



**A MEMORANDUM  
ON THE PROJECT  
OF THE  
CEYLON MUSLIM CULTURAL  
CENTRE**

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**THE CEYLON MUSLIM CULTURAL CENTRE**

**Zahira College, Colombo, Ceylon.**

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## **CEYLON MUSLIMS - ETHNOLOGY AND HISTORY**

The distribution of population in Ceylon according to Religion, Census Year 1953, is given on page 32 of The Ceylon Year Book 1955 as follows:-

Buddhists 5,217,143; Hindus 1,614,004; Muslims 541,812; Christians 714,874; Others 10,804; Total 8,098,637. The Muslims thus constitute nearly 6.7% of Ceylon's population – roughly 550,000 in a total of a little over 8,000,000.

2. Due to the insufficiency of available evidence and the lack of sustained effort and sufficient encouragement, their ethnology has yet remained an inadequately explored field of research. A comprehensive treatment of the subject would indeed illumine some of the obscure aspects of Ceylon's history – e.g. the extent of the contacts the Muslims of Ceylon had maintained for several centuries with their brethren in faith in lands far and near; the political relations which Ceylon had with Muslim World particularly at its hey-day; and the volume of Ceylon's trade and its geographical distribution.

3. The Muslims of Ceylon were given the application of 'Moors' by the Portuguese who first came to Ceylon in 1505 (A.D) and encountered these Muslims as their immediate rivals to trade and influence. This description of 'Moors' was their immediate rivals to trade and influence. This description of 'Moors' was misnomer based on 'Moors' - the people of Mauretania who were the Muslim neighbours of the Portuguese. The name, however, gained currency in Ceylon due to its wide use by the Colonial Powers. These Muslims ( Moors) were the descendants of Arab settlers whose numbers were later augmented by local converts and immigrant Muslims from South India. With regard to the date of the arrival of the first Arab settlers, Sir Alexander Johnstone holds that it was during the early part of the 8th century A.D. "The first Mohammedans who settled in Ceylon were, according to the tradition which prevails amongst their descendants, a portion of those Arabs of the House of Hashim who were driven from Arabia in the early part of the eighth century by the tyranny of the Caliph Abd al Malek ben Merwan, and who proceeding from the Euphrates southward made settlements in the Concan, in the southern parts of the peninsula of India, on the island of Ceylon and at Malacca. The division of them which came to Ceylon formed eight considerable settlements along the north-east, north, and western coasts of that island; viz : one at Trincomalee, one at Jaffna, one at Mantotte and Mannar, one at Coedramalle, one at Putlam, one at Colombo, one at Barbareen and one at Point-de-Galle".

4. The presence of these settlers is strikingly corroborated by the accounts found in Muslim sources with regard to the proximate cause of the Arab Conquest of Sind, during the time of Caliph al-Walid. His Governor, Hajjaj of Iraq, initiated this conquest, under the leadership of 'Imad-ud-din Muhammad bin Qasim, as a punishment for the plunder of the ships that carried together with presents from the King of Ceylon to the Caliph the families

of the Arabs who had died in Ceylon. It is reasonable to suppose that during the 8th century (A.D) and subsequent centuries these Arabs came in increasing numbers and settled down in Ceylon without entirely losing touch with the areas of their origin. Ceylon exercised a special fascination on these sea-faring Arabs as a commercial junction of importance which afforded possibilities of profitable trade in pearls, gems, spices and other valued articles. These voyagers were impelled to remain in Ceylon, attracted by its scenic splendour and the hoary traditions associated with the Adam's Peak, and encouraged by the cordial treatment received from the local rulers and the country's inhabitants.

5. After the sack of Baghdad in 1250 A.D. by Hulagu and his Mongol hordes, Baghdad irretrievably lost its earlier importance; and with it the Arab activities in the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean diminished considerably. Muslim influence, however, did not thereby cease entirely. It began to emanate from India where by the 13th century (A.D.), the Muslims had firmly established themselves along its Western Coast and possessed a virtual monopoly of its external trade. As a result an Indian element was added into the composition of the local Muslim community. Despite the racial admixture that took place in consequence and the new manners and customs that were acquired, the individuality of the community was preserved on account of the cherished memory of its Arab origin and the emphasis that was placed on Islam as the base of its communal structure.

