

FAREWELL RECEPTION FOR 3 WELLKNOWN IMAMS AT THE ICC

A reception was held at the Islamic Cultural Centre on Friday, 24th January to bid farewell to three Imams: Sheik Jamal Manna, who has been with the Centre for the past 20 years. He has been a real asset, spreading Islam not only inside the mosque but also everywhere outside the ICC among the community.

Sheik Hamid Khalifa, whom we have seen develop his communication skills during the 12 years in office.

Sheikh Mahmood, whose unusual voice and serenity endeared the jamaat to him during his four years as Imam at the centre.

H.E. Dr. Mohamed I. Shaker, the Egyptian Ambassador, thanked them in his address for their service. So did Dr. Al Ghamdi, the Director of the I.C.C. and many others. They were also given sound advice and encouragement from one of the veteran Imams Sheik Zahran.

On behalf of the MWA we wish to extend our thanks and best wishes and Allah's blessings to Sheik Jamal Manna, who has been a constant advisor and friend to our Association. He will be greatly missed.

Sheik Hamid Khalifa has been a great supporter of the MWA. We will miss him and his children. They have become an integral part at our functions.

Sheik Mahmood we did not get to know very well. We shall remember him as we all liked the way he recited the Holy Quran.

We extend a hearty welcome to the 3 new Imams and look forward to a good rapport with them. We wish you all the very best and pray that your stay here may be rewarding.

The new Imams are: Dr. Muhammed Kamal El-Din; Dr. Al Khedr El-Kashif and Sheik Hassan Shafi'.

CISFOO

Guillettstr. 35, 6000 Frankfurt

The MUSLIM WOMAN

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NEXT MWA MEETING

Sunday, 9th February 1992, at 4.30 pm
at the Islamic Cultural Centre, 146 Park
Road, London NW8

4.30 Opening Dua
Recitation from Holy Quran
MWA Business

5.09 Maghrib Prayer

5.30 MIRAJ - Talk by Mrs. Saeeda Sharif

6.15 Closing Dua Tea

MWA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

PRESIDENT	Mrs Khanam Hassan
SECRETARY	Mrs Nisa Ali
ASST. SECRETARY	Mrs Karima Mustafa
TREASURER	Mrs. Mavis Badawi
RELIGIOUS ADVISER	Mrs Saeeda Sherif
EDITOR	Dr Zubeda Osman
CO-EDITOR	Mrs Samina Hasan
ARTWORK/PRINTING	

MEETINGS OF THE MWA ARE TAKING PLACE ON THE SECOND SUDNAY EACH MONTH

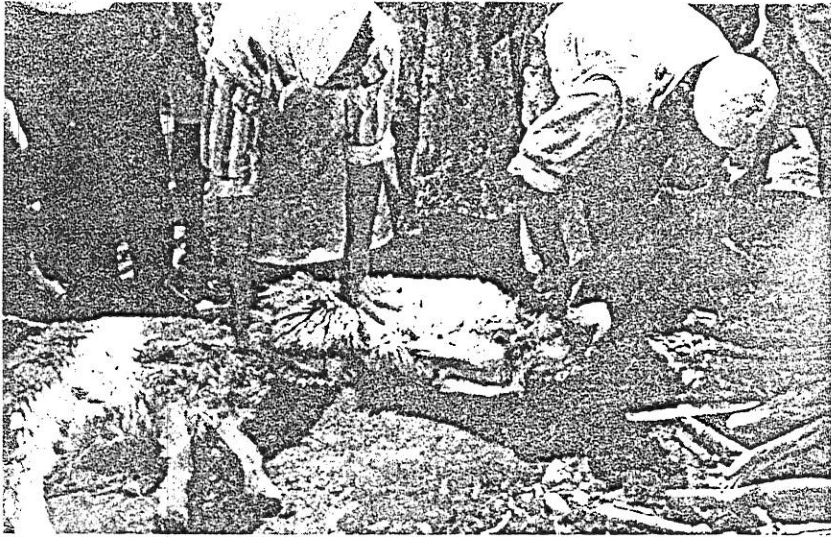
Festivals and Festivities in Islam

Islam has two major festivals a year, one at the end of the month of Fasting known as *Īd al-Fiṭr*, and the other towards the end of the Pilgrimage period when all those who do not attend the Pilgrimage celebrate a Festival of Sacrifice known as *Īd al-Adhā*.

