



Zahira College Colombo

Group of 60

NEWSLETTER

Volume 1, Issue 1- July/Sept 2006

For private circulation among members only

2006-2007 Will be Year of Education

The new Executive Committee, which was appointed on 2nd September 2006, headed by Justice Saleem Marsoof, will take education as the main theme for the year and several projects are being planned. On 28th June 2006 the Group of 60 Education and Welfare Committee inaugurated its Seminar Series for students preparing for the GCE (Advanced Level) examination to be held in April 2007. The objective of the project was to provide special lectures to supplement the classes conducted by Zahira College so that the students will be able to develop their knowledge as well as examination technique to produce better results. The Seminar will be conducted in 3 stages, the first of which was successfully completed in June. The second stage of the Seminar will be worked out on 1st and 2nd November 2006, and the project will be completed with the third stage of the Seminar which will be scheduled for February or March 2007. The Education and Welfare Committee is also planning a similar seminar series for students of Zahira sitting the GCE (O/L) examination to be held in December 2007. The group has also launched the Marhoom Senator A.M.A. Azeez Scholarship Fund to provide scholarships to brilliant and needy students of Zahira College. The Committee solicits your suggestions in regard to any other way in which educational standards at Zahira can be improved.

The Education and Welfare Committee consists of Justice Saleem Marsoof P.C. (Chairman), Mr. A.J.H.S. Illyas (Secretary), Professor Tuly de Zylva and Messers Salahudeen Cader, Ashroff Hussain, Ibrahim Hameed and Munsif Hussain.

The topmost picture shows the Governor of the Western Province, Hon. As-Sayed Alavi Moulana, Principal Zahira College, Mr. M. Abdul Ahad, then Group of 60' President, Sam Macan Markar, Chairman of the Education and Welfare Committee Justice Saleem Marsoof, Committee Secretary Mr. A.J.H.S. Illyas and Com. Member Mr. Salahudeen Cader at the head table. The pictures below that show the President Sam Macan Markar addressing the gathering and the College Head Prefect delivering the vote of thanks. The other two pictures show part of the invitees, guests and students who assembled at Gaffoor Hall for the inauguration of the project,



The Importance of Education in Islam

by Justice Saleem Marsoof P.C.

To seek knowledge is a sacred duty, it is obligatory on every Muslim, male and female. The first word revealed of the Qur'an was "Iqra" READ! Seek knowledge! Educate yourselves! Be educated.

Surah Al-Zumr, ayah 9 asks: "Are those equal, those who know and those who do not know?" *Surah Al-Baqarah*, ayah 269 reveals: "Allah grants wisdom to whom He pleases and to whom wisdom is granted indeed he receives an overflowing benefit." According to hadith, our Prophet (PBUH) has said: "Go even to China to acquire knowledge". During the days of the Prophet, going to China from Arabia was almost impossible for an ordinary being, as it was necessary to traverse thousands of miles of inhospitable desert land and the dizzy heights of the Himalayan mountain range to reach China. Going to China by sea was equally hazardous, as one has to go round the Cape of Good Hope and almost half the globe on the Indian Ocean to reach China. So, what our Prophet was saying to us was that we should be prepared to devote our whole lifetime and even risk our life to gain knowledge. In fact, our Prophet (PBUH) has said, "He who travels in search of knowledge, to him Allah shows the way to Paradise."

The Islamic world has produced the greatest scientists and scholars mankind has ever known, and the standards of Islamic universities in cities such as Fez, Baghdad, Damascus, Cairo and Cordova are a model for even the 21st Century. We all know that the system of numbering used all round the world is known as "Arabic numerals" and first appeared in print in the work of the Muslim mathematicians al-Khwarizmi and al-Kindi around 825 AD. The science of Algebra was named after al-Khwarizmi's book, *Al-Jabr wa-al-Muqabalah*, much of whose contents are still in use. The work of Muslim maths scholars was imported into Europe 300 years later by the Italian mathematician Fibonacci. Algorithms and much of the theory of trigonometry came from the Muslim world. And Al-Kindi's discovery of frequency analysis rendered all the codes of the ancient world soluble and created the basis of modern cryptology.

