



HIGHLIGHTS OF
BILAL MUSLIM
MISSION OF TANZANIA
(1965 - 1986)



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OF TANZANIA

1965 — 1986

By
The Managing Committee
BILAL MUSLIM MISSION OF TANZANIA
P.O. Box 20033
DAR ES SALAAM
Tanzania

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PREFACE

It gives me a pleasure to write these few lines as Preface to this booklet, which gives a condense and comprehensive picture of the activities of the Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania for the period 1965 - 1986.

It is necessary to mention in this connection the wholehearted support the Mission has been getting from the K.S.I. Supreme Council of Africa, and particularly from the present officials of the Council, especially Haji Mohamed G. Dhirani, the Chairman. Their dedication to Tabligh work has been a source of strength for the Mission. Haji Mohamed Hasham (Hon. Treasurer of the Council) is a Committee member of the Mission, and his advice, help and support has been very valuable to us in all these years.

My predecessor, Haji Ahmad Hussein Sheriff Dewji, guided the Mission with devotion and dedication since its establishment upto the last year; and continues to take deep interest in the progress and development of the Mission.

I must also express the Mission's gratitude to the generous donors, devoted members, dedicated teachers, muballigheen and staff, without whose wholehearted cooperation and support the Mission could not achieve what it has done.

We regret that at the time of compiling this booklet, we could not find some important photos, for example, the scenes of the eye-comps, or the pictures of some volunteers and past officials of the Mission.

Dar es Salaam
21st August, 1986



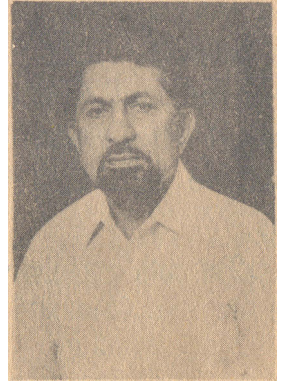
Fidahussein Abdullah
Chairman

MESSAGE
OF

Haji Mohamed G. M. Dhirani,

Chairman,
The Federation of Khoja Shia Ithna-asheri
Jamaats of Africa

We offer our gratification to Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala for having bestowed upon the Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania the double achievement of opening the Howza-e-Ilmiya and laying the foundation stone of the Markaz as-Sayyid ai- Khoui.



With the initial establishment at D'Salaam the activities of the Mission have spread and are now strongly rooted as far as Kenya, Burundi, Rwanda, Zaire, Madagascar, Mauritius and some West African countries.

This being the religion of Allah, it is He who takes its care and sees to its progress.

On our part it is our Islamic obligation to endeavour to spread the religion of Allah. In this respect it must be mentioned that so far the tablighi work has been carried on by dedicated workers on purely voluntary basis. It is through their selfless and untiring efforts that the Bilal Muslim Mission has reached the present stage. To all of them we must pay due respect and leave it to Allah to reward them here and in hereafter for their services in His cause.

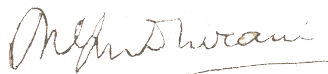
It was Hujjatu'l Islam Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi who initiated the idea of the Mission and then turned the idea into fact. It was through his efforts that the activities commenced in Tanzania and it is a pleasure to note that he is

again with us to enhance the tablighi activities.

Today we must also remember late Ayatullah al-Uzma Sayyid Muhsin al-Hakeem who had reminded the Community that we were answerable to Allah if we did not do any efforts in this respect.

Our present Marja', Ayatullah al-Uzma as-Sayyid Abul Quasim al-Khoui takes a very keen interest in the activities of the Mission and is a source of encouragement to it in all respects.

I offer my prayers for further success of the Mission

A handwritten signature in brown ink, reading "Mohamed G.M. Dhirani", with a horizontal line underneath.

Dar es Salaam,
20th August, 1986

MOHAMED G.M. DHIRANI
Chairman



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE BENEFICENT, THE MERCIFUL

PROLOGUE

Now Shi'a **madh-hab** is firmly rooted in African soil. Wherever you go in Tanzania or Kenya, Burundi or Zaire, Nigeria or Ghana, Sierra Leone or Senegal, Ivory Coast or Madagascar, you will find indigenous Africans who are proud to call themselves Shi'a Ithna-asheri. They have their **Hawzas** and **Madrasas**, schools and hostels, **Mosques** and **Husainiyas**; they have religious books and magazines in their own languages; there are 'ulama' and muballigheen among them as are the teachers and writers - who use their talents in the service of Islam.

Twentyone years ago, the scene was different. In 1964, you could have travelled from Somalia to Madagascar and from Tanzania to Nigeria without finding a single African Shi'a.

It all began here in Tanzania, when the Bilal Muslim Mission was established to propagate True Islam according to the Qur'an and Sunnah.

WHY THE MISSION?

Islam is the religion for the whole mankind. Its God is 'Rabbul-Alamin' (Lord of the Worlds); its book is 'Dhikrul-lil-Alamin' (Reminder to all the worlds); its Prophet was sent "ilannasi Kaffatan' (to whole mankind); its centre of worship, Kaaba, is 'hudan wa Mubarakal-lil-Alamin' (Guidance and blessings to all the worlds). These clear declarations are enough to inspire the Muslim community to convey this universal religion to every corner of the globe.

Moreover, numerous Ayas of the Qur'an exhort the Muslims to call the people to the path of righteousness.

The Holy Prophet of Islam always ended his sermons with the words: فليبلغ الشاهد الغائب (Those who are present should convey it to those who are not here). Thus every Muslim is obliged to convey the Message to those who have not heard it yet.

And it was Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) himself who laid the foundation of missionary work by sending his companions to neighbouring tribes and countries inviting them to accept Islam.

Also he told Imam 'Ali bin Abi Talib (a.s.):

“O 'Ali: If Allah guides someone through you to the right path, it is better for you than all the world and its riches.”

In the light of these Ayas, traditions and precedents; there is no need to emphasize the importance of Tabligh, i.e., missionary activity to convey the message of true Islam to those who until now have not been properly approached.

Still it was necessary to mention these facts because many un-informed Muslims in East Africa are of the opinion that there is no need of such organised effort, because, according to them; there was no such organisation in the days of the Holy Prophet. They forget that during his life, the Prophet being the absolute ruler was himself THE ORGANISATION.

In fact, these Muslims are victims of the propaganda of the Christian Missions. Time and again one comes across statements by Christian missionaries that, in spite of all the efforts of Christianity in Africa, Islam gets 3 or 4 times more converts than the Christianity.

According to the Newsweek (New York) the number of Roman Catholics - mind you, only Roman Catholics - in Africa increased from 20 million (in 1965) to 65 millions in 1985. We have yet to see in Africa even five

million newly-converted Muslims in place of these 45 million newly-converted Catholics! According to our thinking such statements are a double-edged sword: they lull the African Muslims to contented sleep, leaving the field to the Christian Missions; and they stir the religious and philanthropic institutions and foundations in Europe and America, to pour more and more money into the coffers of the Missions in Africa.

BACKGROUND

The Shia Ithna-ashari who settled in East Africa in the last quarter of the 19th century were mostly Khoja by origin and traders by profession.

They had themselves separated from H.H. the Aga Khan, and, as a result of that upheaval, were facing social and economic troubles. Naturally, in that situation, they were more concerned with establishing their own identity, rather than reaching out to others. No attention was given to channelling their religious zeal towards propagation of the faith among other groups; and, unwittingly, the African Muslims came to look upon this holy faith as something that originated in India. Thus, in their minds, Shia faith had nothing to do with the original Islam!

The myths prevalent at that time in East Africa about the Shia make one laugh today; but at that time it was hardly amusing.

In the mid-fifties, Mulla Husein Alarakhya Rahim wrote in the Zanzibar based religious Gujarati periodical "SALSABIL" about the need to spread the message of Ahlul-Bayt (a.s.) among the indigenous inhabitants of the continent; the late professor Khwaja Mohamed Latif Ansari of Pakistan had drawn the attention of the community to this need in his address delivered at Arusha Conference in December 1958. Before him late Allamah Sayyid Ibne Hasan Jarchawi (Pakistan) and thereafter late Zakir Husain Farooqi (India) drew attention to the importance of tabligh. But it was all a cry in wilderness. The talk never reached the stage of serious discussion.