ĪD AL-FIṬR

The Festival of the *Īd al-Fiṭr* marks the end of the fast and on that day the community offers special congregational prayer and it is customary to visit one's friends and relatives, all of whom participate in the joyous occasion. Children receive gifts, new clothes and presents, while others exchange greetings and wear their best clothes on this Festive day. It is an obligation on every Muslim who is not poor to give charity to the poorer members of society to enable them to enjoy the celebration in a decent manner.¹ The Festival of the *Īd al-Fiṭr* is a time of thanksgiving to God for enabling Muslims to observe the fast of the whole month of Ramaḍān and seeking His forgiveness for any lapses. Muslim festivals differ sharply from the festivals of other religions in the sense that Islam does not allow its followers to indulge in extravagance, attend concerts, dances, wine parties, or discotheques and such worldly pleasures. It is an occasion for prayer, social greetings and reunions.

1. Cf. Abū Dāwūd. See also other *Ḥadīth* and *Fiqh* literature, chapter "*Īd*".



The scene of Sacrifice of Animals at Mina during the Pilgrimage period. Muslims slaughter the animal by the inner part of the neck, using a sharp knife. (From the Ḥajj folder published by Minaret House, Croydon.)

‘ĪD AL-ADḤĀ (Festival of Sacrifice)

The ‘Īd al-Adḥā occurs towards the end of the Pilgrimage period and is also an occasion when Muslims throughout the world attend congregational prayers and make a sacrifice to God in the form of an animal, sharing its meat with relatives, friends, and the poor. By observing this Festival, Muslims demonstrate their readiness to sacrifice their lives as did the Prophet Abraham about three thousand years ago. This Festival is celebrated for three days. As with the Festival of ‘Īd al-Fiṭr, schools, colleges, universities and government offices, as well as private institutions in the Muslim countries, remain closed during these days so that everybody can participate in the celebration and enjoy lawful things in a relaxed mood.¹

1. A great number of Muslims are now living in non-Muslim countries, such as Europe, America and Australia, hence the majority community in such countries should recognize the cultural and religious needs of the Muslims living there. Muslims of such countries have the right to at least a day off to celebrate the major festivals. Denying them this right is tantamount to an infringement of basic human rights.

Apart from these two major Festivals, there are some other occasions when Muslims all over the world celebrate with much enthusiasm. They are as follows:

(a) LAYLAT AL-QADR (The Night of Power)

Laylat al-Qadr, described in the Qur’ān as “better than a thousand months”,¹ occurs on one of the five odd nights in the last ten days of Ramaḍān.² The night of the 27th is regarded as the likeliest night of *Qadr*, and elaborate preparations are made to welcome this night with prayer and devotion. This blessed night is traditionally observed in all parts of the Muslim world with great reverence. Muslims devote the whole night to offering supererogatory prayers, reading from the Qur’ān, visiting the cemetery and asking forgiveness from God.

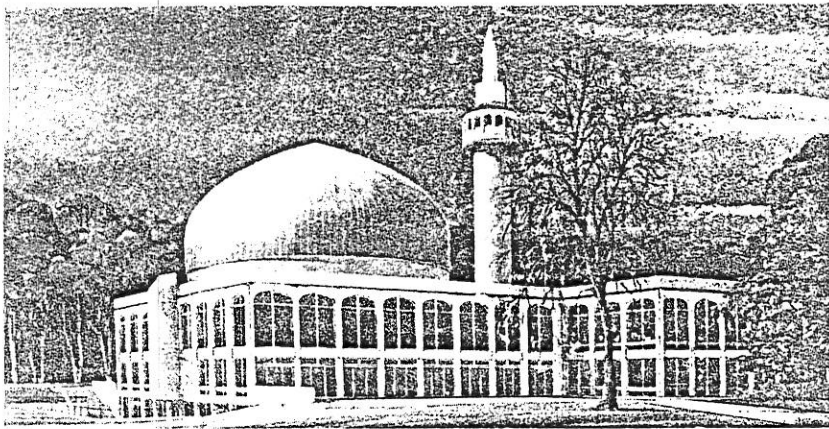
(b) ‘ĀSHŪRĀ’ (Tenth of Muḥarram)