6. Because of the lack of territorial ambitions and the absence of any colonial spirit among these Muslims the local rulers did not regard them as aliens. Instead these Muslims were favoured for the commercial and political contacts they gained for Ceylon, for the revenue they brought to the country, the foreign skills they secured e.g. medicine and weaving, and the encouragement they gave local trade by the introduction of new crafts, e.g. gem cutting and by the promotion of improved methods of transport, e.g. "thavalam" (carriage – bullocks). The extent of their influence when the Portuguese appeared in Ceylon may be gauged by the conjecture of Sir Emerson Tennent that "but for this timely appearance of a Christian Power in the Island, Ceylon instead of a possession of the British Crown, might at the present day have been a Mahometan Kingdom, under the rule of some Arabian adventurer".

7. With the advent of the Portuguese in 1505 the Muslims suffered a change in their status which they never recovered thereafter. The Portuguese regarded them as their rivals in trade and enemies in faith. The Dutch who superseded the Portuguese were not prepared to give the Muslims even a small share of their commercial gains and therefore promulgated harsh regulations to keep them down. It was during the Dutch period the Muslims from South East Asia (Malays) came to Ceylon, many of them brought by the Dutch from their possessions as soldiers to fight for them and some as exiles for political reasons. When the Dutch capitulated to the British, these soldiers joined the British regiments specially formed and eventually settled down in Ceylon.

8. The British did not follow the undiluted policy of proselytization pursued by the Portuguese. Nor were the British, so harsh as the Dutch in their economic exploitation of Ceylon. To that extent, under the new rulers, the Muslims fared better. Yet they could not gain any special favour on account of their irreconcilable attitude towards the ways and culture of the west which they identified with Christianity “ The only persons who directly oppose us ( the British missionaries ) and refuse to listen to our statements of Christian truth and to accept our facts are the Mohammedans”. This, no doubt, doubt, handicapped the Muslims severely in the political, economic and educational spheres but ensured the preservation of their communal individuality despite the smallness of their numbers and the loss of cultural contacts with the Muslim World in some parts of which, like Turkey and Egypt, changes were evident on account of the impact of Western civilization. As a result till about the beginning of the current century, the Muslims of Ceylon remained culturally isolated, educationally backward and politically insignificant.

### **ZAHIRA : ITS GENESIS AND GROWTH**

9. The Muslims, however, could not continue to ignore the trend of events taking place in Ceylon and the Sub-continent of India. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan who founded in 1875 the Mohamedan Anglo-Oriental College was the leader of the Aligarh Movement in India which stressed educational reforms. Arumuga Navalar who countered the efforts of the Christian Missionaries in North Ceylon established in 1872 an English school under Hindu management. The Buddhist Theosophical society established an English school in 1886 which finally developed into the present Ananda College, Colombo. During this period the Muslims of Ceylon had in M.C. Siddi Lebbe a leader of vision who understood the significance of these changes. He had for several years canvassed the opinion of his co-religionists for a new educational approach but he had not been heeded. It was at this time, in 1883 that Arabi Pasha, the National Hero of Egypt - Ahmad 'Orabi El Misri' - came as an exile to Ceylon, He provided a powerful stimulus for an agonizing reappraisal on the part of the Muslims of Ceylon in regard to their attitude towards modern education and Western culture. All these cumulatively culminated in the establishment in 1892 of Al-Madrasathuz Zahira under the patronage of Arabi Pasha which has since blossomed into Zahira College, Colombo.