After describing the condition of Shia community in early 1960's, Al-Haj

Mulla Asgharali M.M. Jaffer writes in his booklet *Outline of Shi'a Ithna-ashari History in East Africa*: "As these novel ideas suffered the pangs of labour, a young Aalim from India set his feet on land in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania. With an analytic bent and genius, vast knowledge and readiness to meet with the new challenges, this young Aalim was destined to set the wheels of change moving. He was Maulana Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi. Whether he himself was aware of the new directions to which Shia Ithna-ashari community of Eastern Africa was being led by his efforts and whether his efforts were intentional and thus motivated, is difficult to ascertain. But that his arrival heralded a new era in the Shiite society of East Africa is indisputable. Among the Ulema who now remained to discharge their set role, he was perhaps the first to walk down briskly from the pedestal of mere adoration. Maulana set himself to learn kiswahili, the lingua franca of Tanzania and Kenya and language adopted in Zaire, Uganda, coastal parts of Madagascar, Comoro islands and boundaries of Somalia. With great diligence, he perfected his English. He was now equipped and prepared to meet with the new demands in which he himself was a fervent and ardent believer. This was indeed very important; for the new venue of service was not imposed him; it was charted by himself".

A scheme for tabligh was prepared by Maulana Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi and sent to secretariat of the Khoja Shi'a Ithna-ashari Supreme Council at Arusha in 1962. In 1963, he was transferred to Arusha and the plan was discussed at length. At that stage it could not be implemented as suggested, but a pilot plan was put into effect. Meanwhile late Ayatullah Sayyid Muhsin al-Hakim gently admonished some leaders of the Khoja Shia Ithna-asharis to preach the Truth to the African masses and thus to absolve themselves of the sacred responsibility to Allah Almighty. In 1964 Maulana Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi submitted another detailed memorandum on the missionary activities before the conference of the federation convened at Tanga, Tanzania. The 1964 memorandum was received with mixed feelings but it got a boost from a resolution sent by Dar-es-salaam Jamaat "to do something in this (tabligh) connection. With valuable support of Al-Haj Mulla Asgharali M.M Jaffer and Al-Haj Ali Mohammed Jaffer Sharif, the



Late Ayatullah al-‘Uzma as-Sayyid MUHSIN AL-HAKEEM whose encouragement and patronage put the Mission on sound footing.

scheme was ultimately adopted as a policy by an appreciable majority. This is how a new field of activity appropriately named BILAL MUSLIM MISSION¹ was begun.



(Late) Al-Haj Mohamedali Meghji ex-Chairman of the K.S.I. Supreme Council: during his chairmanship, Bilal Muslim Mission was established and progressed.

Al-Haj Mulla Asgharali M.M. Jaffer who in his capacities as the K.S.I. Supreme Council's Hon. General Secretary, Vice-Chairman and then Chairman, nurtured the Bilal Muslim Mission leading it from strength to strength.

1 After the great African companion of the Prophet, and first Muazzin of Islam Hazrat Bilal, may Allah bestow upon him His pleasure.



Hujjatul Islam Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi

A committee was formed at Mombasa (where Supreme Council's headquarters were now placed) with Haji Mohsin Ali Mohammed Jaffer as its convenor. Simultaneously work was started at Dar-es-salaam by Maulana Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi (where he was transferred as the resident 'Alim). Soon after his arrival Haji Hussein Nasser Walji and Haji Fidahussein Abdullah Hameer were elected President and General Secretary of the Dar-es-salaam Jamaat respectively. With their active and enthusiastic support, Maulana began Tabligh work.

For two years, the Dar-es-salaam Jamaat nursed the mission during its infancy.



Al-Haj Ali Mohamedjaffer Shariff A founding Member, who even at this age spends all his time and energy in Tabligh activities.

Mulla Asgharali M.M Jaffer writes in his above mentioned book:
“As I have mentioned earlier, the incessant and untiring efforts and contributions by Maulana Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi in this direction have been decisive and of great importance. His knowledge of Swahili and English enabled him to offer his service without undue hesitation. He was appointed Chief Missionary of Bilal Muslim Mission - an appellation signifying the new role of an Aalim among the Khoja Shia Ithna-asheri. For the first time in its history the community lent its credence to this new appointment and realised that the function of an Aalim could be much more beneficial, varied and discursive.”

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE MISSION:

The expansion of the mission's activities in Dar-es-Salaam and its vicinity necessitated the establishment of an autonomous body, BILAL MUSLIM MISSION OF TANZANIA, as a subsidiary of the Khoja Shia Ithna-ashari Supreme Council. A Constitution was prepared by the secretariat, and a committee formed, with Haji Ahmad Hussein Sheriff Dewji (Moshi) as its president and Haji Mohammedrafiq G. Somji as the Hon. Secretary. Five Founders signed the constitution:

1. Maulana Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi
2. Haji Ahmad Husain Sheriff Dewji
3. Haji Ali Mohammadjaffer Sheriff
4. Haji Fidahussein Abdullah Hameer
5. Haji Hussein Nasser Walji.

The Mission was registered on 16/4/1968. Registered Trustees of the Mission were incorporated on 18/10/1968.

The Mission is run by voluntary donations and subscriptions, and the grants of the said Federation. It has achieved its aims and objectives through books, periodicals and education.

The Maraje' taqleed, Ayatullah Sayyid Mohsin al-Hakim and Ayatullah



Al-Haj Ahmed H. Sherif, A Founding Member; First Chairman of the Mission from 1967 to 1985.



Al-Haj Mohammedrafiq Somji, Hon. Secretary 1967 - 1982



Mr. Sherali Hon. Secretary, 1983- 1985

Sayyid Abul Qasim al-Khui have attached great importance to the activities of the Mission, and have expressed their full support; blessing the Mission with their earnest prayers. Recently the Islamic Propagation Organization of the Islamic Republic of Iran has established close relations with the Mission to help it with teachers, books and scholarships etc

SOME DISTINCTIONS

The Mission, in a short period has earned many distinctions to its credit.

After Sayyidana Ja'afar Tayyar (who preached in the court of Ethiopia 6 or 7 years after the advent of Islam), Bilal Muslim Mission was the first and for a long time the only institution dedicated to the Tabligh of True Islam in the sub-Saharan Africa.

Also, it is the first Shia Mission established outside traditional Shia centres.

The foundation of the Mission was laid with the teaching of religion to interested Africans. The aim, from the very beginning, was to create a cadre of African scholars capable of conveying the message of Shia'ism in this part of the world. As a result the Mission is the first and the only Shia institution (outside the traditional Shia centres) which is run almost entirely by indigenous preachers.

The Mission began its activities in a remote corner away from Middle East, India and Pakistan. Now this organization, born in a hut of coconut leaves, has secured for itself a niche of honour and is acknowledged as one of the important centres of Shia'ism. Our brethren in many other countries look towards it for religious guidance and help. Now, we serve, and help our Muslim brothers in Middle East, Europe and U.K, Central, Southern and West Africa, Canada, U.S.A, Guyana, India, Pakistan, Ceylon, Thailand, Indonesia, Philippine, Malaysia, Australia and Poland.

The Mission, although situated in Tanzania and Kenya, has spread the light of True Islam far and wide. Its impact may be seen in the fact that



Ayatullah al-'Uzma Aqa-e-Al-Haj as-Seyyid Abul-Qasim al-Khoui (Najaf); whose patronage and unrestricted support has brought the Mission to its present stage of development and progress.

when Hujjatul Islam Shaykh Houssein A. Chahada (a Lebanese Muballigh) established his society in Sierra Leone (West Africa) he named it “Bilal Muslim Mission.” Later on Bilal Muslim Mission du Burundi and Mission Islamique do Malagasy were established on the same pattern under the umbrella of the Khoja Shia Ithna-ashari Supreme Council to carry on the Tabligh work in Burundi and Madagascar respectively. These two missions work in close cooperation with the Tanzania and Kenya Missions.

We most humbly thank Allah (s.w.t.) that He made us instrumental in spreading His message not only in Africa but as far field as Guyana and Trinidad. Now as a direct result of the efforts of the Tanzania Mission there is the Pioneer Shia Muslim Association of Guyana (now run with the help of the World Ahl ul Bayt Islamic League) which has also successfully established the True Faith in the Trinidad and Tobago.

Our sister organization, the Kenya Mission, has succeeded in spreading the message of truth in Ghana (where there are now two Shia Associations in Accra and Tamale) and Nigeria (where a sizeable number have been converted.)

Also the Tanzania Mission has established its foothold in Zaire.

We have converts also in Malawi, Mauritius and Comoro Islands.

OUR ACTIVITIES

It is not possible, within this limited scope, to enumerate all the activities of the Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania in detail.

