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EDITORIAL

Strengthening Family Values

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

The position of the family in Islam is very important because of the role the family is playing in the political, educational and economic progress of the Ummah. That's why Allah (SWT) called on the Muslims to save themselves and their family from the hell-fire (SAW).

In various traditions of Prophet Muhammad (SAW), he has encouraged the Muslims to marry those whose soundness of character and commitment to the *deen* are established. That's why Islam discourages any marital relationship outside the boundary of marriage.

It is with this in mind that the Nigeria Muslim Forum calls on the entire members to think about ways of strengthening Islamic family values that will ensure the success of each household. Researches have shown that children who grow up under the care of both male and female parents tend to progress more in their future career, have psychological stability and tend to excel in their endeavour, and marriage is the only institution that can ascertain that progress.

For this reason, the forum has revived the regional bodies, and appointed new co-ordinators where none exists. (continue on page 7)

THE 21st CENTURY MUSLIM

By Hadiza Isa Wada

The writer, Hadiza Wada, a co-recipient of an Ambassador for Peace Award by the Interreligious and International Federation for World Peace, UPF in 2006, shares with the reader her opinion that such books need to be written, and if not books then articles and conferences aimed at educating the public and clearing the misinformation that exists between followers of major religions of the world. In many countries people have been victims of one crisis or another that has roots in religious misunderstanding. As Nigeria prepares for elections within a few months, it is important for the public to understand and resist being used in inciting any crises, in any other name including religion.

Below (from paragraph two) is a short excerpt from her published book, soon to be formally launched. This work's main aim is to familiarize people from various faiths and backgrounds about who a Muslim is, though the writer believes Muslims may also enjoy reading it. It is important though to understand that the ideas, thoughts and reflections put forth are solely those contemplated upon by the writer. It is not the writer's wish to attempt to expound deeper religious or theological philosophies, as this should be left to Islamic scholars.

The writer's sincere hope is that some of the readers of this work, especially ordinary hard working citizens of Western nations will get some idea as to some of the belief systems, thoughts, and actions borne out of some required practice and belief system of his or her ordinary counterpart from the Islamic world. That may provide possible

explanations to them in their unique individual world as to why the Muslims they know act and think the way they do. As psychologists will tell us, most behaviours are borne out of the daily practice of a particular value system and norms held dear by a person. It may also provide a basis for one's ability to differentiate between a true believer of Islamic faith, from others that may claim adherence to the faith but practice something else. To be objective is to understand that no race, gender, religion or ethnic group is completely free from individuals bent on breaking the value system and engaging in unbecoming activity from within it. It is true that of the three religions Islam seems to have more hold, and consequently influence, on the daily lives of its adherents.

The consequence of that hold may be viewed... depending on the judging individual's own value system. But to blame the Muslim or call them generally fundamentalists or extremists in the negative sense of the word does not do justice to them; and this is why. Once anyone comes into the fold of Islam by declaring publicly the Unity (Oneness) of the One true God, and the prophethood of Muhammad (SAW), he is mandated without question to practice some daily service at specific times of every single day. Not to talk of other restrictions and behaviour required of him.

For example the Muslim is obligated to wash and purify himself five times daily, then perform Salat (strictly regulated prayer) at five exact points of the Sun's journey across the earthly sky. Each of these five prayer services are supposed to be said while one is in

Letters/comments to: The Editor, NMF Newsletter, c/o 165 Olivia Court, Asgard Drive, Salford, Manchester, M5 4TR, e-mail: nmfuk@mail.com

complete control of his senses.

Anyone engaged in that prayer is literally communicating directly with God during those times and should therefore not be under the influence of intoxicant. Islam believes this is a serious time for one to be uttering to his Creator, words that he might not be in complete control of. That requirement of no intoxicative influence at those five times often encouraged those coming into the fold of Islam to gradually abandon alcohol and illegal drugs completely.