10. Zahira started in 1892 continued as a primary school till when its status was raised to that of a secondary school. In 1921 Mr. T.B. Jayah (later His Excellency the High Commissioner for Ceylon in Pakistan) assumed duties as Principal and Zahira began to pulsate with new life and make phenomenal progress in every direction. During his period Zahira became a Grade 1 Collegiate School and was soon recognized as one of the leading educational institutions of the Island. After 27 years of service at Zahira, Mr. Jayah relinquished duties at the age of 57 on his becoming the Hon'ble the Minister of Labour and Social Services in the first Parliamentary Cabinet of Ceylon and was succeeded in August 1948 by the present Principal Mr. A.M.A. Azeez, formerly of the Ceylon Civil service

## **ZAHIRA : ITS IDEAL ROLE AND STATUS**

11. Zahira during these years became the Mother of Muslim Denominational institutions and, in the words of Dr. T. B. Jayah, 'the Radiating Centre in Ceylon of Muslim Thought and Activity'. In brief it may be stated without exaggeration that what the Aligarh Movement achieved for the Mussalmans of the Sub-Continent of India, Zahira achieved for the Muslims of Ceylon. Zahira thus never did nor never shall consider herself a mere collegiate institution, because of the sacred obligation which has devolved on her as the Cultural Centre of the Ceylon Muslim Community, to foster its distinctive culture with the sure and strong conviction that the Community best serves Sri Lanka not by the abandonment, dethronement or dilution of its culture but by its protection, preservation and promotion.

12. At present Zahira College, Colombo, is the only Muslim Institution successfully preparing Muslim students for the Entrance Examinations of the University of Ceylon and some with Arabic as one of their four subjects. Zahira has so far produced three Arabic (special) graduates of the Ceylon University and three other graduates ( General ) with Arabic as one of their subjects belonging to the same University. One of them, Mr. I. L. M. Shuaib, a member of Zahira's staff, is now a M.A. student in Arabic of the Ceylon University. Another Zahirian, Mr. A. M. M. Mackeen, one of Zahira's best students in Arabic will soon be a Ph. D., having already obtained his B. A. Hons. (Arabic) degree of the University of London.

13. Zahira was born of the conviction that no price was too dear for the cultural individuality of the community. Thus from the day of its foundation Zahira has realized that "religion can alone prepare modern man for the burden of the great responsibility which the advancement of modern science necessarily involves and restore to him that attitude of faith which makes him capable of winning a personality here and retaining it hereafter". Islam therefore rightly occupies pride of place in the curriculum and inspires Zahira in her aspirations and thereby guides her actions and activities. Of the first Mission of students composed of four Mawlawis (Alims) that was sent in 1947 to Egypt by the Ceylon Muslim Scholarship Fund to follow courses of studies at the thousand year old Al-Azhar University of Cairo, three are members of Zahira's staff. From them, the study of Islam and Arabic at Zahira has received fresh impetus. On Zahira thus is cast the special duty – to promote the distinctive culture of Islam and thereby maintain its steady contribution to the cultural enrichment of Ceylon as indeed to sustain its spiritual links with the World of Islam.

14. According to conditions obtaining in Ceylon, a student has to complete two years after passing his S. S. C. Examination before he could take up the competitive Entrance Examination of the University of Ceylon. Being the only Muslim Institution successfully preparing Muslim students for admission into this University Zahira's responsibilities in relation to the present aspirations and the future status of the Muslim Community have vastly increased by the far reaching changes, political, economic and social, that are now taking place in Ceylon. The Muslims of the present generation are called upon to respond

satisfactorily and speedily to the challenges offered by the complex problems of Ceylon in its present stage of development by adapting measures that would ensure their economic survival as well as promote the progress of Ceylon in technological and other spheres. Zahira is thus required to fulfil special tasks, assume added responsibilities and discharge new obligations.

### **ZAHIRA : CHALLENGE AND RESPONSE**

15. To cope with the demands of the situation confronting her, Zahira has evolved an integrated plan for its curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, with an extensive and ambitious programme of additional buildings. This includes: (a) the New Hostel – a three storeyed structure of which the basement has been completed and the second storey is being commenced, (b) the new Science Laboratory for the specialized teaching of Physics, Chemistry, Botany and Zoology, (c) the new Rifle Range which is being accorded special priority on account of the unflagging enthusiasm for rifle shooting that has been shown and the excellent results that have been consistently produced over a period of several years at Zahira and (d) the Siddi Lebbe Memorial Building for practical Education, Stage 1 of which will soon be completed. By these items and the increased cost of buildings experienced since the second world war, local benefactors and well wishers are being taxed to the utmost of their resources. Of this programme the most important is the Ceylon Muslim Cultural Centre - a project of great possibilities and vital consequences to the entire Muslim population of Ceylon without any distinction of race or area, school or sect.