The Mission publishes two bi-monthly magazines: Sauti Ya Bilal (The Voice of Bilal) to cater for the Swahili readers; and ‘The Light’ which now enjoys global readership. To its credit the Mission has more than sixty English and Swahili books written on a wide range of Islamic topics.

It has 15 branches in Tanzania, which are run by the African Muballigheen

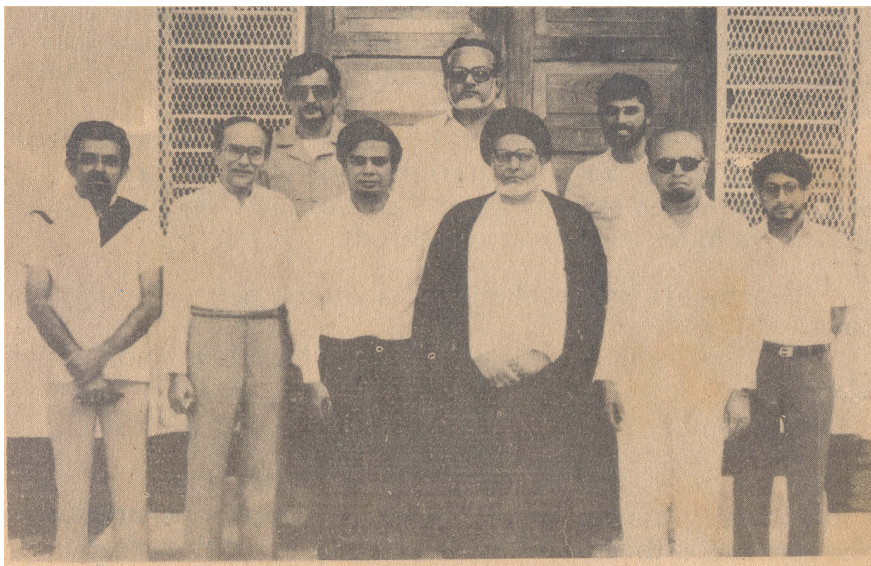
and teachers trained at our Hawza at Temeke. Many Muballigheen and teachers trained by us are serving in several centres in Kenya.

The Mission runs successful Correspondence Courses in English and Swahili, which have substantial enrolment of students from as far as West Africa, South America and Australia.

We broadcast Islamic talks on Radio Tanzania

In following pages you will find some details about various departments.

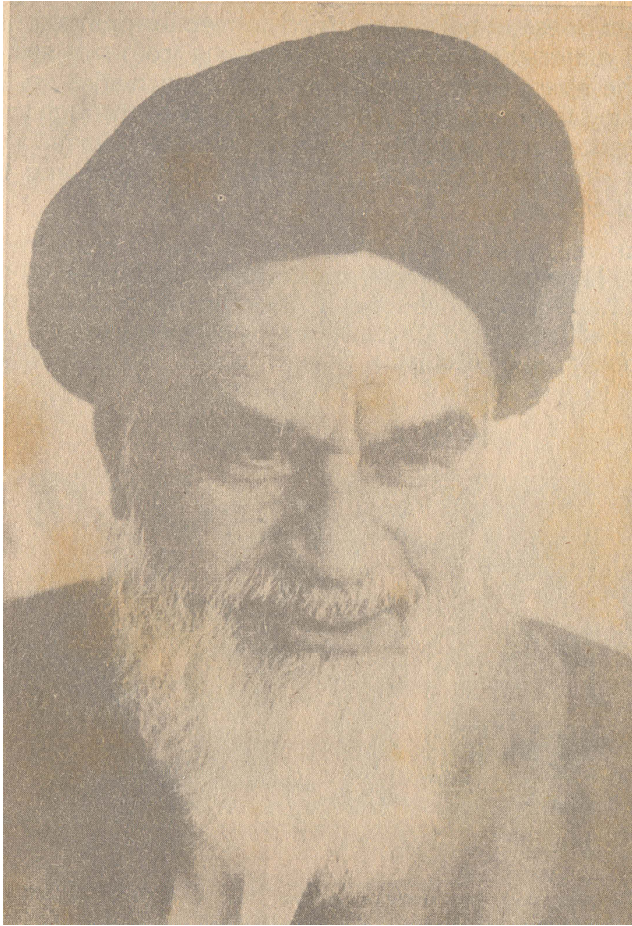
PRESENT MANAGING COMMITTEE



First line: (R to L) Haji Alihusein M. Janmohamed (Member); Haji Fidahussin A. Hameer (Chairman); Maulana Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi; Haji Mohamed Raza Dungersi (Hon. Secretary); Haji Mohamed A. Khalfan (Member); Haji Roshan A. Fazal (Advisor for Dispensary).

Second line: (R to L) Haji Mushtaq G. Fazal (Member); Haji Mustafa A. R. Alidina (Member); Haji Mohamed Hasham (Member).

Not in picture: Haii Muslim Habib (Hon. Treasurer).



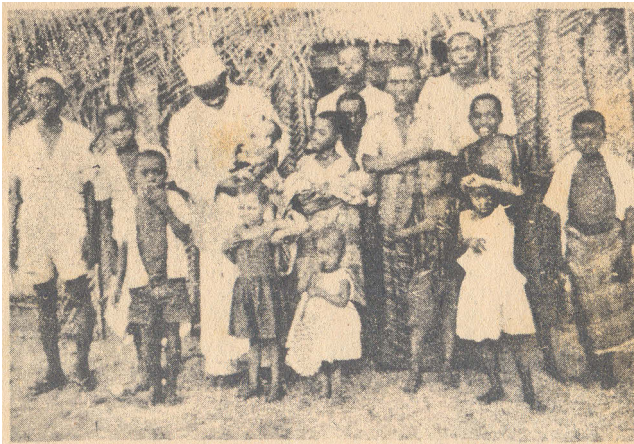
Ayatullah ul-'Uzma Aqa-e-al-Haj as-Sayyid
Ruhullah al-Khomayni, the Founder of the
Islamic Republic of Iran.

The Islamic Propagation Organisation (Iran)
has recently established close relations with the
Mission

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Islam does not believe in forced conversion or in one obtained through material inducement. Proceeding from this self-evident truth, the Mission has steadfastly kept its activities confined to “conveying the message”. This has been done through teachings in madrasas and schools, through various Correspondence Courses, through literature in Swahili and English and through personal contacts.

Our very first step in 1965 was to start a class for Islamic history- Thereafter, a night madrasa was started by Shaykh Mohammad Ali Ngongabure at Temeke in his house - a small hut thatched with coconut leaves. The students were taught by Shaykh Ngongabure and Maulana Seyyid Saeed Akhatar Rizvi. On 27/9/1968 five of them were sent to Najaf where they persued their studies under the patronage of late Ayatullah Sayyid Mohsin al-Hakeem. But due to the fast deteriorating conditions under the Ba’thist



The hut at Temeke where our activities began. Shaykh Mohammad Ali Ngongabure is standing with students of the children’s madrasa.

rule, they were transferred to Sur (Lebanon) under the care of Ayatullah as-Sayyid Musa Sadr, and later on to Darut-Tabligh, Qum (Iran). On 30/6/73 two more students were sent to Qum. (After coming back, three of them are serving religion at Madrasatu Ahl il-Bavt (A.S.) Temeke, and two at Mombasa madrasa. After the Islamic revolution of Iran, many more students have gone to Iran, among whom there are some even from



This photo was taken after farewell party given to the five students sent to Najaf in 1968.

First line:

The students (R to L): Abdullah Seif Linganaweke, Abdallah Qasim Nguranga; Suleiman Juma Mahanaka; Abdur-Rahman Rashid; Harun Rashid Pingili.

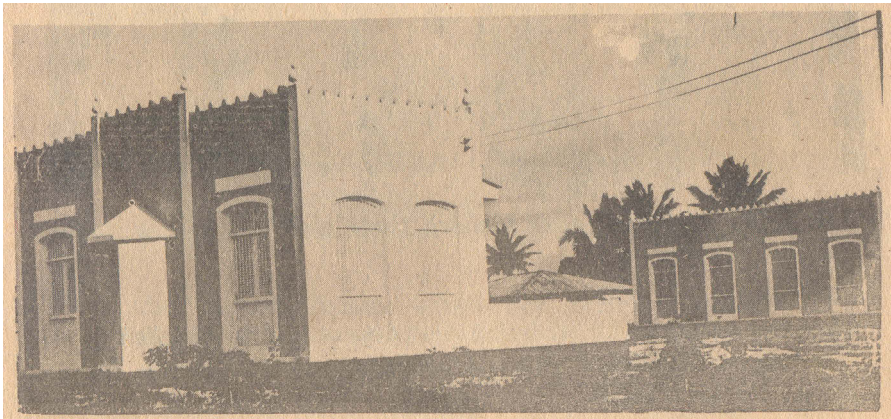
Second Line:

(R to L) Shaykh Mohammad Ali Ngongabure, Maulana Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi; Sayyid Muhammad Mahdi Musawi Shushtari.