Many practices that are voluntary to adherents of other Godly scriptures are mandated on the Muslim. Apart from the five daily prayers, the Muslim is obligated to fasting, almsgiving and charity. The continuous right of the poor and the kin to one's share of wealth is mandated. Belief in all of God's Prophets and Messengers is also mandated; including Moses who brought the messages within the scripture called Torah or Old Testament for the Jews; and Jesus who brought the messages contained in the Injil or Gospel.

There is a particular requirement to believe in the messengers on one hand and one that requires the belief in the messages or books they brought on another.

Then it is also mandated that one believes in the Unseen, including belief in One God, though we do not see Him physically, and the belief in His angels also invisible to humans.

Finally Muslims are obligated to perform some religious service lasting several days in Islam's most holy city and site Mecca at least once in a lifetime. The service however

traces the life of Prophet Abraham who is believed to have laid the first foundation of the Kaaba together with his teenage son Ishmael.

The Kaaba is the black and gold draped cubic building at the center of Islam's holiest mosque in Mecca. This final obligation falls only on individuals who have attained the means to execute the travel and its expenses within their lifetime.

The 21st Century was ushered in with a clear message. For the United States and the Western Bloc in particular, Islam and Muslims have come to replace Communism and the Soviet Eastern Bloc as the antagonist in the Post Cold War era. It is contentious however as to whether the attack on the World Trade Center of September 11, 2001 was actually the igniter, or motivating factor behind the move. While there are people who believed that without the attack what Muslims are going through today would not have been so, there are yet others who have already identified Islam as the next bogeyman for the West years before the September 11, 2001 attack on the World Trade Center in New York. Many books were written to discuss the increased identification of Islam in the late nineties as the next target of both physical and psychological warfare.

One of the best of such books the writer has come across thus far is the one written by a Georgetown University Professor and a non-Muslim (Esposito, 1999).

Other intellectuals appearing on independent television stations such as Link TV and FSTV (Freedom of Speech Television) in the United States suspiciously point to the attacks of 2001 as the catalyst for conveniently initiating and facilitating some policies that would otherwise not be possible; the gradual erosion of individual rights in the United States under the guise of providing security from such attacks. It provides the grounds needed they claim, for the use of certain types of technological devices to track individuals.

The legalization of the use of technologies to track the movements of individuals, including the prevalent use of global positioning systems GPS and other devices used earlier only for individuals on parole who wear a tracking band, became possible. Using other technologies to pry into private lives of individuals grew significantly after the introduction of information superhighway, and has since been an issue debated in congress and within civil rights circles.

In 1994 Communications Assistance for Law Enforcement Act was signed into law in the United States, so do other controversial surveillance applications, FBI's Carnivore (DCS1000) system 2000 and Patriot Act which passed only after the September, 2001 attacks. Regardless however, the 2001 attacks had forced on us the need for initiating dialogue on all fronts in order to enrich our understanding of each other. Even if as claimed often by policy makers of the West that the campaign is against some Islamic extremist only, no Muslim today is guaranteed freedom from stereotyping and profiling.

Dialogue with the hope of bridging the information gap subsequently helps ward off anxiety, suspicion and probably even bloodshed. It helps the society in our global village of the 21st century find better avenues for the exchange of ideas and consequently reaching that equilibrium so much desired for coexistence.

The more information available for everyone to read and ponder upon the higher the chances and opportunities exist for discussing ideas and tearing down the suspicious walls that separate the various groups. It is the writer's opinion that discussions and dialogue are not choices we can afford to just ponder upon, but are important requirement necessary to ward off unnecessary bloodshed.

This piece is an extract from the introductory section of a book written by Dr Hadiza Isa Wada: The 21st Century Muslim: Get To Know Them. Kuala Lumpur: A.S. Noordeen Publishers.

