

*Historical development of Islamic libraries internationally and in South Africa : a case study of the
Islamic Library in Gatesville.*

by

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**A minithesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Magister Bibliothecologiae, in the Department of Library and Information Science,
University of the Western Cape.**

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DECLARATION

I declare that *Historical development of Islamic libraries internationally and in South Africa : a case study of the Islamic Library in Gatesville* is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any other degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged as complete references.

Roldah Adams

Date: November 2003

Signed:

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my beloved parents, my father the late **Hadjie Ganief Adams** and my mother the late **Hadjie Fatima Adams**, may Allah grant them the highest place in paradise, insha-Allah (if God will).

“Read in the name of your Lord who created, He created man from a clot of congealed blood. Read and your Lord is most bountiful – who taught with the use of the pen (to write), Taught man what he knew not.”

At-Qur’an – 96 (The Clot): 1-5

KEYWORDS

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History

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Gatesville

ABSTRACT

Historical development of Islamic libraries internationally and in South Africa : a case study of the Islamic Library in Gatesville.

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The purpose of the study was to examine the historical development of Islamic libraries internationally and in South Africa and to examine the Islamic Library in Gatesville as a case study in order to understand in which way communities have sought to provide a solution for adequate library facilities for the specific needs of the Muslim community in the greater Cape Town area.

The following objectives are derived from this purpose, namely to examine the:

- Historical development of Islamic libraries internationally and in South Africa
- Historical background of the Islamic Library in Gatesville
- Services rendered at the Islamic Library in Gatesville

The research was conducted in two parts: a literature survey and an empirical investigation.

A survey of the published literature was executed to establish the extent to which the historical development of Islamic libraries internationally as well as in South Africa took place.

Islamic libraries played a major role in the shift from oral to a written culture amongst Muslims. The first libraries in Islamic civilization were at mosques and the first book to enter the mosque was the Qur'an.

Different types of libraries are discussed which include mosque, private, public and academic libraries. Three great libraries in Islam which held an important place in the cultural life of Muslims which were not only seen as store houses for books but seen as centers for learning and teaching were: The library of the Abbasid Caliphs in Baghdad (The House of Wisdom also known as Dar al-Hikma); the library of the Fatimide Caliphs in Cairo (The House of Science also known as Dar al-Ilm) and the library of the Umayyad Caliphs in Spain (The Library of Cordova).

During the latter part of the twentieth century the Muslim community in South Africa has been able to work towards the establishment of Islamic libraries. Special reference are made to three Islamic libraries in the Western Cape, namely the Islamic Library in Gatesville; Husami Sautush Shabaab Cravenby Islamic Library and the Southern Islamic Resource Centre and Library (SIRCAL) at Al-Munouwar Mosque, Retreat.

In the empirical investigation, structured interviews were conducted with the staff and with some of the executive committee members of the Islamic Library in Gatesville to glean information on their perceptions

of the historical development of this library and services rendered. This method of data collection was chosen to ensure that the respondents reacted to the same set of questions and to afford the opportunity of clarification of questions to the respondents. The information acquired in this way contributed to the presentation of the case study.

The Islamic Library established in 1987 began as a small home library in Primrose Park in the Athlone area, now situated in Gatesville. This library serves the Muslim community as well as any other community in the greater Cape Town area that wish to make use of its services.

Recommendations for the Islamic Library in Gatesville to render an effective service include: to have a librarian-in-charge; workshops and training session for staff; re-arrangement of books and the launching of a library website. Recommendations for further research include a thorough survey of available resources especially of Islamic literature in the Western Cape as well as in the other provinces of South Africa or an overview of Islamic libraries in South Africa can be investigated.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ICOSA	Islamic College of Southern Africa
MJC	Muslim Judicial Council
SIRCAL	Southern Islamic Resource Centre and Library

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In the translation of verses 1-5 of chapter 96 in the holy Qur'an a person's need to strive to seek knowledge by reading is emphasized (At-Tabari, Al-Qurtubi & Ibn Kathir, 1996: 1121-1122). Furthermore (Ali, 1999) emphasizes that Islam is a way of life that encourage its followers (Muslims) always to improve their lifestyle through the acquisition of knowledge and information.