Burundi, Uganda, Malagasy and Comoro Islands.

And again to quote Mulla Asgharali M.M. Jaffer, “among the great changes it has wrought in the Khoja Shia Ithna-Asheri Community is a fact that it spurred and prompted the Khoja boys and girls to engage in the advanced religious studies. With the African boys and girls in Iran today, we have a number of Khoja Shia Ithna-Asheri students all busily pursuing higher religious education.”

Construction of the Mission’s first mosque and a 2-room madrasa began at Temeke in February, 1969. The Muharram majlises in Swahili (which the previous year were held at Shaykh Mohammad Ali Ngongabure’s house) were held in 1969 in the yet incomplete mosque. The mosque and madrasa were officially opened by Maulana Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi on 15th October, 1969. The Madrasa was now shifted to its own building.



The First Building:

The Bilal Mosque and the 2-roomed Madrasa at Temeke

Later on 2 more rooms were added to it. It was at this time that Boarding was started (with 5 student) in a rented house.

In October 1970, M/S Combined Enterprises, Dsm., donated a Pre-fab house for use as Boarding House. The students were shifted therein. M/S Combined Enterprise then donated another Pre-fab house to ease the problem of space. In 1975 a spacious boarding house and madrasa was built by Mrs. Kulumbai Husein Sheriff of Arusha. At that time we had 16 boarders.

When our 3 students came back from Qum in 1973, the level of teaching was enhanced too.



The Building donated by late Mrs. Kulumbai Husein Sheriff (Arusha). Now it contains offices of the Mission, Printing Press, Maktabatu-th-Thaqalayn Library etc.

In 1977 we purchased a spacious house adjacent to our plot for Boarding House, because the number of students had increased to 32. Now there are about 48 boarders, coming from all over Tanzania, as well as Comoro Islands and Burundi. There are at present 6 well-qualified teachers to teach them.

The foregoing account gives you an over-all View of gradual growth and development of the Madrasa and Boarding.

To alleviate the space problem, Haji Haidar Khaki has generously added one more story on the above-mentioned Madrasa (that was built in 1975), and which is being opened today.

We still need a hall for Husainiya and rooms for starting technical classes. Foundation Stone for this spacious 3-story building is also laid today. Its ground floor will be used as Husainiya and 10 rooms in two upper stories will be used for classes including cutting and tailoring class, cooking class, typewriting class and subjects like that.

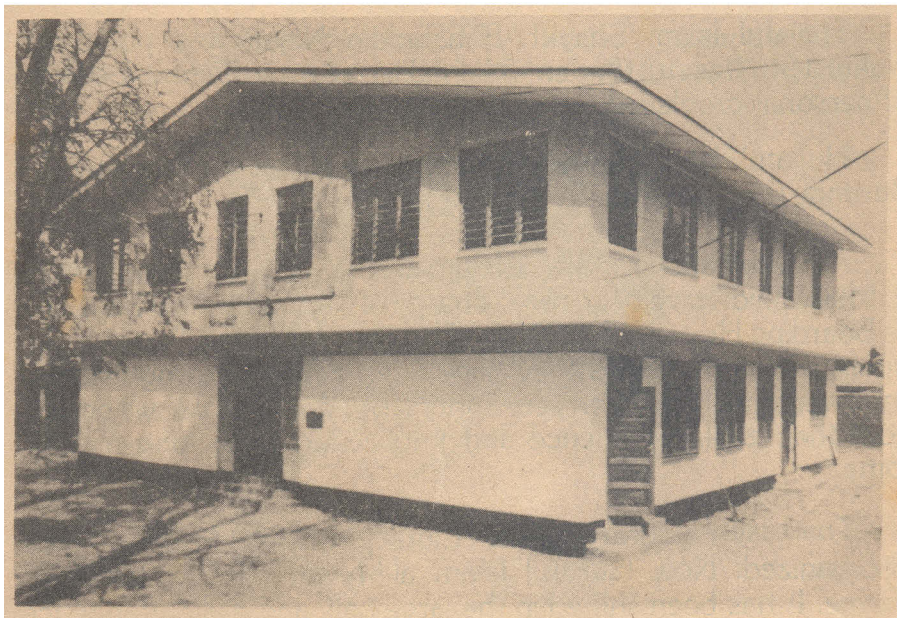
An important development in this field has been the arrival of Hujjatul Islam Talib Husain Taqi al-Khazraji, and Hujjatul Islam Abbas Mahdi Ahmad al-Muwahhidi.

When Maulana Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi came to Tanzania for a month in 1985, a decision was taken in consultation with Supreme Council, whereby Maulana went to Iran and made an agreement with Sazman-e-Tablighat-e-Islami (Islamic Propagation Organization), Tehran. The Sazman, by this agreement, undertook to send competent teachers in order to improve the teaching methods and raise the standard of studies, and to provide the Mission with all necessary text books. It was also agreed that the Mission shall try to open autonomous Missions in the countries ranging from Somalia to Mauritius; the Sazman will provide at least one teacher for each country. It was further agreed that the main centre should be in Dar-es-Salaam. All the teachers (even if they are to be posted to other countries) shall be sent at first to Dar es Salaam in order that they may be briefed by Hujjatul Islam Aqa-e-al-Haj Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi. After this

reorientation they will be sent to their appointed places.



Haji Haidar Khaki



The New Building

The newly-built Upper story (to be opened today) reserved for the Hawza-e-Ilmiya

We are glad to record that, accordingly, four well-qualified teachers arrived on 28/4/86. Their Incharge, Hujjatul Islam Shaykh Ali Asghar Awhadi reached Dar es Salaam (via Nairobi) on 9/5/86. Various Syllabi were made for various groups:

1. Four-year syllabus for the Temeke's Hawza Ilmiya, which now has been named, Madrasatu Ahlil-Bayt (A.S.) lil Uloom-il-Islamiyyia.
2. Three-year syllabus for the children's madrasas - to be implemented in various branches of the Mission.
3. Seven-year syllabus for religious education given in the govt's Primary Schools.
4. One-year Teachers Training Course.
5. Three-month Crash Course for teachers.

Hujjatul Islam Shaykh Baha'uddin Najafi was posted to Nakuru Madrasatul Qur'an. (He had to return to Tehran because of personal problems).

Hujjatul Islam Sayyid Murtaza al-Milani was posted to Burundi. (He has recently gone for Hajj.)

As stated above, Hujjatul Islam al-Khazraji and Hujjatul Islam al-Muwahhidi have been given charge of Madrastu Ahlil Bayt and its Boarding House respectively. They are staying at Temeke and within the short period they have been here, the progress and improvements have been very impressive. We hope we will benefit from their zeal, experience and knowledge for a long time to come.

Thaqalayn Library: The Library of the Madrasa was disorganized. Now Hujjatul Islam al-Muwahhidi has taken its charge. It has been shifted in the large hall, and daily attendance has been made compulsory for the students. We hope when the books promised by the Sazman-e-Tablighat-e-Islami will arrive, the Library will become a treasure of knowledge.

ISLAMIC CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

In 1967, on the advice of Haji Hasan Ali Mohamedjaffer Sheriff (the then Hon. Treasurer of the K.S.I. Supreme Council) the mission started the Islamic Correspondence Course (ICC) with the aim to acquaint our youths with the important aspects of Islam. The level was a bit high and the readership was limited to the students of the secondary schools or higher.

Each unit would be explained in a booklet and accompanied by questions. The first unit was published on 16/4/1970. The next 7 units and also 17 and 21 were written and published without much delay. But the increasing pressure of work did not leave much time to Maulana Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi to write the remaining booklets.

However, the course, even in its incomplete form, became popular and many units have been reprinted by publishers in Pakistan, Iran, and USA. Some of them have been translated by other publishers in India into Urdu and Hindi. The Mission has translated most of them in Swahili.



Haji Muslim Habib
Hon. Treasurer (from 1979).

MASOMO YA KI-ISLAMU KWA NJIA YA POSTA

ICC lessons are in English and aim at a higher level. In order to fulfil the need of the general public, the mission embarked in December 1972 upon the project of correspondence course in Swahili language.