### **THE INAUGURATION OF THE CEYLON MUSLIM CULTURAL CENTRE**

16. The Foundation Stone of the Centre was laid by the Hon'ble Haji H. S. Ismail, M. P., Speaker of the House of Representatives on March 18, 1958. This was made possible in the first instance by the generous gift of the Asia Foundation in a sum of Seventy-five Thousand Rupees. Finding that Rs. 75,000/- would not enable the commencement of even the first stage, an appeal was made to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for help; and help readily came in a sum of Rs. 25,000/-. The funds were augmented by Rs. 10,000/- from His Holiness: Dr. Syedina Taher Saifuddin Saheb, Dai-UI-Mutlaq of Dawoodi Bohras and Chancellor of the Muslim University, Aligarh, India. A few months later the Maldivian Government supplemented the amount of Rs. 2,000/-. The Ceylon Government by a special allocation through its Department of Cultural Affairs further increased the funds by a sum of Rs. 5,000/-. Local benefactors donated in all Rs. 4,000/- , - Total Rs. 121,000/-

17. The estimated cost of the buildings of the Cultural Centre being Rs. 400,000/- (Stage 1 Rs. 175,000/-, Stage 11 Rs. 225,000/- ) there was a sum of Rs. 54,000/- still wanted. Relying on Him - the Giver of all Gifts – and sustained by the good will of the Chief Benefactors – one Foundation, an University Chancellor and three Governments and the sympathy of all her

well wishers in Ceylon and abroad, Zahira proceeded with the scheme, undaunted by the paucity of funds at that time – thanking Him in the words of her motto - Alhamdu Lillah.

### **THE CENTRE – STAGE 1 – FOUNDATION CEREMONY**

18. In the aims and activities pertaining to this Centre Zahira will ever derive special inspiration from the Quranic verses that were recited on March 18, 1958 at the commencement of this ceremony - verses which have been rendered into English thus :-

“Abraham and Ishmael built the house and dedicated it saying: our Lord! Accept this from us, Thou, indeed! Thou art the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing, our Lord. Make of us Muslims, bowing to Thy Will, and make of our descendants a nation that will bow to Thy Will. And show us our ways of devotion and turn unto us in Mercy; for thou art the Oft-Returning, Most Merciful”.

### **THE CENTRE'S ARCHITECTURAL ASPECTS**

19. The Ceylon Muslim Cultural Centre, Zahira College, Colombo, is comprised of :-

- (a) A Library section which includes (i) Stacking facilities for 100,000 volumes (ii) Librarian's counter (iii) Reference Library section (iv) Catalogue Area (v) Reading facilities for about 250 persons at a time and (vi) a Group Study Room – all these on the ground floor.
- (b) An Archives Section and a spacious car park together with a room for the librarian – all these in the “dip” of the ground – what may be termed as the basement floor, with a basement which will provide extra accommodation for study classes etc. The Archives will contain documents , manuscripts etc of historical value pertaining to the Muslim community.
- (c) An Exhibition Hall for the display of paintings, manuscripts, drawings, posters and of specially selected books on specific themes etc. In this Exhibition Hall will be held Annually the Islamic Cultural Exhibition increasing yearly in its range and value.
- (d) An Audio Visual and Lecture Hall ( auditorium ) with accommodation for about 180 persons, and an Art Room adjoining for special work in Islamic Art.
- (e) The space at the rear of the building will be converted into a ‘ Saracenic Garden’ which in addition will provide a pleasant atmosphere for open-air reading.