THE EUROPEAN MUSLIMS – ROLE & RESPONSIBILITY BY DR MAHATIR MUHAMMAD

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

1. Firstly I would like to say how glad I am to meet and speak to European Muslims. You and I know that Islam is not the religion of the majority of the Europeans. They are, if not practicing, at least nominal Christians. In fact Christianity is regarded as a European religion although in reality it is a Jewish religion. The truly European religion is polytheistic and centred around the belief in the gods Zeus and Jupiter and a pantheon of other gods. That there are Europeans who are Muslims is something the world still consider strange. Even I was not aware of the existence of European Muslims who were not converts but had been born Muslim in European Muslim countries or territories. It was only when Bosniaks fought for their independence recently that I realised these are not Turks who had stayed behind after the dismantling of the Turkish Empire, but are ethnic Europeans who are Muslim. I realised that Islam is not totally alien to the Europeans. And what is more, such is their faith that they sustained it during the dark age of atheistic Communism until they regained their independence and their faith.

2. That there should be European Muslims at all is a blessing. I believe that many Europeans are now accepting Islam because they have lost faith in Christianity or they themselves feel spiritually lost.

3. We should be happy and grateful to Allah swt that there are still Europeans who are Muslim. But there is little to be

happy about the present situation of European Muslims and indeed of Islam and the Muslims generally.



Dr Mahatir at the EMU Conference

4. Muslims of today, despite succeeding in releasing themselves from the colonial yoke are still the most oppressed people in the world. They and their religion are regarded as outdated and incompatible with modern times. They seem unable to compete and develop as people of other faiths are doing.

5. Today we hear open condemnation of Islam as a religion, which promotes terrorism. We hear disparaging words describing our Prophet. We see Muslim countries being invaded and Muslims slaughtered. And we see Muslims and their countries unable to help or protect their brothers and sisters because they are all weak or they do not really regard other Muslims as their brothers. Some willingly collaborate with the enemies of Islam to the detriment of fellow Muslims.

6. Yet we see many Muslim countries richer then they had ever been before, richer than even their rich detractors. We see Muslim countries holding the key to the well-being and prosperity of the world but this has not been used in the interest of Islam and the Muslims. In fact, if truth be told this unprecedented wealth has been placed in the hands of the enemies of Islam to finance the oppression of Muslims. In the midst of this wealth we see Muslims and Muslim countries languishing in poverty and

misery unable even to feed themselves, much less to develop and prosper their communities and nations.

7. Instead we see wars between Muslim countries and sectarian violence as disputes between different sects of Islam flare up into civil wars in various places. And the rich wallow in their riches while still remaining undeveloped, backward third world countries. There is not a single developed Muslim country. They are great consumers of the products of non-Muslims, including the weapons which they often use against each other.

8. We see a state of denial among Muslims where they claim that although they are being oppressed and looked down upon, although they are poverty-stricken and miserable, actually they are better off than their tormentors and oppressors. In fact some contend that being miserable, poor and oppressed are what makes them good Muslims. Besides they say that although they suffer humiliation and oppression in this world, they would have a good life in the next. And their oppressors would be punished in the next world. Therefore they, the Muslims should be willing to suffer in this world because their place is in the next world.

9. This is self-deception of a high degree. Actually this world is as much for the Muslims as it is for those of other faiths. Muslims forget that when they pray to Allah swt they always beg for hassanah or wellbeing not only in the akhirat but in this world also. Indeed it is hassanah in this world that they ask for first, and then only for hassanah in the next world when they say: "Robbbana atina fid dunnia hassanah Walfil akhirati hassanah"

10. How could Allah swt desire a life of poverty and misery of His khalifah in this world? It does not make sense. Besides the Quran states that all that is

good is from Allah and all that is bad is due to us. If we live in a state of penury it is really our fault.

11. Besides the Quran states very clearly that Allah swt will not change the fate of the faithful until they themselves try to change their fate. Only if they try would the Almighty help them to improve their lot. Prayers alone will not change anything.

12. The question is, have we tried. The obvious answer is that we have not.

13. If we look back we must notice that the greatness of the Islamic civilization was due to the efforts made and work done by the early Muslims. We know that the early Muslims were great scholars not just of the religion but of the sciences, mathematics, medicines etc. I will not name the great Muslim scientists, mathematicians and other scholars here because you are familiar with them.

14. But today where are the great scientists and other learned men in the Muslim community. There are practically none. And why is this so? Is it because of Islam? Is it that Islam somehow obstructs worldly capacity, worldly achievement?