The course consists of four booklets on “Roots of Religion and Biography of the Prophet”, “Biographies of the 12 Imams and Bibi Fatemah Zahra”, “Branches of Religion”, and “Islamic Ethics and Manners”. After successful completion of the course, the student is awarded a beautiful certificate.

The first student was enrolled on 8/12/1972.

Until now more than four thousand have completed the course. There are more than three thousand presently on roll. They come from Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Zambia, Malawi and Zaire. These are farmers, secretaries, officers, teachers, school and university students and factory workers among them. They follow Shafi'i, Ibadhi and Hanafi schools of thought; also there are many Christians from various denominations.

As a direct result of this course, some Africans accepted the Shia faith in Bundibugyo (Uganda) years after the self-made Field Marshal Iddi Amin turned out all the people of Indian Origin (including Khoja Shia Ithna-ashari) from Uganda.

With increase of students in Kenya, our sister organization, Bilal Muslim Mission of Kenya, found it necessary to print the books in Mombasa and now the Kenya brethren are served from there.

ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS COURSE

With ever increasing popularity of Swahili Correspondence course (MYK) it was decided to publish it into English also in order that its benefits might reach to English speaking countries.

It will not be out of place to mention that in the original Swahili course, the first three books were translated by Shaykh Mohammad Ali Ngongabure from an Arabic book with a lot of changes and additions made by Maulana Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi. The fourth book was an original work, in Swahili, authored by Sayyid Muhammad Mahdi Shushtari (the then Asst. Chief Missionary of the mission).

Then the course was translated into English by Haji Mohsin M.R. Alidina (Dar-es-Salaam University) and published under the title “Islamic Religious Course (IRC)”

Like the original Swahili, it is divided into four parts, each explained in a separate book.

The lessons have proved so educative and became so popular that a publisher in Karachi had plagiarized the whole set, bringing it into one book with a new name - without mentioning the names of original authors, translators and publishers.

Our sister organization in Kenya have popularized the course in Ghana and Nigeria. Now there are two Shi’a organizations in Ghana, which are now also supported by the World Ahl ul-Bayt (A.S.) Islamic League, London.

REPLYING TO RELIGIOUS QUESTIONS

Maulana Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi, the Founder Chief Missionary frequently receives questions on religious matters, not only from Africa but also from Europe, North and South Americas, Middle East, Indian Sub-continent and Southeast Asia. Among the correspondents are the Muslims as well as Non-Muslims.

From time to time important questions have been compiled and published in book form, so that its benefit might reach a wider circle. Between 1973 and 1979 four parts of this series were prepared:

Vol. 1: Answers to 131 questions received mostly between 1968 and 1971.

Vol. 2: Correspondence between Mr. Dhikiri Omari Mohamed Kiondo and the author, between 1968 and 1974. It contains answers to about ninety questions of various types, plus four Appendices.

Vol. 3: Contains replies to 117 questions received between January 1972 and March 1975.

Vol. 4: Replies to 105 questions received from April 1975 to June 1978, plus one Appendix.

This series contains a treasure of knowledge.

SEMINARS

Most of the converts in Tanzania have accepted the True Faith as a result of the Masomo Ya Ki-Islamu kwa Njia ya Posta. The Mission tries to invite them to Dar es Salaam or to send them to a nearby Jamaat for practical training of prayers etc. But not all of them can avail themselves of this opportunity.

Therefore, it was decided in 1976 to hold regional seminars from time to time to teach the converts.

The purpose of holding such Seminars was to gather new converts and acquaint them with each other and teach them important matters of religion.

MWANZA SEMINAR:

Mwanza was chosen as the venue of the first Seminar (26th-28th November, 1976). When approached, Mwanza Jamaat very generously offered to host the Seminar. It was attended by 28 participants, some of them reached there after considerable hardship owing to lack of adequate transport.

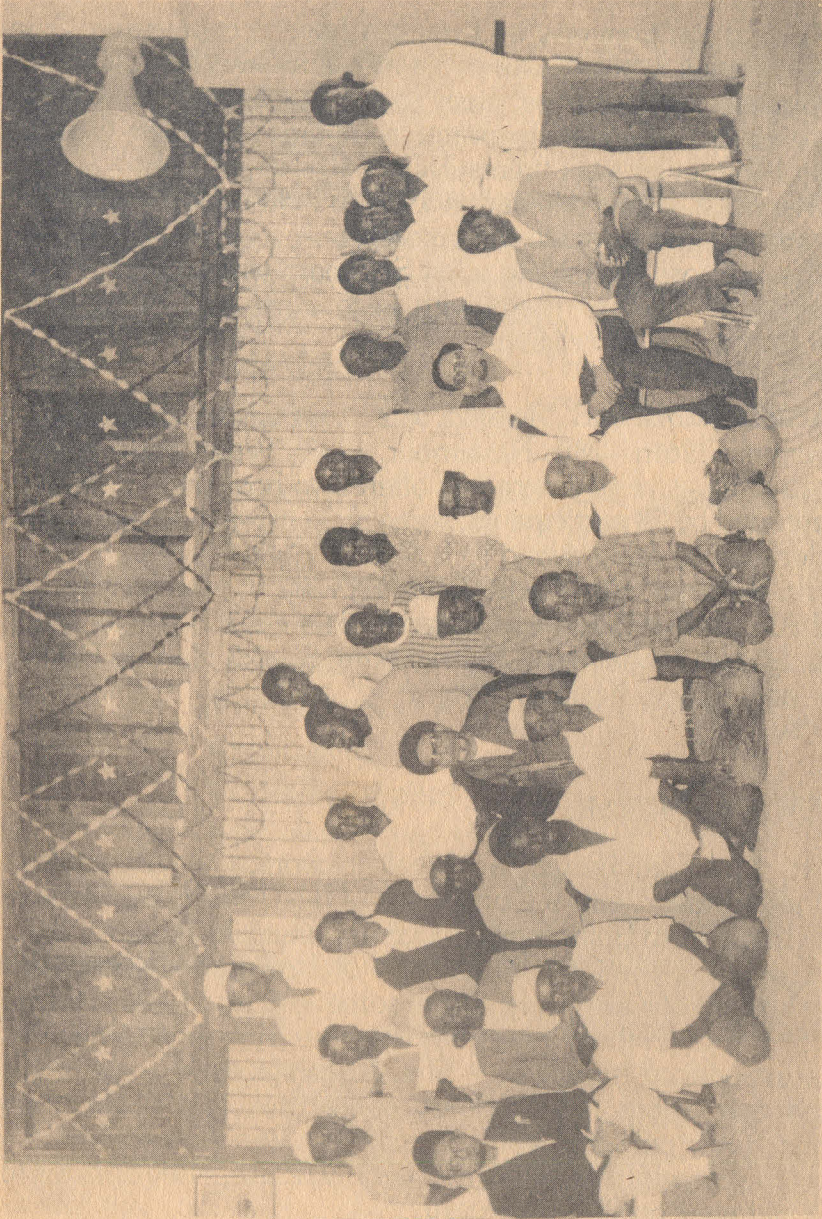
The Seminar, held under Chairmanship of Maulana Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi, was addressed by Haji Ali Mohamed Jaffer Sheriff, Shaykh Mohammad Ali Ngongabure, Sheikh Haroon Rashid Muba and Mzee Khamisi Kitumbo, and drew tremendous response.

KALEMIE SEMINAR:

Mr. Suleiman Banza, a Muballigh working in Bujumbura (Burundi), under Central Committee of Bilal Muslim Missions of Africa, came from Bujumbura to Dar es Salaam in January, 1977; and reported to the Chief Missionary of Tanzania Missions that during his visit of Kalemie, he found some African people claiming to be Shia though they knew nothing about Shia faith. When Mr. Banza introduced himself as a Shia Muballigh, they were highly pleased and asked him to bring some Shia Muballigheen to Kalemie. They collected some fund which was deposited in the bank in the name of Bilal Muslim Mission du Zaire. They decided to hold a Seminar on 27th February.

The invitation was accepted, Shaykh Mohammad Ali Ngongabure (our Muballigh at Bagamoyo) and Mr. Khamisi Kitumbo proceeded to Kigoma on 19th February, and from Kigoma went to Kalemie on 24th.

There, as a result of the contacts established, about 70 people accepted Shia'ism.



The Group Photo of the Mwanza Seminar

Two Madresas, containing 83 and 13 students respectively, asked the Bilal Missions to send Muallims to teach them Shia faith.