Perhaps, the most famous scholar ever in the history of mankind, was Ibnu Sina, whose story explodes the now fashionable theory that the West has the monopoly of all knowledge. Ibn Sina, who was born in 981 AD in Bukhara, had by the age of ten memorized the Qur'an and quite a bit of Arabic poetry, and went on to study medicine. He simultaneously studied philosophy by reading relevant Greek, Islamic, and other material. He learnt Logic from the (then renowned) philosopher Abu Abdallah Natili. In addition, he received instruction from various teachers in metaphysics. By the age of sixteen, Ibn Sina had mastered the study of medicine; his skills in that field proved to be of great value and gained him a great reputation. He was such a veteran that by the age of twenty-one, Ibn Sina had become accomplished in all branches of formal learning, and started to serve as a jurist in Gurganj. He was then welcomed by Khawarizm Shah in Jurjan where he served as a teacher. In Rayy (near modern day Tehran), Ibn Sina served as an administrator and then moved on to Qazvin where he was a physician. The credit for deducing that Venus must be closer to the earth than to the sun goes to Ibnu Sina. He was the first to describe meningitis, and the first to suggest the treatment for lachrymal fistula by the use of a medical probe into the throat canal. Ibn Sina was also the first scientist to graphically describe, in minute detail, the different parts of the eye.

Ibnu Sina's work *The Kitab al-Shifa* (The Book of Healing) is described as a scientific and philosophical encyclopedia. Its Latin translation during the 12th century is known as the "Sanatio." It covered Mathematics, which was divided into four branches, Geometry, Arithmetic, Astronomy and Music. His most famous book throughout the East and the West is the immense encyclopedia of medicine, *Al-Qanun fi al-Tibb* (The Canon of Medicine). It surveyed the entire realm of medical knowledge available, at that time, from ancient and Islamic sources. Its systematic approach and its intrinsic value superseded all previous works on Medicine, and remained supreme for six centuries. In addition to describing pharmacological methods, *Al-Qanun* described 760 drugs and became the most authentic medical material of the era. It was translated into Latin by Gerard Cremona in the 12th century and became the textbook in European medical schools. During the last 30 years of the 15th century, it was reissued 16 times with 15 editions in Latin and once in Hebrew, and it was reissued more than 20 times during the 16th century. In 1930, Cameron Gruner partly translated *Al-Qanun* into English and entitled it *A Treatise On the Canons of Avicenna*. From the 12th century until the 17th century, *Al-Qanun* served as the chief guide for medical science in the West. Dr. W. Osler, author of the *Evolution of Modern Science* wrote, "The Qanun has remained a medical bible for a longer period than any other work."

Ibn Sina spent the last 14 years of his life relatively peacefully in the court of the ruler Ala ad-Daulah in Isfahan. He completed many works on philosophy, medicine, the Arabic language and the many military campaigns that he had to attend. His works include *Kitab al-Shifa*, the *Kitab an-Najat* (Book of Salvation) and the *Kitab al-Isharat wa at-Tanbihat* (Book of Directions and Remarks). The latter describes the mystic's spiritual journey beginning with the development of faith to the final stage of direct and continual vision of God. Ibn Sina died in June 1037 while on a military campaign with Ala ad-Daulah, leaving his vast findings and knowledge for us to learn from. The story of Ibnu Sina shows us how learning the Qur'an in a tender age can propel a man to great heights in the realm of knowledge and spiritualism.

The question that I wish to pose is: what has happened to the great Islamic thirst for learning? Perhaps, long entrenched monarchies, colonialism, foreign dominance or intervention and the oppressive rule of their own people have brought about moral and spiritual degeneration of Muslims throughout the world. Perhaps, we have due to lethargy, arrogance or ignorance strayed away from the teachings of the Qur'an and *sunna*. Perhaps, the temptations and intrigues of the Western world have lured us away from the path shown to us by Islam. To retrieve ourselves from this degeneration, it is about time that the Muslim Ummah restructures its educational priorities along Islamic lines, fulfilling the existing needs as well. By virtue of such an educational program, the future generations will become the torch-bearers of Islamic values and play an effective role in the present world. The challenges of modern times call for rebuilding the structure of our educational program on such a foundation as to fulfill our spiritual as well as temporary obligations.