15. One way to determine whether it is Islam or other factors which cause the Muslims to lag behind in the world today is to study the performance of people of the same ethnic origin living under the same conditions but some belong to the Islamic faith while others belong to other faiths. We can study the Europeans for example as we have Europeans who are Christians and Europeans who are Muslims. But the European example is limited. Far too few Europeans are Muslims while the vast majority are Christians.

16. But the peoples of the Indian sub-continent are much more numerous and more evenly distributed between those who are Muslims and those of other faiths.

17. There may be other factors which affect the performance of people but one cannot get away from the impression that people of the same ethnic origins who are Muslims are less successful in life than those who are not Muslims. Somehow there seems to be a link between the performance of Muslims and their religion. We may conclude that Islam hinders worldly success.

18. But we know that at one time the Muslims were the most successful people. They succeeded in building a great civilization and they were what we would now call a world power. What happened which caused them to decline until they became so weak and backward that anyone almost could dominate and humiliate them.

19. If we care to study the history of the Muslims and the religion we would notice the decline of the Muslims was progressive and began many centuries ago. But the decline gathered momentum in the 15th Century of the C.E.

20. During that century the Muslim jurists gained ascendancy and they taught the ummah that there was merit only in the study of religion. Other fields of knowledge were irrelevant to Islam and acquiring knowledge in these areas earns no merit for the afterlife. In fact these subjects were regarded as secular and science for example would undermine faith in the religion. Science and mathematics were based on logic and frequently they contradicted faith. Greek philosophy too, by arguing on the basis of reason, could affect faith and therefore weaken it.

21. As fear of losing faith took hold Muslims avoided the study of science, mathematics and modern medicine.

22. Unfortunately at about the time the Muslims were rejecting the study of these non-religious subjects, the Europeans who had observed the progress and

sophistication of the Muslims, decided to study the knowledge gathered and developed by the Muslim scholars of the past so as to achieve similar progress. They had been living in what historians call the Dark Ages until the European Christian priests decided to acquire the knowledge of the Muslim in order to catch up with the Muslims.

23. The net result of the Muslims giving up the acquisition of non-religious knowledge and the Europeans acquiring this knowledge from the Muslims was the rapid decline of the Muslims and the Renaissance of the European Christians. It could not have been coincidence that these two momentous things; Muslim decline and, Christian Renaissance should happen together with the changes in the attitude towards knowledge acquisition.

24. Over the centuries the gap between the Muslims and the European Christians in terms of progress and development widened. What we are seeing today, the domination of the Muslims by the Christian Europeans is intrinsically linked to the teachings of the Muslim jurists that there was no merit in the study of anything else other than religion. Muslims are certainly backward in these field. They have become the consumers of the products of modern knowledge and are quite incapable of producing their own basic needs even. In fact even for their own defence they have to source their weapons from the non-Muslims. In other words they depend on the non-Muslims for their own defences. Yet the Quran is very specific and clear that the ummah must have the capacity to defend themselves.

25. Why are they incapable of producing their own defence needs. Surely it must be because they do not have the knowledge. They did not know enough about science, mathematics and all the other esoteric knowledge which are needed in order to invent, develop and produce modern weapons so they may defend the ummah. Because they have no knowledge of these non-religious subjects they are unable to

fulfill an important injunction of the Quran – to have the ability to defend the ummah.

26. Even today we are taught that non-religious subjects are secular. Far too many Muslims want to have their children study religion. We should know enough about our religion so as to lead the life of Muslims. But must we all be experts in religion.

27. Is it true that only religious studies will give us merit in the next world? We know that in Islam there are two categories of obligations. There is fardhu 'ain which requires that we perform certain rituals and abstain from certain acts in order to gain merit for ourselves personally.

28. But there is also fardhu kifayah which must be performed by a member or some members of the Muslim community failing which the whole community would bear the sin, which the individual performance of fardhu 'ain cannot expiate.

29. Thus it is incumbent upon a Muslim community to have experts in the fields of defence, in agriculture and food production, in medicine etc so that the community is well provided for and can look after its well-being. If a Muslim community does not have these experts than the whole community would be sinning.