ARUSHA SEMINAR:

This Seminar was held on 15th - 17th July, 1977, in which converts from Arusha and neighbouring regions participated. The Arusha Jamaat very generously hosted the Seminar; participants were accommodated at Arusha Guest House, and the Seminar held in the Madresa; it was chaired by (late) Mulla Gulamhussein A. Peera, and addressed by Shaykh Abdullah Kasim Ngurangwa, Mulla Gulamhussein A. Peera and Shaykh Harun Rashid Pingili.

There is need to revive this system in order to keep in touch with our newly converted brethren.

BOOKS

The Mission upto now has published more than sixty books in English and Swahili on a wide range of Islamic subjects.

Its English books are extremely popular; many publishers have reprinted them in Iran, India, Pakistan and the U.S.A. - most of them with our permission. Some books have been translated in French, Italian, Persian, Urdu, Hindi, Gujarati, Burmese, Thai, Indonesian, Japanese, and Hausa languages.

Upto now, the general practice of Shia writers was to translate books from Arabic, Persian and Urdu into European languages. Now, for the first time, some English publications of Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania have been translated into Arabic, Persian and Urdu. The Mission is the first, and as far as we know, the only, Shia institution whose publications have been given such recognition.

PRINTING PRESS

Our printing work since the first day was done by the Dar es Salaam Printers Ltd, Dar es Salaam.

In 1980, they donated an offset printing press (Gestetner 211), a camera, a plate-making machine and a stitching machine.

Since then the Light and Sauti ya Bilal are printed in our own press. Recently a donor has given us a new printing machine (Gestetner 311). With the two machines we will be in a position to bring our printing programme up-to-date.

But the biggest bottle-neck is the type- setting - which keeps us behind the schedule.

We have recently purchased a second-hand type-setting machine locally. Hopefully now we shall be able to make proper plans for our publications.

But our responsibility would not end here. We should endeavour to give the books and magazines widest circulation.

THE LIGHT

How it started:

In 1963, the Executive of the K.S.I. Supreme Council (then at Arusha) suggested to Maulana Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi to publish every month a small article on religion and send it to our youths studying in Europe and America, in order to keep them in touch with religion. Thus, the first issue of “The Light” was published in March 1963. It was cyclostated job (1½ pages, foolscap size) and a grand number of 75 copies were printed. By the end of 1964 about 15 issues were published and readership had increased to 300.

In 1965, Maulana Rizvi started publishing it from Dar-es-Salaam - printed at the Dar-es-Salaam printers Ltd on large size. After a few issues, it started coming out under the auspices of K.S.I. Territorial Council of Tanganyika.

When the Mission was registered in 1968, Maulana Rizvi suggested that now the Light should be published by Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania. Since then it is published as the main organ of the Mission. Gradually its pages have increased and printed has gone from linotype to offset.

The magazine enjoys world-wide readership and is recognized as an authentic and authoritative voice of the Shia faith. Its articles are copied - sometimes without acknowledgement - in Islamic magazines in India, Pakistan, Iran, UK, USA and even South Africa. Occasionally they are translated and published by Arabic and Persian magazines.

SAUTI YA BILAL

Sauti ya Bilal (The Voice of Bilal) was started by Haji Mohsin Ali Mohammedjaffer Sheriff, who was appointed the Convenor of the Bilal COmmittee at Mombasa. Three issues of different sizes were published from Mombasa in 1965 and 1966.

In 1967, the Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania took it over.

Al-Haj Sayyid Mohammad Mahdi-al-Musawy, the Asst. Chief Missionary of Bilal Tanzania became its editor; since then it is published as a bi-monthly magazine.

The magazine is very popular in Tanzania, Kenya and adjacent Swahili speaking areas.



Sayyid Muhammad Mahdi al-Musawi Shushtari
Editor, Sauti ya Bilal (1967 - 1976)



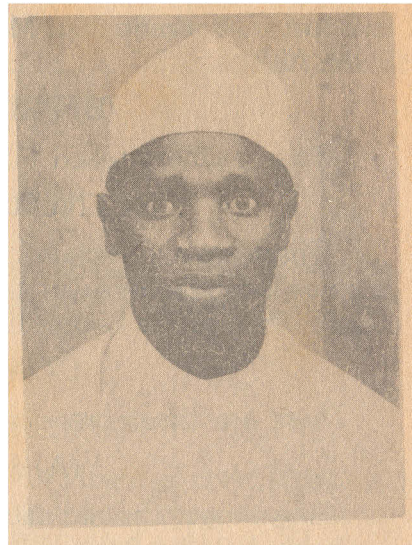
Maulana Sayyid Sajjad Husain



Haji Mohsin A.M. Jaffer



Haji Mohammad Hussein Rajani
(Haji Saheb)



Maalim Dhikiri U.M. Kiondo

BRANCHES

The Mission has fifteen branches in Tanzania, out of which ten are operational.

DAR ES SALAAM

Temeke Centre is not only our Head-quarters, it has a branch too.

In this branch, there is a Nursery Madresa, a Primary Madrasa, and an Adult Girls Madrasa.

(A) ADULT GIRLS MADRASA

There are 42 girls in this Class, who are diligently taught by Mrs. Tahera Rajani, our Head Lady Teacher, who spends her time in this noble work fi sabilillah.

She recommends that we should also start stitching, knitting, cutting and dress-making classes as well as Typing classes in order to help the girls in their struggle for life.

As soon as the new building (whose foundation stone is being laid today) is ready, the Mission shall implement this scheme, Insha -All ah,

(B) PRIMARY CLASS

Two teachers teach 112 students in this section.

(C) NURSARY CLASSES

There are two section, comprising of about 80 children. There are two lady teachers who take these classes. Porridge is given to the children at the recess time.

COAST REGION

There are three branches in the Coast Region:

(A) BAGAMOYO

Bagamoyo, the old capital of the then German East Africa, probably has the

2nd oldest Shi'a Ithanaashari Mosque in East Africa. With the transfer of the capital to Dar es Salaam, Bagamoyo declined, and the Masjid and Imambara remained as relics, where the Dsm. Jamaat kept a watchman. Late Mr. Saleh Jacksie used to come, in Muharram, from Zanzibar to Bagamoyo and hold Mailises there. It continued till 1935. The Ithnaashari Union of uar es Salaam holds a majlis there during Muharram/Safar which mumineen from Dar. go to attend.

In 1965, it was decided to start a branch of the Mission in that Mosque. The Dar es Salaam Jamaat renovated it and a centre was established in 1966. After some time it had to be closed. Since than, it was opened and closed serveral times. But now since last two years, the Branch is progressing day by day. Shaykh Hasan Ndimbo worked there alone for two years; now he is assisted by another Muallim.

The building and boundary wall have been repaired and renovated again.

There is a Madrasa with 34 students. There are other educational centres attended by our teachers.

(B) MSATA

Msata, on the road between Chalinze and Korogwe, has a Madrasa which has 30 full-time students. Our teacher, Hamisi Rabana, teaches in other institutions also.

(C) IKWIRIRI

Ikwiriri branch was established in July 1970. There is a Madrasa in which two teachers teach 117 students. They also teach in other institutions.

BUKOBA REGION

Bukoba Branch is most active, and the dedication of the Bilal Regional Committee and Karutanga local Committee deserves appreciation. In 1984 they added a library and class rooms to the existmg building of Karutanga Madrasa.

There are four teachers in the Madrasa, who teach 201 children during day

time; 35 adults are taught in the adult class six times a week.

RUVUMA REGION

Luwawasi, near the Songea airport, is the oldest branch; it was started in July 1967 by Maulana Sayyid Sajjad Hussein.

A Madrasa was constructed on the plot donated by (late) Jumbe Idi. Foundation stone was laid on 3/2/1968 by Maulana Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi.

There are two teachers and 33 students in the Madrasa; there is an adult class in which ten persons are taught religion six days a week.

This branch owes much to the moral and material support given by late Mulla Ali Hussein Nagji, Haii Karmali Rajani and Haji Akbar Rajpar.

Another branch in Tunduru is served by one teacher who teaches 59 students; there is also an adult class of 5 persons.

ARUSHA REGION

One teacher is working at Arusha, where there are 83 children in the Madrasa. A few years ago the Arusha branch was participating in the Saba Saba Trade-fare.

TANGA REGION

In Kwembago (Dist. Lushoto) a teacher runs a Madrasa of 98 children.

The branches at Ujiji and Kalela (in Kigoma Region), Lindi, Mwanza, Tanga and Mboga (Coast Region) are dormant at present. Efforts are at hand to revive them.