‘Āshūrā’ is observed on the tenth of Muḥarram, the first month of the Muslim calendar. On this day, Muslims observe a voluntary fast and in some parts of the Muslim world they celebrate it by preparing special dishes. To differentiate from the one-day fast of the Jews, Muslims celebrate ‘Āshūrā’ by fasting for two days. Historically the day of ‘Āshūrā’ is of immense importance, because it was on this day that the Prophet Noah left the ark, the Prophet Moses saved the Israelites from the Pharaohs, and Ḥusayn the grandson of the Prophet, was martyred at Karbala, near Kufa in 60 A.H./679 C.E. etc.³

1. The Qur’ān 97: 3.

2. See Bukhārī and Muslim, s.v. *Ramaḍān and Qadr*.

3. Bukhārī and Muslim, s.v. ‘Āshūrā’.



London Central Mosque, situated at 146 Park Road, London, N.W.8. One of the biggest Mosques and Islamic Centres in Europe. (By courtesy of Publication Department, Islamic Cultural Centre, London.)

(c) JUM'AT AL-WIDĀ' (Farewell Friday)

Historically Jum'ā (Friday) has always been a day of special religious significance especially marked by Friday congregational prayer.¹ *Jum'at al-Widā'* occurring on the last Friday of Ramaḍān is of special significance. On this day, Muslims in large numbers throng to mosques and offer their prayers in congregation, bidding farewell to the month of Fasting with a heavy heart.

(d) LAYLAT AL-MI'RĀJ (Night of the Ascent)

The celebration of *Laylat al-Mi'rāj* is made to commemorate the ascent of the Prophet Muḥammad to Heaven.² The *Mi'rāj* also known as the *Isrā'*, happened on the 27th of Rajab, the seventh month of the Muslim calendar in the tenth year of Muḥammad's prophethood. On this particular date, Muslims hold special assemblies and describe the life of the Prophet with special reference to the *Mi'rāj*.

1. The Qur'an 62: 9.

2. The Prophet led by the Archangel Jibra'il was taken to the Seven Heavens where he spoke with God and came back the same night with a number of instructions such as the institution of the obligatory five daily prayers. See *Hadith* literature on *Mi'rāj*.

(e) MAWLID AN-NABĪ (Birthday of the Prophet)

The 'Īd *Mawlid an-Nabī* is celebrated with special assemblies organized to eulogize the Prophet and describe different aspects of his life.¹ Sometimes, Muslims organize such functions to last over several days in the month of Rabī' al-Awwal, the third month of the Muslim calendar, in which the Prophet was born.

There are some other festive occasions connected with the family such as the birth of a child, circumcision and marriage. It is part of the Islamic faith that a child is received as a gift from God and is not to be considered, as some Westerners think of them as a "Problem".² For this reason, the birth of a child is considered a great blessing and consequently, Muslims express their thanks by giving to the poor gifts in the form of food, money or clothes, announcing the name of God (*Adhān*) in the infant's ears and arranging an 'Aqīqa party, usually after a week, where an animal is sacrificed and friends and relatives are invited to a feast.³

The circumcision of a boy (*khitān*) is another occasion for festivity in the family. It is said that the practice of circumcision, which has been made obligatory in Islam, has been inherited from the Prophet Abraham.⁴ The boy is attired in good clothes and receives presents from relatives and well-wishers. Often, to mark the occasion, the parents also arrange a feast to which friends, relatives and neighbours are invited.

1. The celebration of the Prophet's birthday in Muslim society started from the 10th Century C.E. i.e., about four hundred years after the death of the Prophet. (cf. Mez, *Renaissance of Islam*, Eng. tr. by Khuda Bakhsh, London, 1937, p.427).

2. See *Mishkāt*, chapter "Aqīqa", where a number of Traditional sayings have been quoted.

3. Ibid.

4. See for example, *Mishkāt* and books on *Fiqh*.

by Nisa Ali

The AGM of the Muslim Women's Association was held on Sunday 8th December 1991 at the Islamic Cultural Centre.

