are exchange of view-cards, music, reading, photography, and current affairs. I am a young man of 21 and a polytechnic student.

P.O. Box 1423
Kumasi, Ghana

Alhassan A. Mallam

●●

I am pleased to see your magazine, the Islamic Culture Forum. Thank you very much for sending me the issues of the magazine. I find them very impressive and I hope this magazine will help a great deal in developing consciousness about the importance of teachings of Islam. Such efforts are bound to consolidate unity and create better understanding among the Muslims of the world.

1 Ramkrishna Mission Road
Dacca-3, Bangladesh

Mainul Hosein

●●

I am a Muslim currently stationed in Okinawa, Japan. I am in the U.S. Air Force. I would like to know if you know of any other Muslims here in Okinawa. I have run across a couple of Muslim sisters married to non-Muslims. If there is an organization here in Okinawa, please send me names and addresses so that I can get in touch with them. I would also like for you to send me some literature if you can. Also, if you sell books, I would like to have a listing on them.

Could you please send me the date of the beginning and ending of Ramadan? What help you give me will be greatly appreciated.

Okinawa, Japan

Ishmail D. Abdullah

●●

The Birthday of Prophet Muhammad was celebrated throughout Burma on March 3, this year.

In olden days, the *Eid-e-Milad-un-Nabi* or the Prophet's Birthday used to be celebrated by way of giving lectures on the life of the Prophet and reading *Moulood* in all the mosques in the country after the *Esha* Prayers followed by distribution of sweets. This continued from 1st to 12th Rabi-ul-Awwal.

This year the Day was celebrated *inter alia* with the holding of a mass meeting in Rangoon attended by both men and women. It was a great success.

Besides, the All Burma Burmese Muslim Women's League held their own gathering on the occasion. As usual, there were lectures. Then followed a grand party which was also graced by the presence of Madam Kassim, wife of H.E. Mr. Kassim bin Mohammed bin Hussain, Ambassador of Malaysia.

Though the occasion affords us the opportunity to arouse the zeal of the Muslims to become better Muslims and to propagate Islam to others, some members of the *Ulama* dubbed this function as *Bid'a*. They think that giving religious lectures and imparting religious instructions are the only concern of the *Ulama*. As in elsewhere, we in Burma also are struggling against fanaticism. It is our sincere desire to propagate Islam in its true spirit and we believe that our humble efforts need appreciation and encouragement.

Rangoon, Burma

(Miss) Myritzu Chit

The existence of your wonderful magazine Islamic Culture Forum has come to my knowledge through NUR - The Light - published from El-Cerrito, U.S.A. and an article published in Memon Welfare of Bombay under the title 'Islam in Japan' translated from your magazine by Sultan Akhtar Patel, Alhamdolillah.

I and my associates are engaged in the sublime mission of presenting Islam to our fellow brothers in its beautiful, crystal and simple form so that all of us may be guided by Allah to the path of truth. Therefore, I earnestly request you to please enrol me in your mailing list and also other organizations all over the world to send us literature on Islam, through the good offices of your column.

C/O M/S Abdul Shakur Abdulla,

P.O. Box No. 11.

Latur 413-512

Maharashtra, India

E.A. Motiwala

●● We are delighted that our humble Newsletter (now entitled "Voice of Muslim Africa" and incorporating the previous "Fil-ul-Islam" and "Al-Jihaad") is reaching you regularly and we give you the assurance that you shall continue to receive it for so long as Allah may spare and empower us to perform this specific service in His Holy cause.

All six issues of your own beautifully edited and splendidly printed Islamic Culture Forum have safely reached us and we want you to know, Beloved Brother, that we sincerely regard these publications as being of the best of the Islamic publications in the English language extant in the world today and we congratulate you with our entire hearts on these publications and would assure you that they occupy a pride of place on our Headquarters Library shelves.

With our very best Salaams and beseeching of Allah, All-Merciful, that He long spare and empower your Society to continue with its noble work in Japan and bestow upon you all a Reward Magnificent for that which (through His Grace) you have done for Islam and the Muslims upto now.

P.O. Box 4872,

Cape Town, 8000

South Africa

Ismail Joubert

Director Propagation

Al-Jihad, South Africa

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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Thank you.

Executive Director

Islamic Culture Society, Japan

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THE MUSLIM WORLD:

Monochrome reproduction of the 4-Colour map attached with ISLAM: FAITH AND PRACTICE (see Book Review).