20. The above project will be completed in two stages, stage 1 embracing the immediately required portions and Stage II embracing the remaining building. It is estimated that stage 1 would cost about Rs. 175,000/- and Stage II about Rs. 225,000/- the whole projects thus costing about Rs. 400,000/- This estimate is naturally susceptible to fluctuation in the cost of labour and of materials.

21. The Cultural Centre occupies an extremely prominent position in the premises where the dominating feature is the Mosque (The Maradana Mosque which is one of the oldest

and most spacious Mosque in Colombo). All these facilities will be made available not only to the staff and students of the College but to all irrespective of colour or class, caste or creed. In view of the Cultural Centre's easy accessibility by train or bus, occupying as it does a prominent position in the College premises situated within the heart of the City of Colombo, it is hoped that an unusually large number of persons will be benefited by the Centre. It faces the College playground and adjoins on one side the Zahira New Hostel, which when completed will be a three storey structure and adjoins on the other side the New Ghaffoor Hall which has accommodation for about 750 persons.

22. The site of the Centre was selected and the plans were approved by Dr. S.R. Ranganathan of the University of Delhi, India, the world famous authority on Libraries and Librarianship. He has specially commended the introduction of an additional open air reading room and confirmed that the plans provide for the best possible use, functionally and aesthetically, of the space available. The annexe to this memorandum gives a layout plan of the centre (scale:- 32' = 1" ).

#### **THE CENTRE: A LIBRARY OF BOOKS ON ISLAMICS**

23. Already there is a library, at present housed in two spacious classrooms and containing nearly 15,000 volumes besides several periodicals. This includes a special section on Islam and Islamics. Owing to its present congested state, the public is unable to make use of the library. Therefore when it is shifted to the new premises all readers will have an easy access. The Centre has been planned to possess a comprehensive collection of books on Islam and Islamics in as many languages as possible ---e.g. Arabic, English, Tamil, Urdu, Sinhalese ; and such a library has been a long felt need in Ceylon not only for the Muslims but also for the non-Muslim student of Islamic Civilization.

#### **THE CENTRE'S SPECIALIZED ARABIC – TAMIL SECTION**

24. In addition there will be a specialized section containing volumes of Arabic-Tamil literature - a valuable and significant contribution made by the Muslims of Ceylon and South India. In the Tamil language as spoken and written by the Muslims several Arabic words are in use which in many cases have displayed their pure Tamil equivalents. The term Arabic-Tamil has therefore gained currency to indicate the Tamil of the Muslims. At one time Arabic-Tamil was written in the Arabic script with four of its letters being improvised with additional diacritical marks to denote four Tamil sounds unknown to Arabic and with special diacritical marks to represent extra vowel sounds. Today Arabic-Tamil is being generally written in the Tamil alphabet with or without diacritical mark

#### **THE CENTRE: AN INSTITUTE OF ISLAMIC RESEARCH**

25. The Arabic-Tamil books which were in vogue in Ceylon some years back, it is feared, will soon disappear unless a systematic collection of them is made early. The Centre will



therefore take adequate steps for their collection and safe custody and whenever necessary arrange for the reprinting of the volumes concerned. There are still available in Ceylon, though scattered, several rare manuscripts of Arabic and Arabic-Tamil volumes. Accommodation for them will be found in the Archives section. In addition there will be a specialized collection of the Holy Quran in the various kinds of Arabic calligraphy obtainable and also in all the available translations.

26. The Archives and the Library with as complete a set of books as are obtainable on Islam and Islamics in as many of the languages as are available will provide the necessary facilities for reading and research on Islam in Ceylon -- a theme of special value to Islamic scholarship but so far inadequately treated. The Centre will therefore endeavour to establish contacts with similar Research Institutes in other parts of the world and obtain help in methods and materials.

27. Mr. M. Sameem, B.A. (Ceylon) of Zahira's staff who has had a training in Librarianship at the Ceylon Institute of Scientific and Industrial Research is in charge of the Library and has already started a systematic classification of the books.

#### **THE CENTRE: A BUREAU OF PUBLICATIONS.**

28. In addition to the items outlined above, the Centre will undertake or assist in the production and publication of Sinhalese and other books on Islam.