Today we need an educational system which can produce, in the words of late Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdudi, the "Muslim philosopher, Muslim scientist, Muslim economist, Muslim jurist, Muslim statesman, in brief, Muslim experts in all fields of knowledge who would reconstruct the social order in accordance with the tenets of Islam." This indeed was the dream of our forefathers such as M. C. Siddhi Lebbe, I. L. M. Abdul Aziz, A. M. Wappitchi Marikar and Ahamed Orabi Pasha when they worked together to sow the seeds of Al-Madrasathul Zahira in 1891 which has now blossomed into Zahira College, Colombo and inspired several other Zahira

Colleges in other parts of Sri Lanka. During the so called "golden era" of Zahira, under the leadership of Marhoom Dr. T.B.Jayah and Senator (Dr.) A.M.A.Azeez, the College combined religious and secular education effectively to produce great scholars and sportsmen. Zahira stood for a total Islamic education catering for both material and spiritual development. After the takeover of the College by the Government and its subsequent divesting thanks to a great struggle which took the matter to the Privy Council, the management of the College has become a problem despite legislative intervention in the form of the Zahira College, Colombo, Board of Governors Act No. 18 of 1982. Recent research and brain storming have yielded just one prescription to bring back Zahira to its pristine glory and to prevent the dream of our forefathers from becoming a nightmare: *Infuse Islam to its curriculum, management and administration.*

The Muslims today are the most humiliated community in the world, and should they persist in following the same educational program as given by their colonial masters, they will not be able to recover themselves from moral and spiritual decadence. Islam is our greatest gift. We have to be thankful for this gift. We have to render to Allah His due. Allah has given us so much by making us a part of the Ummah of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) so we must totally commit ourselves as followers of the Prophet. We must become true Muslims.

How can we become Muslims in the true sense of the word? First let us define who a Muslim is. A Muslim is not a Muslim simply because he is born one. A Muslim is a Muslim because he is a follower of Islam, a submitter to the Will of Allah. We are Muslim if we consciously and deliberately accept what has been taught by the Prophet and act accordingly. Otherwise we are not true Muslims. The first and most crucial obligation on us is to acquire knowledge and secondly to practice and preach this knowledge. No man becomes truly a Muslim without knowing the meaning of Islam, *because he becomes a Muslim not through birth but through knowledge.* It is impossible for us to be Muslim, and at the same time live in a state of ignorance. It is essential to understand that the greatest gift of Allah – for which we are so overwhelmed with gratitude – depends primarily on knowledge. A person without knowledge is like someone walking along a track in complete darkness. This shows that our greatest danger lies in our ignorance of Islamic teachings and in our unawareness of what the Qur'an teaches and what guidance has been given by the Prophet. Only if we are blessed with the light of knowledge we will be able to see plainly the clear path of Islam at every step of our lives, for our material and spiritual wellbeing. The main purpose of acquiring knowledge is to bring us closer to God. It is not simply for the gratification of the mind or the senses. It is not knowledge for the sake of knowledge or science for the value of sake. Knowledge accordingly must be linked with values and goals.

One of the objectives of acquiring knowledge is to gain the good of this world, not to destroy it through wastage, arrogance and in the reckless pursuit of higher standards of material comfort. Another purpose of knowledge is to spread freedom and dignity, truth and justice. It is not to gain power and dominance for its own sake. Obviously, what we may call the reservoir of knowledge is deep and profound. It is a vast and open field that is not limited. It is impossible for anyone to gain anything more than a fraction of what there is to know in the short span of one's life. We must therefore decide what is most important for us to know and how to go about acquiring this knowledge. According to hadith, "He who acquires knowledge acquires a vast portion" and "If anyone going on his way in search of knowledge, God will, thereby make easy for him the way to Paradise." Ibn Mas'ud (Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said: The position of only two persons is enviable; the person whom Allah bestowed with wealth empowering him to spend it in the way of righteousness, and the person to whom Allah gave wisdom with which he adjudges and which he teaches to others. According to *Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah*, Ibn Abbas (Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Messenger of Allah said: "A single scholar of religion is more formidable against shaytaan than a thousand devout persons."

As Wordsworth once said, in a moment of poetic wisdom: "The Child is father of the Man". Our children are our future. The future lies in their hands, but only through knowledge because whoever neglects learning in youth, loses the past and is dead for the future. It is this thought that inspired the Group of 60' to declare this year as the 'Year of Education' and to launch the Marhoom Senator A.M.A.Azeez Scholarship Fund and many other programmes to augment educational standards at Zahira College, Colombo, which is the premier Muslim educational institution in Sri Lanka. May Allah (SWT) give us strength to behave and act just as He likes us to do and be pleased with us. *Rabbi zidnee ilma* (O Lord, increase us in knowledge). *Aameen.*

Dr. A.M.A. Azeez Scholarship Fund

On a proposal made by Janab Sam Macan Markar, the immediate Past President of the Group of 60, it has been decided to launch the Group of 60 Dr. A.M.A. AZEEZ SCHOLARSHIP FUND in memory of the distinguished past Principal of Zahira College, who was the only Sri Lankan to be included in the list of one hundred great Muslim leaders of the 20th Century. The Group of 60 has decided to offer scholarships to students of Zahira College, Colombo, by selecting academically bright students who perform well and secure the best results at the forthcoming GCE (OL) examination who opt to continue their education at Zahira College. A few scholarships will be also awarded to students selected purely on the basis of needs. The Scholarship will consist of a payment of at least Rs. 1000 per month for a period of 2 years.