30. Fardhu kifayah is not much stressed by Muslim scholars and teachers as much as the rituals of prayer, fasting, zakat and haj. It is because of this unequal emphasis between fardhu ain and fardhu kifayah that today we found the Muslim communities backward, incapable of protecting themselves, incapable of good governance and generally weak and miserable. The result is to bring disrepute to Islam and the Muslims. Faced with problems they find themselves incapable of overcoming them. Instead they do desperate things which gain them nothing.

31. When I was studying in the English colonial school I read that Islam was spread by the sword. Now that I have access to more books and other sources of information, I know that it is not true. The real reason why Islam spread to the four corners of the world was because of the success of Muslims in life. We know for a fact that Islam came to Malaysia and Indonesia without any violence. The Malay rulers accepted Islam because the Arab and Indian Muslim traders who came to Southeast Asia in the first half of the 2nd millennium were good pious people who were experts in navigation and were prosperous as traders. The Malay rulers were impressed by these great seafarers and traders and were willing to find out more about their religion of Islam. There was no force used. It was purely because these Arab and Indian Muslim were well-to-do and sophisticated people, knowledgeable in the teachings of Islam and in other fields of knowledge that the Malay rulers were well disposed towards them. Eventually the Malay rulers embraced Islam and their subjects followed suit.

32. It was the same in South Asia and elsewhere. The Muslim rulers of India could have forced their Hindu subjects to become Muslims, but they did not. Those who became Muslims did so of their own free will.

33. But we know that European Christians massacred the Red Indians and Amerindians and took their land. The survivors were forced to become Christians. In Spain Muslims and Jews

were forced to embrace Christianity on pain of death.

34. Today Islam is not gaining as many new adherents as before because Islam is equated with failure, with being humiliated, with being irrational and given to acts which do not create a good impression of Islam or the Muslims.

35. If we want Islam to be respected, to win support if not convert non-Muslims we have to show that Muslims are good successful people.

36. In the first place we must develop a good capacity for governing our communities and countries. Most Muslim countries today are not well-governed and are not capable of development. They are largely consumer communities or nations incapable of industrialising and producing their modern needs. The education standards are low and as I said earlier they do not produce great scholars as they did in the past. In a fast changing world they are not innovative, always depending on others to come up with new ideas or products which they then buy at inflated prices.

37. Allah has given the Muslims more wealth than any other people but this wealth is not well managed. They are just spent lavishly instead of being wisely invested. They can if they want to, dominate the world. Certainly they can defend the ummah from oppression. But they have not made any attempt to do this. Instead they kept their money in foreign currencies, in foreign lands. And when these currencies depreciate in value they lose much of their wealth.

38. The rich Muslims prefer not to work. They prefer to employ other people to work for them. These people are like the mercenary soldiers of the past, who were engaged by Muslim rulers to fight and defend them. Eventually they become so dependent on their mercenaries that without them the Muslim, rich though they may be, would be quite powerless. At that stage they actually came under the power and authority of the mercenaries.

39. It is distressing to see rich Muslims setting up big business enterprises which are left to foreigners, frequently non-Muslims to manage. Often the rich Muslim pays huge salaries and compensations to these mercenary managers and cared not whether their enterprises lose money or not. Frequently the businesses are some kind of pastime or status symbol to exhibit wealth. They would compete with each other just to show what toys they have.

40. In the past it was the possessions of the biggest diamonds or other baubles. But today we see this exhibitionism in the form of possession of companies and enterprises, or luxury aircrafts and palaces. It is the same story of the Peacock throne or the Koh-i-noor.

41. It would seem that the wealth will be with the Muslims forever. But along the way some are bound the fall. Just as before, the Muslim nations declined and fell one by one, the future may see this thing happening to the wealthy Muslim nations of today.

42. Today's wealth is due to the need for oil as fuel. But will oil always be the fuel for heat and power. There are already other sources of power – the sun, hydro power, wind power, even waves. But so far they have not proven efficient. But if oil prices are too high they might prove worthwhile to use. Malaysia produces palm oil which can be a substitute for diesel. It is renewable. But it is at the moment unlikely to meet the huge demand for diesel.