29. There are no suitable books at present on Islam and Islamics in the Sinhalese language, which is the language of the vast majority of the population, will inevitably occupy a pre-eminent position in Ceylon. It has therefore become urgently essential from all points of view to produce such books in Sinhalese and thus gain for Islam a new and additional language. In the circumstances obtaining at present, the curriculum of the Muslim pupil should include Arabic and three of the four languages viz: Sinhalese, Tamil, English and Malay. Thus the Muslim has to cope inevitably with four languages, three of which are not his home languages. To ease the strain thereby caused to the Muslim pupil, it is essential to produce in these languages suitable text books as well as supplementary readers with Islamic backgrounds.

30. Thus the books envisaged are of two groups viz : (1) Books in the Sinhalese language to suit the needs of adults with a knowledge of the language (2) Books meant for the Muslim pupils in schools. In regard to Group (1) the following books are to be translated into Sinhalese in the first instance from either Tamil, English, or Arabic :- (a) The Life of our Holy Prophet (o.w.b.p) (b) A Book on Islamic History (c) A Book on Islam containing, inter-alia, important aspects of Islamic Philosophy illustrated with suitable texts from the Holy Quran (d) A Book of Hathees specially selected from authentic sources (e) A Book on the Message of Islam. Group 2 would start with (a) A Book on prayer and other Pillars of Islam -

(Rudiments of Islam), (b) Stories of Islam or Elementary Islamic History with emphasis on the life of the Holy Prophet (o.w.b.p) and (c) Selections from the Holy Quran and the Hadiths.

31. The first book selected under Group (1) of the above scheme is the translation into Sinhalese of Abdur Rahim's Nabigal Nayagam ( Seerat-ul-Nabi) in Tamil. The translation incorporates the amendments contained in the second edition of the original, and will contain the following additional features :- (a) Chronology of Events taken from different sources incorporating both Hejira and Christian dates (b) Diacritical marks specially improvised to facilitate the transliteration of Arabic into Sinhalese letters, and (c) Glossary in Sinhalese of words and terms with Islamic connotation. The Centre has already received a grant of Rs. 2,000/- from the Government of Ceylon for this undertaking, and the author has kindly given the Centre the necessary authority for the translation.

### **THE CENTRE: A SCHOOL OF ISLAMIC ART & MUSIC**

32. The Exhibition Hall will endeavour to provide space under ideal conditions for the display of specimens of Islamic Art obtained or borrowed from time to time. The art room will be availed of to conduct special classes for students of Islamic Art including Architecture. It is proposed to send a Zahirian abroad for the necessary training in Islamic Art which is unobtainable at present in Ceylon. The services of the calligraphist Mr. Ahmad Ali Wahibi Ahmed Samak have been kindly granted to the Centre by the Government of the United Arab Republic and classes are now held in Arabic Writing and calligraphy - a distinctive art of the Muslims, once well-known in Ceylon and now being revived.

33. The encouragement of Islamic Music will constitute an important item in the activities of the Cultural Centre. For this purpose the Audiovisual and Lecture Hall with good acoustics and satisfactory accommodation would be freely made use of. A member of Zahira's Staff Mr. M. K. M. Jamaldeen already possessed of recognized qualification in Carnatic Music is now with the scholarship awarded by the Government of India following a course in Hindustani Music – both theory and practice – at the Bathkanda College of Hindustani Music, University of Lucknow, India. On his return and with his help a school of Islamic Music will be inaugurated.

### **STUDY CLASSES AND “ SUMMER SCHOOLS” OF THE CENTRE**

34. The project envisages the provision of classes in Islam, Quranic Recitation, Islamic Civilisation (history, economics, philosophy etc.) ,Arabic and Urdu. Other classes will be added from time to time – all of them being available for the benefit of all those willing to make use of the unrestricted opportunities given irrespective of all whether they are from Zahira or outside. Classes in Classical Arabic were commenced in September 1957. Arabic to us is the language of The Book, of our daily prayers, of our names and salutations and of our sermons and ceremonies. It is therefore gratifying to find that many are taking advantage of these classes finding time for Arabic in the midst of their professional and other duties and

despite the competing demands of other languages which are more useful for earning and employment. These classes provide a two year course of studies that will enable them to read and understand the Holy Quran and the Hadiths and are being conducted by two members of our College Staff who are exceptionally well qualified for this purpose – one having received his training in the Faculty of Technology of the World famous University of Al Azhar, Cairo, Egypt and the other in the department of Arabic of the University of Ceylon.