TEACHING IN GOVT. SCHOOLS

Apart from these full-fledged branches, there are more than fifty teachers in various places who teach the syllabus provided by the Mission.

Also our teachers in various branches take religious classes in different schools twice or thrice a week. In this way, they serve about 2,000 children

in ten Primary and Secondary schools.

RELIGIOUS FUNCTIONS

Religious functions are held in many branches.

(1) TEMEKE CENTRE:

As for the Temeke Centre, Majlises are held for twelve days of Muharram; and Niyaz is arranged.

During Ramadhan nights, the programme starts one hour before sunset, when Dars-e-Qur'an is given. After prayer, Niyaz is served, followed by Mawaidha, Du'a-e-Iftitah and other Du'as of the Ramadhan nights.

Majlises are held every Thursday night as well as on birth and death anniversaries of the Ma'sumeen. Du'a-e-Nudba is recited every Friday after Fair prayer.

(2) BAGAMOYO: Ramadhan programme starts after 8.30 p.m. Du'a-e-Iftitah and other du'as are recited. followed by Mawaidha. Niyaz is served.

(3) IKWIRIRI: Ramadhan and Muharram programmes are held. Niyaz is served.

(4) MSATA: Muharram Majlises were started followed by Niyaz in 1985.

(5) SONGEA: Muharram Majlises are held also at Luwawasi.

(6) ZANZIBAR: Since 1984, on the invitation of the Zanzibar Jamaat, Shaykh Abdullah Seif is posted there for the month of Ramadhan. His speeches, delivered in Swahili, are appreciated very much.

In all the above functions speakers and preachers are sent from Temeke Centre.

EYE CAMPS

The Mission's real aim is to bring light into darkness, because **“Allah is the Guardian of those who believe; He brings them out of the darkness into the light.”** (2:257) Actually it means guiding the people to the light of the True Faith: **“For surely it is not the eyes that become blind, but blind become the hearts which are in the breasts”.** (22:46)

Yet the Mission is helping the physically blind to see, as a manifest symbol at its spiritual endeavours.

The plan to hold eye-camps was envisaged, on behalf of the Mission, by Haji Anverali Merali Ali Bhai, Haji Mohamed Hussein Rajani (Haji Saheb) and Haji Mustafa A.R. Alidina, in cooperation with the ophthalmists M/S Bashir H. Gulamali, Abdul Najafali Dhala, Murtaza Somji, Hasnain Fazal and Mr. Abdu.

At first, they covered the Bagamoyo area, where eye-camps were held at the Mission's branch situated at the Bagamoyo Mosque.

In 5 trips, held on various Sundays, about 1100 patients were screened. 30 needed cataract operation, and were called to Dsm for it. The rest were given spectacles - free of charge.

In the last trip, Dr. Fuad H. Sheriff checked about 400 patients for B.P. and diabetes.

Now, they are covering Ikwiriri in Rufiji area, where the Mission has a branch.

In two trips held in September, 1985 and July, 1986, 967 patients were checked. 104 had matured or immature cataract; 3 Glucoma, 3 blind eye, and 30 Amboloyopic, Matured cataract cases were advised to come to Dar es Salaam. Others with need of spectacles were given the spectacles, medicine and sun-glasses.

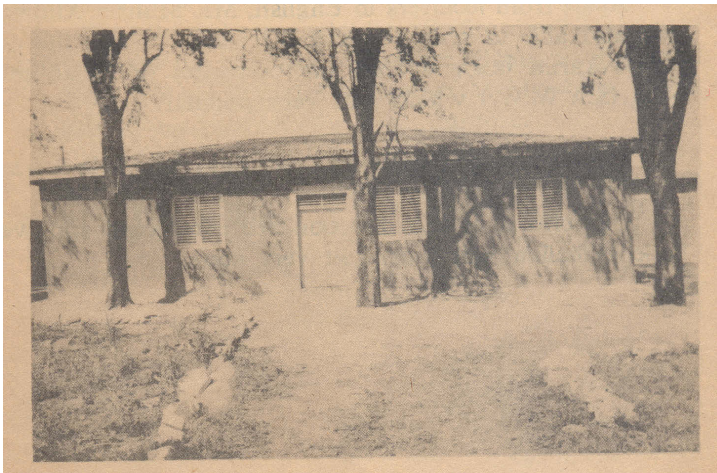
Our sincere thanks to the organisers, the opticians, the cardiologist, the volunteers and those brothers who are providing transport and money to make this noble programme a success.

HEALTH CLINIC

In 1984, a half-built house on an adjacent plot was purchased by the Mission with a view to use it as a free Health Clinic for the benefit of the general public. Haji Abbas Alloo (of Toronto, Canada) donated about half of the cost. The rest was raised from general donation. Mr. Akhtar Nayani did the decoration work without charging any labour cost.

The Mission is highly obliged to Brother Habib Gulamali Damji for his efforts to get approval for the dispensary from the Ministry of Health. As soon as we get the approval letter, arrangements will be made to employ the Doctors and Staff, purchase the equipments and medicine and other necessary paraphernalia.

We hope the Mission will get the necessary support of the Community as usual for this project too.



The Dispensary Building at Temeke.

RADIO AND TELEVISION

With the efforts of AI-Haj Mustafa A.R. Alidina and AI-Haj Roshanali Fazal, our members have been able to give lectures on Radio Tanzania as from 15th November, 1985.

AI-Haj Mohamed Khalfan, AI-Haj Muhsin Alidina, Mulla Mohammed Husein Kermali, AI-Haj Mohamed Raza Dungersi, and AI-Haj Muhammad Nathani have already spoken on a variety of subject; i.e. Tauheed, Qur'an the Ultimate Miracle, Moral Issues in Islam, Islamic History and the life of Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.).

AI-Haj Maalim Ahmed Issa very kindly monitors the lectures and acts as adviser to the speakers.

Apart from lecturers in English, Mr. Muhsin Alidina was also able to give a talk in Kiswahili on the life of Nabi-e-Karim (s.a.w.w.) on the occasion of Milad-un- I Nabi (S.A.W.W.) which was very popular.

Audio-visual Programme on Zanzibar Television.

Our efforts in this direction are continuing and we hope Inshallah will bear fruit very soon.

SABA SABA TRADE-FAIR

IN 1985, some enthusiastic youths, i.e. Murtaza Pyarali Ahmad Sikiladha, Sadik Hashm, Haji M.H. Rajani, Akbar Juma and others arranged with Bakwata to use their stall (which they were not using) for Bilal Mission's Book Exhibition. The programme was a great success. Apart from books sold or distributed, we got more than 300 students for the Swahili Masomo Ya Ki-Islamu (Kwa Njia ya Posta).

Since then Haji Mustafa A.R. Alidina had been trying to get a plot allotted permanently for the Bilal Mission. We are glad to report that now the Trade

Fair authorities have given us a plot, for which requisite fee etc. has been paid.

The approval came a bit late. So the above-mentioned youths used the pavilion of Brother Mahboob Bharwani for Bilal. We are thankful to Brother Mahboob for giving us half of his pavilion for this purpose.

We plan to construct a building on our plot very soon, and next year we shall welcome you at our own pavilion, God willing.

DEVELOPMENT PLANS

The development and growth of our Head-quarters and Hawza has been gradual, as must have been seen in preceding pages. Even the “temporary” Pre-fabricated houses have continuously been used for classes. It is only after the completion of the upper story building (which is officially opened today) that the classes have been shifted from these houses and the mosque. Still there is need for further rooms and halls.