43. But what if? Hybrid motors will reduce the need for petroleum. There will be less demands, which in turn will reduce prices. Maybe the prices will go down enough to turn a

sellers market into a buyers market. Then there will be fierce competition to sell oil and prices will fall some more. And when this happens the smaller producer may go bankrupt or at least not be as rich as before. So the wealth from oil may not be forever after all. It behoves the oil-rich to diversify their sources of wealth. And to diversify they would need knowledge and skills in other fields.

44. The world is changing and changing radically. The speed and ease of communications will result in migrations of people. There will be in 50 years time or so no country that is single ethnic. Certainly there will be no country which will have people only of one religion.

45. What does it mean? It means that we will have to learn to live in multi-ethnic and multi-religious societies and countries. Muslims find difficulty in adjusting to life among non-Muslims. They want to preserve their customs and traditions – their way of life. Some of these may be enjoined by Islam, but many are based on the traditions of their races.

46. We need to learn to adjust to what is still acceptable to our faith. If we fail it may be that in every country there will be Muslim ghettos where typically the Muslims would be poor, backward and miserable. We already see this in some countries where Muslims have migrated.

47. This poverty and ghettos will not enhance the image of Muslims. It would be degrading. It would be a blight and a slur on the greatness of Islam, our religion.

48. This is very likely unless we learn to adjust, to make preparations for the coming changes. We must not forget our faith but let us re-examine what our religion really teaches us.

49. Most of what we believe and we practice are the results of interpretations of the religion by the learned ones in the past and also presently. We have seen how some of their interpretations have resulted in us becoming backward and incapable of obeying the injunctions of

Islam.

50. Islam is not for the time of the Prophet only. It is for all times. If Islam succeeded in making the Jahilliah a great people able to build a great civilization, then is it not possible for Islam to do the same for the Muslims in our times.

51. I believe it can. But we need to go back to the original teachings as found in the Quran and the verified hadiths for guidance. I feel sure that if we do we will be able to make the necessary adjustments in our life so that we remain good Muslim but yet we are able to adjust to a radically changing world.

52. I have mentioned earlier how the Europeans had acquired the knowledge gathered and pioneered by the Muslims and were then able to make use of them to achieve their Renaissance. But knowledge is just one element which contributed to the subsequent progress of the Europeans. They possess a culture that enabled them to translate their knowledge into the material progress that they have achieved. And one of these is their innate curiosity, their desire to know more and to apply their knowledge in practical ways.

53. European Muslims I believe still have this character just as Malay Muslims, Indian Muslims, Arab Muslims and African Muslims retain elements of their racial character, even after becoming Muslims.

54. European Muslims must make use of the European culture of curiosity, of wanting to know more, of practical application of knowledge, of the skills in organisation and development, of inventiveness, of developing methods in order to help the Muslim ummah to adjust to the changes that are coming, in order to make use of new knowledge and skills to develop their communities and to achieve progress in order to sustain their faith in multi-religious societies that at times would be hostile to their religion. They had done so when they were under the atheistic Communists and they must help the ummah to do so in the challenging

world that we have to live in, for we would no longer have the protection of

borders and the comfort of living only among peoples of our own faith, among Muslims. The European Muslims have had a unique experience and we the ummah must make use of their experience and their capacities to employ knowledge, new knowledge to the practicalities of life in a multi-racial, multi-religious rapidly developing world.

55. It is perhaps expecting too much for all Muslims to regard each other as brothers as enjoined by Islam. But those of us who can regard each other as brothers, and as brothers we are prepared to make sacrifices in order to help each other, should try to do so.

56. We proudly say that Islam is not just a faith, a religion like other religions, but it is a way of life, as Addin. If we believe that it is a way of life then we should ensure that all Muslims have a good life and to do that we as brothers should help each other.

57. I hope that our European Muslim brothers will subscribe to this and ensure that we share each others travails as we should share each others good fortunes.

Thank you.