The meeting was opened at 4.45 pm with the recitation of Sura Yasin by Mrs. Sharifa Sharif who also gave us the translation in English. Mrs. Sharif also elaborated on its meaning and importance as a comforter to the bereaved.

Reports were presented first by the President, Mrs. Khanam Hassan and then by our Secretary, Mrs. Nisa Ali (see in this issue). Mrs. Mavis Badawi, our Treasurer, gave a verbal report. She did not receive the audited account from the accountant yet. She mentioned that our funds were low and we needed funds for the administration of the Muslim Women's Assoc. and our major expenditure, Madina House. With the lack of children funds were not forthcoming. She made an appeal to members to pay their subscription which is due in January 1992.

Mrs. Samina Hasan, Co-Editor of 'The Muslim Woman', urged the members to contribute articles for the monthly magazine.

Following these reports members expressed their concern about the non referrals to Madina House. Some suggestions wre made.

The results of the elections were as follows:

The Executive Committee for 1991/93:

PRESIDENT	Mrs. Khanam Hassan
SECRETARY	Mrs. Nisa Ali
TREASURER	Mrs. Mavis Badawi
ASSISTANT SECRETARY	Mrs. Karima Mustafa
MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY	Mrs. Assia Youssef
RELIGIOUS ADVISER	Mrs. Saeeda Sharif
EDITORS 'THE MUSLIM	Dr. Zubeda Osman
WOMAN	Mrs. Samina Hasan

Committee Members:

Mrs. Qamar Bashir	Mrs. Firdaus Arif
Mrs. Azra Rekhi	Mrs. Soraya Youssef
Mrs. Shafqat Faffar	Mrs. Gul Amin
Mrs. Sharifa Sharif	Dr. Shahana Rizvi
Miss Shirin Hassan	Mrs. Gania Hoodless

We thank Miss Shirin Hassan for the efficient way she carried out the task as returning officer.

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Assalamu Alaikum,

I shall read my report now and in the end I shall be glad to answer any questions you may like to ask.

I would first like to thank you all for coming today to the Annual General Meeting of the Muslim Women's Association.

You will hear later on this afternoon about the activities which MWA members have vigorously carried out this year, but first I would just like to make a few comments.

The MWA has continued to sponsor children in Lebanon through the Save the Children Fund. We also have contributed money to the U.M.O. Youth Council in London, to Bangladesh, Iran, Islamic Council of Palestine and children in Iraq. Members have undertaken welfare work as well, for instance, visited the sick in hospitals and offered help, comfort and support to families in need. We have organized Bazaars to raise funds to support our projects. We held regular meetings of the MWA as well as of the Trustees of Madina House.

This is perhaps a good time to say a few words about Madina House. We have so far helped over 200 children in Madina House. We were asked by the inspector to obtain larger premises, as Madina House has no play area for children. But for the last 8 months we have had no referrals, that means no children have been admitted. We have tried our best by advertising in 'Community Care and Social Work Today' (copies of which are available for you to look at, if you so wish). Unfortunately we had no success. We have contacted the Social Services Department to find out what causes this blockage. We have had no success so far.

No money is coming in, yet expenditure continues to escalate. We have to spend a large amount of money to train staff in order to comply with the new legislation.

We are facing a serious crisis at the moment. One of our trustees has donated £20,000.-, one committee member £5,000.- and two other committee members £1,000.- each. We feel very grateful for their generosity. Yet, in view of the ever increasing expenditure this money will not last long.

There are a number of options under consideration:

- 1) A Counselling Centre - the community might use Madina House as a resource and we would raise some money this way, but this would still not be enough.
- 2) A Drop in Centre - a creche, where working mothers leave their children during the day. They would be expected to make some contribution, but this still would not be sufficient.
- 3) A Hotel/Bed and Breakfast or flats for our rich brothers and sisters who come from abroad and need accommodation. And with this money we can meet the administrative costs of the MWA, and the remainder would finance one of the above, so that we don't move away from our aims and objectives.

If you have any constructive suggestions please come forward and we will take it for discussion at the Trustees meeting next week.

These are serious challenges but through Allah Almighty's help and your active support we shall continue, Insha Allah, to meet them, but we must be united and we must remember to be strong in the will... to strive, to seek, to find and never to yield...