While the Zahira College Group of 60 has made an initial grant of Rs. 50,000 to help launch the Scholarship Fund, the Sub Committee on Education and Welfare has resolved to invite **donors**, to assist in the augmentation of the fund so that more Scholarships can be provided. Such contributions can be made in memory of your loved ones, who have passed away, or are living. As you are aware, any contribution towards the education of the younger generation is *Sadakath ul-Jariya* and will be rewarded by the Almighty. This is therefore a golden opportunity for you to gain merit while at the same time helping a worthy cause.

For further information, you may contact Justice Saleem Marsoof, P.C. who is the Chairman of the Education & Welfare Committee at 2328655 (during office hours) and 777356556 or Mr. A.J.S.H. Ilyas who is the Secretary of the Committee, at 2863545. You could make your contributions to the Fund by cheque crossed 'Account Payee' in favour of 'G60 A.M.A. AZEEZ SCHOLARSHIP FUND' or make your remittance direct to our special account bearing No. 086100115036986 in the Thimbirigasyaya Branch of the Peoples' Bank. If you are making a direct remittance, kindly inform the above-named of your remittance to expedite the issue of an official receipt without delay. In the event of you desiring to be anonymous, please also indicate by what symbol or pseudonym you wish your contribution should be acknowledged in our accounts.

Please do not forget that the rewards are multiple if you make your contributions during this Holy Month of Ramazan.

MEMORY OF THE TSUNAMI

Shocked and moved by the devastation caused by the Tsunami, The Zahira College Group of 60' played a significant role to help the affected students of Zahira National School, Hambantota and other schools in Hambantota, Kirinda and Lunugamwehera. A delegation comprising of Hon. Justice Saleem Marsoof P.C., Mrs. Muneera Marsoof, Messrs A.H.Ghousul Ameen, Kaleel Mohamed, Salahudeen Cader, S.M.A. Wahab and M. Azmeer visited Hambantota. This trip was organized with the help of Mr. Azmi Thassim, Director General, Chamber of Commerce, Hambantota.

The delegation was welcomed by Mr. Azmi Thassim and a group of Old Zahirians living in Hambantota. The visit to Zahira Hambantota was very nostalgic. The delegation was received by the Acting Principal, Teachers and students of the College. The Acting Principal, Mr. M.H.M. Naseer in his welcome address said that the College was started in 1911 as a Tamil School under the name of Dharmakabeer, later which was named Zahira School and thereafter renamed Zahira National School. He said that Marhoom Sham Mahroof as the Mayor and later as the Member of Parliament helped the College in providing buildings. There are 950 students and over 100 students were killed by Tsunami. The Principal, teacher Sahardeen's entire family and Teacher Arafa's husband died in the Tsunami.

As a gesture of our goodwill, one VCD player and set of microphones were presented by the leader of the delegation to the Principal of Hambantota Zahira. Mr. Salahudeen Cader brought some Gents and ladies' wrist watches and three of each were presented to the Principal to be given to the most deserving prefects. The delegation also visited other schools in Kirinde and Lunugamwehera, and made similar presentations. Later, the Group of 60' formed the Education for Progress Foundation, of which the present President is Al Haj A.H.Ghousul Ameen, with a view of broad-basing the efforts to help our schools in the Provinces, particularly in the Tsunami affected areas, to improve their educational standards.

Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The similitude of His light is as a niche wherein is a lamp. (Surah 24:35)

Computer Lab Renovation

The Chairman of the Board of Governors requested the group to undertake renovating the computer lab in the primary section. Mr. Branudeen Amith, who is domiciled in Australia agreed to take on this task. His company M/s Archibuilt helped in planning the project. Many G60 members also contributed towards the success of the project.

The completed lab, consisting of 8 multimedia personal computers, was handed over to the students of the primary section on December 18, 2004. It was declared opened by Mrs. Ruweena Aliph, the daughter of the late Dr. T.B. Jayah.