35. On the arrival shortly of Sheik Zahran Mohamed Ali of the Al-Azhar University, classes will be commenced in Islam. The Centre owes a deep debt of gratitude for the arrangements concerned to the Rector of the University of Al-Azhar, Cairo and the Government of the United Arab Republic.

36. In view of the proximity of the Cultural Centre to the New three storeyed Hostel it will be possible to hold, with the help of scholars from Ceylon and abroad, Summer Schools and Seminars in respects of themes of special value to Muslims. Several lectures of cultural importance have been delivered by distinguished personages under the auspices of the Ceylon Muslim Cultural Centre – e.g. The Hon'ble Humayun Kabir, Minister of Scientific Research and Cultural Affairs, the Government of India on "Islamic Contribution to Indian Culture" in May 1959.

#### **CULTURAL CONTACTS THROUGH STUDENTS**

37. Inquiries are being made from Muslim students outside Ceylon, some of them belonging to minority groups in their areas and others resident in areas with inadequate facilities for Modern Education, whether they could join Zahira to pursue their studies in the Islamic atmosphere that prevails. Already a few Maldivians have been admitted, besides, a scholarship has been granted to a Muslim student from Kenya, British East Africa. Another student is expected from the Federation of Malaya. However the number of Muslim students thus admitted would depend on the accommodation provided and the financial resources available. In view of the beneficial results that will be produced by the cultural contacts established through such students, as many students as possible will gain admission.

#### **THE CENTRE'S SCOPE AND FUTURE**

38. With His Grace, this Cultural Centre will develop into an Islamic Institution offering adequate facilities for reading and research and attracting specialist students from Ceylon and abroad.

#### **FINANCIAL POSITION AT PRESENT**

39. Cost roughly estimated : Stage I = 175,000/-  
 Stage II = 225,000/-  
 Total = 400,000/-

Details of donations so far received as on 1st January, 1960 are as follows :-

The Asia Foundation	.....	.....	.....	Rs. 75,000.00
The Government of Pakistan	.....	.....	.....	Rs. 25,000.00
The Government of Ceylon	.....	.....	.....	Rs. 11,000.00
His Holliness Dr. Syedena Tahir Saifuddin Saheb, Chancellor, Muslim University Aligarh	.....	.....	.....	Rs. 10,000.00
Miscellaneous from Local Benefactors	.....	.....	.....	Rs. 7,000.00
His Majesty Tuanku Abdul Rahman ibni Al-Marhum Tuanku Muhammed, the Paramount Ruler and Head of State of the Federation of Malaya				Rs. 3,000.00
The Maldivian Government				Rs. <u>2,000.00</u>
			Total	Rs. <u>133,000.00</u>
Stage 1	.....	.....	.....	Rs. 175,000.00
Donations as on 1st January, 1960	.....	.....	.....	Rs. <u>133,000.00</u>
Balance Required	.....	.....	.....	Rs. <u>42,000.00</u>

40. To complete Stage 1 of the Buildings a further sum of Rs. 42,000/- is thus urgently required. It is fervently hoped that with the Grace of Almighty Allah this sum will be soon found.

**Zahira College,  
Colombo, Ceylon  
January 1, 1960.**

**(A. M. A. Azeez)  
Principal, ZCC.**

( Please see annexe containing the layout plan of the Ceylon Muslim Cultural Centre)



**Annexe**

Scale : - 32' + 1"

PLAN OF THE CEYLON MULIM CULTURAL CENTER  
ZAHIRA COLLEGE COLOMBO 10.  
CEYLON