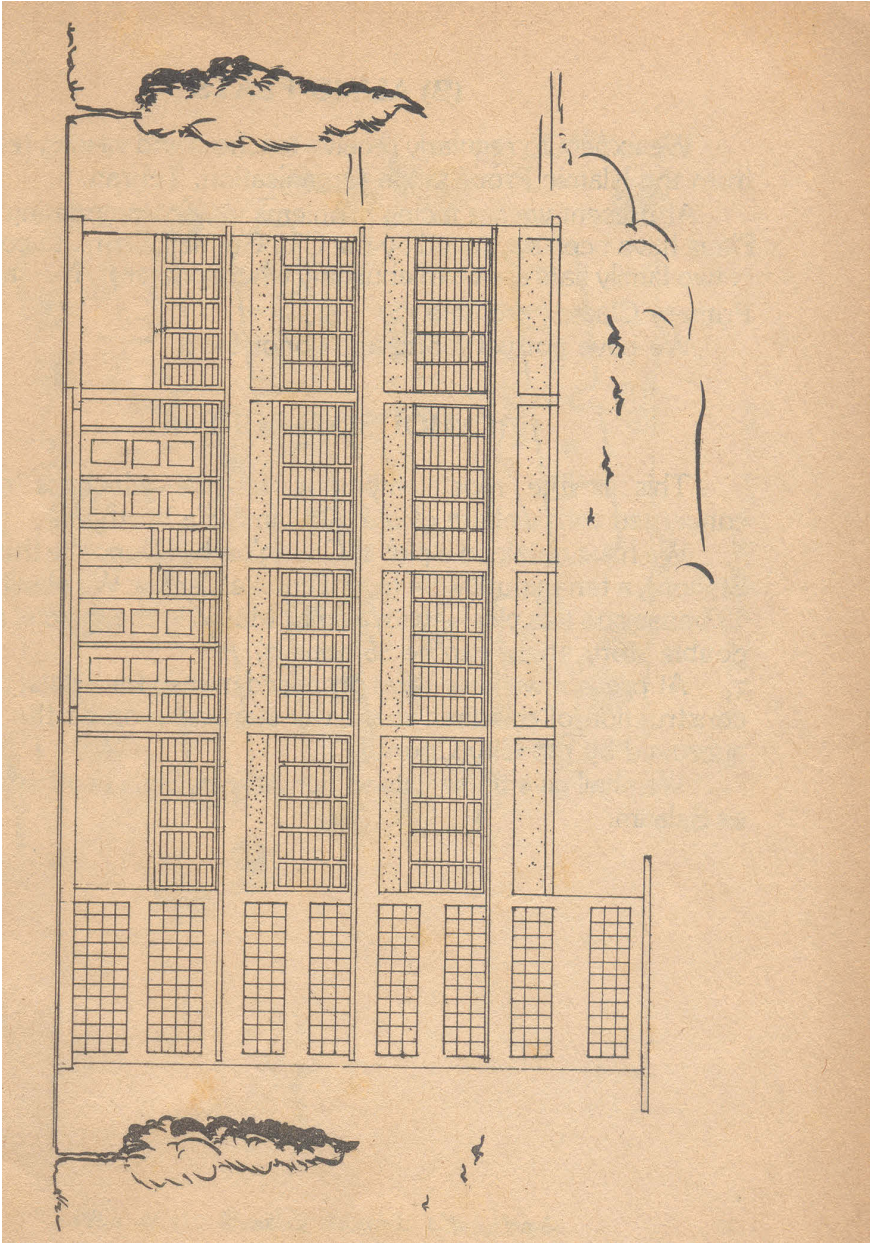
When the original Masjid proved insufficient to accomodate the participants, Maulana Sayyid Sajjad Husain requested some Brothers who made the extension. Also, it was on the request of Mualana Sayyid Sajjad Husain that Brother Akber M. Rajpar made the boundary wall, thus making the compound safe and manageable.

May Allah give good rewards to all the donors and volunteers whose generosity and services have brought the Centre to the present stage. Amen.

With increase of activities, need is still felt for more rooms, halls and flats. Accordingly, we have three Development Plans, a short description of which is given here.

(A) MADRASA AND HUSAINIYA

Today, the Foundation-stone of this 3-story building is to be laid by Maulana Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi, the Founding Father of the Mission.



Artist's view of Markaz al-Sayyid al-Khoui

The ground floor will serve as the Husainiya and alleviate the problems we have been facing upto now during Muharram, Ramadhan and other functions. The first and second floor will have ten class rooms. These additional rooms will allow us to open new classes, e.g. stitching, dress-making and typing etc.

Its cost is estimated to be 8.7 million T. Shillings.

(B) ALIMIS' FLATS

We expect to regularly receive teachers and visiting teachers from the Islamic Propagation Organisation, Tehran.

At present we are facing problems in accommodating them. Plans have been approved by the City Council, Dsm., to construct two family flats above the building where presently Nursery and Primary Classes are held.

We have not yet found any donor for it.

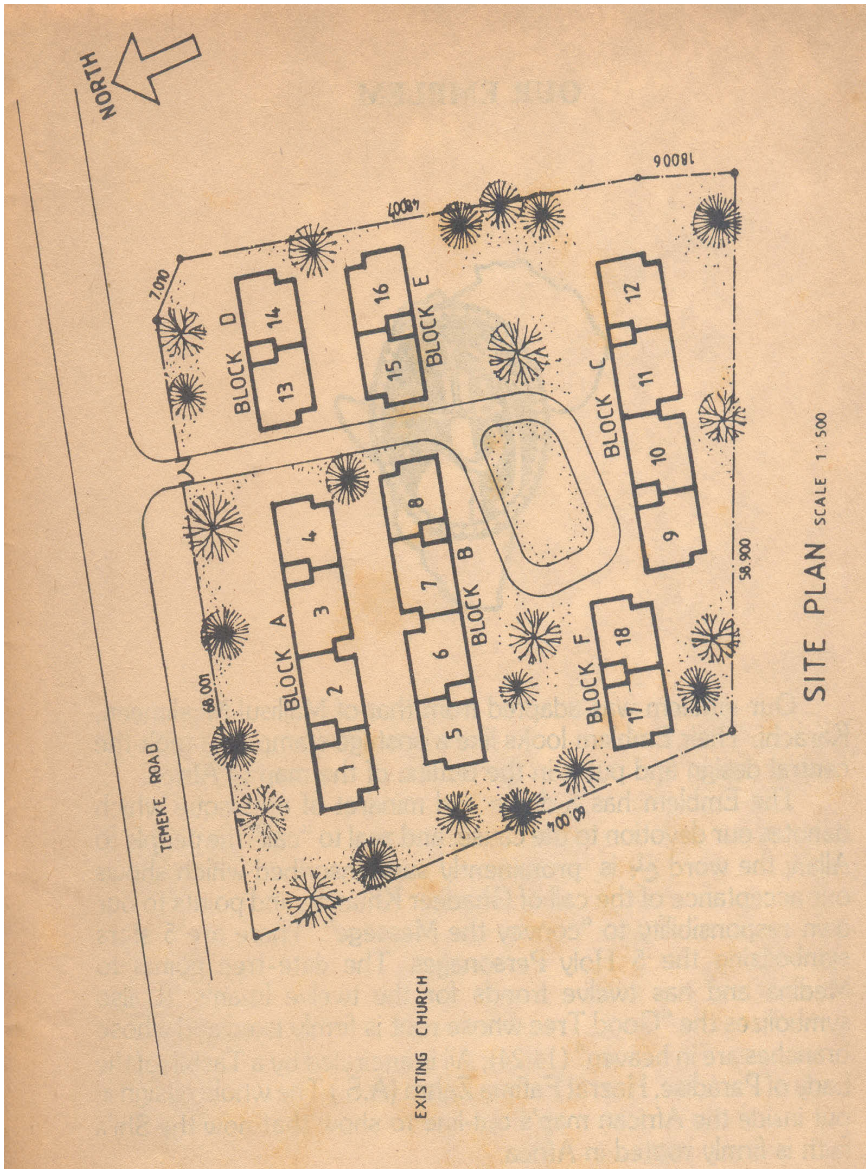
(C) HOUSING SCHEME

This is the most ambitious scheme which is directly concerned with welfare of our African Shi'a brothers.

We have obtained a plot at Chang'ombe (Opposite the Police Station), a ten-minute walk from Temeke Centre. We plan to build 18 houses on this plot - with a small Masjid in the middle. (If built double story, there can be 36 houses).

At present we have been promised money for 8 flats; and the construction of this first phase will start as soon as the plan is approved by the City Council.

We shall give these flats to our African Shi'a brothers in Dar es Salaam.



Plan of the Housing Scheme, Chang'ombe.

OUR EMBLEM



Our emblem was adapted from that of Majlisul Muslimeen, Karachi. Their emblem looks like a postage stamp. We took the central design and put it in the outline of the map of Africa.

The emblem has a dome and minaret of a mosque which denotes our devotion to the cause and zeal to “call” the people to Allah; The word ‘بلغ’ is predominantly super inscribed which shows our acceptance of the call of Ghadeer-e-Khumm, and points to our own responsibility to “convey the Message”. There are 5 stars symbolizing the 5 Holy patronages. The date-tree points to Medina and has 12 fronds for the 12 Imams. It also symbolizes the “Good tree whose root is firmly fixed and whose branches are in Heaven” (14:24). All is encircled by a tasbeeh of the Lady of Paradise, Hazrat Fatimah Zahra (a.s.). The whole design is put inside the African map’s outline to show that now the Shia faith is firmly rooted in Africa.

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