Project Chairman, Mr. Tony Amit and his team, ie: Mazeer, Muzzammil, Rummy Hassen and Saheer worked around-the-clock to ensure the project is completed on time.



A new Gymnasium for the students

Apart from getting enlightening with knowledge, a complete man must be full of good health. In keeping with this, a sub-committee from the G60 headed by the former President donated a fully equipped gymnasium to the college.

The gym, designated as “Dr. A.M.A. Azeez Memorial Gymnasium” was declared opened by the former Chairman of the Board of Governors, Mr. M.M. Zuhair P.C., ambassador designate to the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The speech delivered by our distinguished old boy, Dr. Neville Edirisinghe brought-in many nostalgic memories from the past. Mr. Aslam Omar, Director, Brandix Group, another old boy, highlighted the use of the gym in order to make the next Mr.Fitness from Zahira itself.



New Washrooms for the Staff

With a request from Chairman of the Board of Governors, G60 undertook the task to build a new washroom for the staff of Zahira College senior section. The washroom is equipped with all the latest amenities .



Brilliant Zahirian, Master Pushpakumara who's A/L results made him enter the University, recognized by G60. Here. N. Justice Saleem Marsoof P.C. handing over the plaque and scholarship papers. This tiny step fro G60 ignited many others to follow suit. Unfortunately they do not wish to identify themselves, Thank you comrades.



MEMBERS' DAY – 23RD DECEMBER

A day excursion for Members and their Families to have fun. The venue this year is KUKULEGANGA HOLIDAY RESORT (www.kkgholidayresort.com) which is a recently constructed complex with amenities such as Club House, Swimming Pool, Play Area, Tennis Court, Squash Court, Gym, Walking Trails etc. Located in the environs of the Sinharaja nature reserve, it has a cool climate with lush green tea and rubber estates. Be with nature – Be with friends – Come one Come All! Do not forget the date. (The picture below shows one of the activities of last year's Members' Day hosted by the Hamdoon brothers at Neboda Estate, Matugama.



Executive Committee—2006/2007

President:	Hon. Justice Saleem Marsoof
Imm. Past President:	M.S.Macan Markar
1st Vice President:	Ashraff Ghany
2nd Vice President:	S.M. Salahudeen Cader
Hony. Secretary:	M. Hazmie Yusuf
Asst. Secretary:	M.F. Saqqaf Muheed
Treasurer:	M.S. Mazeer
Asst. Treasurer:	M.H.M. Nafaiz
Editor:	Nizam Lantra
Committee:	A.J.S.H. Ilyas M.H.M.Mashoor M.M.Saheer M. Fuad Jain Faizal Amit M. Romy Hassen M. Mohideen Ariff M.H.M. Samsudeen Mackie S.M.Abdul Wahab A.C.M.Ifthie M.Riza Abdeen

www.zahirag60.com

Our Mission

To be a guiding light to the rest of the Zahirians.

Objectives

We are a fellowship organization. We wish to foster a sense of loyalty to Zahira College and goodwill amongst the members. We cooperate and liaise with other groups of Zahira College towards betterment, progress and advancement of Zahira College Colombo.

Constitution

The entire constitution is available as a PDF file. Please contact us for a copy, preferably giving your email address.



Pix from last year's Members Day

Sub Committees

EDUCATION & WELFARE.

Hon. Saleem Marsoof (Chairman)
Professor Tuly De Silva.
A.J.S.H. Illyas. Ibrahim Hamid.
Salahudeen Cader. Ashraff Hussein.
Munsif Hussain

FINANCE & FUND RAISING.

Fuad Jain (Chairman)
A.C.M. Ifthie. Nafaiz Hamdoon.
M.M. Saheer M.T.A. Irshard
Hazmie Yusuf Rummy Hassen
M.S.Mazeer.

MEMBERS DAY

Rummy Hassen (Chairman)
Fuad Jain Hazmie Yusuf.
Saqqaf Muheed. Nizam Lantra.

SPORTS.

M.S.Mazeer (Chairman)
Hazmie Yusuf. Nizam Lantra.
M.M. Saheer Nafaiz Hamdoon.
M.A.Wahab. Riza Abdeen.
M.F.Ismethdeen M.Shahul Hameed.

WEB PAGE.

Salahudeen Cader (Chairman)
Hazmie Yusuf. Nizam Lantra.