This is a speech by Dr. Mahathir bin Muhammad in Istanbul, Turkey, on the 12th January 2007, at the EMU Conference (Source: <http://www.emunion.de/?action=artikel&id=89>)



News and Announcements

NMF EXCO Meeting in Birmingham

The Executive Committee members of the Nigeria Muslim Forum met on Saturday 17th February 2007 in Birmingham. They deliberated on a number of issues including a review of the issues raised during the last Annual General Meeting (AGM). These include, among other things, mapping out this year's programmes, and revival of regional branches.

The EXCO have also used the meeting to ratify the nomination of Nasiru Umar Tsafe as Organising Secretary I and Abubakar Sani Abba as Organising Secretary II.

BIRTHS

1. The Family of Mr and Mrs Aliyu Gana of University of Birmingham has been blessed with a baby boy named AbdulKadir.
2. The family of Mr and Mrs Ibrahim Ilyasu of Manchester University has been blessed with a baby girl named Fatimah.
3. The family of Dr and Mrs Muhammad Sadig of Sheffield University been blessed with the baby girl.

May Allah (SWT) enable the parents of these children to bring them up in the right manner, according to Islamic teachings, ameen.

ARRIVALS

1. Brother Kabiru Usman, M.Sc. in Construction Management at Sheffield Halam University.
2. Brother Ali Abdulkareem Hassan B.Sc. in Economics and Information Systems at the University of Buckingham.

WEDDING

Alhamdu Lillah, the wedding fatiha of Brother Dahiru Moyi, former Assistant Secretary of the Nigeria Muslim Forum and Sister Maimuna Sulaiman has taken place on Sunday 29th January 2007 in Sokoto. May Allah (SWT) give blessings to the families of the bride and groom, bring them closer, and make this new family a model family that will invite humanity to follow the guidance of Allah (SWT), ameen.

DEATHS

1. Sister Aisha Adamu of University of Dundee lost her Aunty.
2. Brothers Muhammed Sadiq and Abdullahi Alkali Lost their brothers.

May Allah (SWT) forgive them, have Mercy on them and give the family they left behind the fortitude to bear the loss, ameen.

Editorial (from page 1)

The idea is to bring people who are living within the same vicinity together so that they can create programmes aimed at strengthening family values, and in case someone has to leave his family and relocate to another country due to the pressure of work, the platform provided will take care of the needs of his family to ensure that they live within the tenets of the *deen*.

The forum therefore call on members wherever they may be to come together and benefit from this initiative, and people can form these regional bodies wherever they are and inform us of the people elected to spearhead the regional body.

SHAIKH JA'AFAR MAHMUD ADAM: MARTYRDOM AT DAWN BY GARBA A. ISA (YEKUWA@YAHOO.COM)

Sheikh Ja'afar Mahmud Adam, the Kano based erudite Islamic scholar was murdered in cold blood in the morning of Friday 13 April 2007 while performing the *Subhi* prayer. The death of Sheikh Ja'afar through the assassin's bullet has placed him in league with other great men. The most notable was Islam's second well-guided Khalif, Umar Ibn Al-Khattab who prayed to Allah (SWT) to bless him with martyrdom right inside the Prophet's mosque in Madina. Umar was assassinated there while leading the faithfuls in prayer. Sheikh Yassin of Palestine was assassinated by the Israelis while leaving Mosque after the dawn prayer. Also great men and women in Islam were known to die on the blessed day of Friday. One of the late Ja'afar's mentors, Sheikh Abubakar Mahmud Gummi died on a Friday back in 1992. Nigeria's most notable patriotic military leader General Murtal Ramat Muhammad, was callously assassinated on Friday, February 13, 1976.

This writer often wondered where have all our tears gone as they fail to flow after several travails; but once the shocking death of Sheikh Ja'afar sank into me, the tears were flowing in abundance. Sheikh Ja'afar is the kind of person you will meet and come to like instantly. He was young and vibrant probably in his early 40s. Listening to him recite the verses of the holy Qur'an which he committed into memory and for which he once won the First place prize in International *Musabaqaah* competition, is a moving experience.