In this context, I would like to thank all those who have worked so hard this year. I would particularly like to express my appreciation for the continued cooperation and support to the MWA by the Islamic Cultural Centre.

Thank you so much.
May Allah Almighty bless you all.

P.S. £8,000.- which we raised and distributed between the starving children of Iraq, cyclone victims of Bangladesh, sponsored children in Lebanon and refugees in Jordan. This money was not out of the association's funds. Members, their families and friends donated specifically for this purpose.

Khanam Hassan
President.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Madam President and Sisters, Assalamu Alaikum,

I feel quite happy to know that this Muslim Women's Association will be having its "Pearl Anniversary" next April. 30 Years! Yes, 30 years in which we have seen many changes, a large turnover of members many challenges but one thing has remained. It is the commitment by the long standing members and new ones to the aims and ethos of this association.

Give us a situation and we react! This year was exceptional as our members excelled themselves. Our President was told of the urgent need for milk and medical supplies in Iraq. Within a very short space of time £8,000.- were raised and sent to the Red Crescent in Jordan through Dr. Majid. Funds were also raised to help various relief situations.

Our ongoing funding are our two well established projects. 1) The Sponsorship scheme by which we sponsor children in Lebanon. 2) Madina House. This year we launched a fund raising appeal to purchase new premises for Madina House. Due to circumstances beyond our control the donations received were negligible, but we must thank all those who contributed to the special fund which is still open.

'The Muslim Woman', our monthly magazine, has kept you informed of events. The interesting discussions, the many guest speakers, the informative articles, the medical and health page, the children's section all help to create a worthwhile magazine.

Members have been busy in many ways: giving lectures, attending seminars, conferences, visiting sick people widows and bereaved.

We were also represented at social events organised by various organisations.

On behalf of the members of this Association I wish to congratulate and thank you Mrs. Hassan, our longest standing President. You have devoted so much time and energy to this Association and Madina House, which we sincerely appreciate.

Thanks to all the committee members for their support and to all our members who have been so generous, both with cash and kind. May Allah bless you all.

Our thanks to the authorities of the Islamic Cultural Centre for their kindness and support to our Association.

Thank you.

Nisa Ali.

JANUARY 1992 MEETING

The meeting of the MWA was held on Sunday 12 January 1992, at the Islamic Cultural Centre.

The meeting was opened by the Religious Advisor, Mrs. Saeeda Sharif, with the recitation of verses 120-128 of Sura 16 - Nahl - The Bee. She talked about Prophet Abraham's (owbp) obedience to Allah and how we, as part of the Umma should "Invite to the way of thy Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching: and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious... For thy Lord knoweth best who have strayed from His Path and who receive guidance..." Mrs. Sharif pointed out how some of our young people are encouraged to join the Christian faith.

Apologies were received from several of our members who were not at all well.

Mrs. Ghania Hoodless and Mrs. Saeeda Sharif said they would be available to visit the sick etc.

It was decided that Mrs. Saeeda Sharif will speak on the Miraj at the February Meeting.

We discussed:

- a) The increase of begging in and around the Mosque
- b) The way Islam and Muslims are portrayed in the media
- c) The Islamic movement in Algeria and South Georgia.

GET WELL WISHES

We wish all those members who were not well a speedy recovery and look forward to seeing them at the next meeting.

We send best wishes to our dear friend Dr. Charis Waddy who is on her way to recovery after a recent operation.

GREETINGS FROM MARIAM

Our dear sister Mariam Omar who moved to South Africa, sends salam and best wishes to her friends and members of the association.

JANAZA

Mrs. Gania Hoodless, Mrs. Nisa Ali and Mrs. Firdous Arif represented the MWA at the Janaza of one of our members, Sister Odulati on Wednesday, 11th December 91, at the Islamic Cultural Centre. May Allah give her a peaceful resting place.

KASHMIR DAY

SATURDAY 8TH FEBRUARY 1992 10am-6 m

at THE UNIVERSITY OF LONDON, UNION HALL, MALET ST., WC1

Kashmiri Cultural Event. Exhibition of Kashmiri Art, literature and handicraft. Lectures, videos, Kashmiri youth session, WOMEN'S SESSION, Kashmiri take-away food. Special arrangements for children's nursery.

A fund raising dinner



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