Sheikh Ja'afar rose astronomical along the path of Islamic scholarship given his age rising from a roaming slim student to the decisive moment in the early 80s when he gained admission into the Islamic University of Madina. His

strongest field of study was the recitation and the sciences of the holy Qur'an a field where even Sheikh Ibrahim Khalil one of the Kano's most articulate scholars today will refer students to him. That is not to say Sheikh Ja'afar was not well groomed in other fields of Islamic scholarship; those of us who listened to him espouse from the Ahadith, no doubt knew the Sheikh was a kind of an all-rounder in Islamic scholarship. He was also very articulate in current affairs whose analysis of World affairs particularly the Middle East will send many Professors of International Relations to take cover.

The views of Ja'afar Adam on several national and international issues were however often so blunt that many saw him as either hard-lined or confrontational. On the contrary, Sheikh Ja'afar was one of the most peace-loving and amiable person one ever came across. A once fire-brand Izala young scholar, Sheikh Ja'afar was himself a subject of attack by more radical Izala elements who wrongly perceived him as having mellowed down since his return from Madina where he bagged his first degree in Islamic studies. When some few years back Sheikh Ahmed who offered the *Ahadith* sessions at the old BUK Mosque left in protest and migrated to Niger republic, Sheikh Ja'afar led the peace mission which persuaded him to return. During the 2003 pro-Shari'a mobilisation which by God's grace led to the victory of Mallam Ibrahim Shekarau as Kano State Governor, Sheikh Ja'afar was one of the leading lights. He was one of the well travelled scholars spreading the message of Islam. The Gadon Kaya Mosque built by a Kano businessman, Alhaji Yusuf Ali, was Mallam Ja'afar's *Da'awah* Center where he along with others run the Ali Ibn Abi Talib Islamic Foundation and School. His weekly Friday Tafsir sessions were beehive of activities. Sheikh Ja'afar's Ta'alim and lecture sessions always attracted large crowd for their rich and often fearless disclosures. The Al-muntada mosque opened about 5 years ago at Dorayi quarters in Kano was another major *Da'awah* Centre for Sheikh Ja'afar and was the Chief Imam for Friday Prayers. The tiny Mosque along Ungogo Road opposite Daula Hotel in Kano will

also miss his weekly teaching of the *Hadith* book, *Riyadus-salihina*. Also the Beirut Road Mosque built by the late Alhaji Atana, the venue of Ja'afar's Tafsir, will greatly miss him. Those who killed him did him the favour of martyrdom; they killed his human body but not his spirit with which he managed to return to his Creator. Sheikh Ja'afar's close associates and fellow scholars such as Mallam Abdulwahab, Abba Koki, Nazifi Inuwa, Aminu Daurawa and Sani Ashir among others will greatly be shocked beyond imagination for his inspirational role but must take solace that he died in active service for Islam. The Ndimi Mosque where he delivered annual Ramadan Tafsir for several years and by implication, the entire Maiduguri metropolis will greatly miss Sheikh Ja'afar Mahmud Adam following his shocking assassination. Sheikh Ja'afar was no doubt a young man very much older than his age for his depth of knowledge and readiness to disseminate it.

But who could have been after Sheikh Ja'afar? Several well entrenched forces on whose toes the late scholar stepped. Those jittery about the security of well marked personalities will always fear for the safety of such articulate and fearless scholars as Sheikh Ja'afar but always encouraged nevertheless that only Allah (SWT) can guarantee the ultimate security. A very interesting discourse by Sheikh Ja'afar was where he made a distinction between the so-called Religious Crisis and Jihad. He said most of the crisis often described as "Religious" were indeed looting sprees unconnected with the struggle for the protection of Islamic faith and the enthronement of a just society preached by the blessed prophet Muhammad. Given his views, political motives cannot be ruled out, but those who brutally killed Sheikh Ja'afar will never know peace or have their ambitions fulfilled in this world while grave calamity awaits them in the hereafter. As we mourn, cry and pray over the immeasurable loss of Sheikh Ja'afar, we must be consoled that his legacy lingers on and that several Ja'afars will rise up to take his place insha'Allah.