Furthermore Ali (1999) emphasizes that to Muslims living in the information age, require information:

- *“about the status of Muslims around the world,*
- *to access Islamic material for research and scholarship,*
- *as an institution that is dedicated to preserving the Islamic heritage of peoples in different parts of the world.”*

Sardar (1999) refers to at least five Islamic concepts that have a direct bearing on the distribution of knowledge:

*“adl (justice),
ilm (knowledge),
ibadah (worship),
khilafa (trusteeship),
waqf (pious endowment; charitable trust).”*

An examination of the early history of Islam reveals how these concepts were given practical shape and generated a sophisticated infrastructure for the distribution of information and knowledge. Islam made the pursuit of knowledge a religious obligation. Thus a Muslim should at all times be engaged in the generation, production, processing and dissemination of knowledge.

Libraries play an important role in the development of society. An Islamic library or an Islamic information centre focuses on building a collection of materials produced by Muslims and non-Muslims pertaining to Islam (Ali, 1999).

Imamuddin (1983b : 21) and Sibai (1987 : 3) refer to the beginning of Muslim libraries. Like those of the Jews and Christians, they go back to the collection of religious books. The mosque library of the early Muslim period developed into the madrassah (school) and university libraries of the Middle Ages, just as the synagogue, church and monastic libraries changed into public, college and university libraries of today.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A great deal of literature was accumulated during the early period of Islamic civilization. This resulted in the establishment of new institutions to collect, arrange and preserve this literature, which led to the growth of the mosque library, as well as private, public and academic libraries during the Middle Ages (Elayyan, 1990 : 120). The first libraries in Islamic civilization were at the mosques and the first book to enter the mosque was the Qur'an (Taher, 2000).

Arab-Muslims who emerged from the Arabian Peninsula had no libraries and no library or book tradition, but their interest in books and libraries developed as they conquered the centres of old civilization. They adopted Persian literature and Greek science and also developed their own book industry by the seventh century and libraries by the ninth century (Aman, 1975 : 105).

Islamic libraries played a major role in the shift from oral to written culture. The concept of learning was a firmly established principle in classical Islamic civilization (Wilkins, 1994 : 297).

Muslims built various types of institutions, especially the establishment of personal and public libraries, which flourished throughout the ages in creating an Islamic civilization. Muslims communities such as those in South Africa were also motivated by this past history to establish libraries in their country. During the latter part of the twentieth

century the South African Muslim community has been able to work towards the establishment of libraries (Haron, 2001 : 57).

Haron (2001) briefly discusses the establishment of Islamic libraries in South Africa with the emphasis of case studies of Islamic libraries in the Western Cape.

In September 1987 the Islamic Library currently situated in Gatesville at the Al-Aqsa Mosque Complex (also known as Masjidul Quds), opened its doors to the community of the Cape with only 300 items at the time (Haron, 2001 : 62). It began as a small home library in Primrose Park in the Athlone area, which then moved to another location.

Gatesville is an Indian dominated suburb in the greater Cape Town area (Haron, 1997a : 138). Gatesville is an extension of the Rylands area, which also forms part of the wider Athlone area. [See Appendix A for a street map of the Gatesville area and its surroundings (Cape Town street guide, 2001/2002 : 55)] . Rylands and Gatesville are in most cases referred to as Rylands/Gatesville.

This study proposed to examine the historical development of Islamic libraries internationally and in South Africa putting the Islamic Library in Gatesville as a case study in perspective, in order to understand in which way communities have sought to provide a solution for adequate library facilities for the specific needs of the Muslim community in the greater Cape Town area.

1.3 PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study was to examine the historical development of Islamic libraries internationally and in South Africa and to examine the Islamic Library in Gatesville as a case study in order to understand in which way communities have sought to provide a solution for adequate library facilities for the specific needs of the Muslim community in the greater Cape Town area.

The following objectives are derived from this purpose, namely to examine the:

- Historical development of Islamic libraries internationally and in South Africa
- Historical background of the Islamic Library in Gatesville
- Services rendered at the Islamic Library in Gatesville

1.4 DEFINITION OF TERMS

An **Islamic library** or an **Islamic information centre** focuses on building a collection of materials produced by Muslims and non-Muslims pertaining to Islam (Ali, 1999).

For the purpose of this study the Islamic library can be regarded as a special library, because it focuses mainly on Islamic literature. Christianson (1993 : 785) quoted from the Special Libraries Association (SLA) strategic plan of 1989 that a special library is defined as *“an organization that provides focused, working information to a special*

clientele on an ongoing basis to further the mission and goals of the parent company / organization.” The **Islamic library** can be linked to a specific institute, which can be a mosque or an Islamic college or an Islamic organization. The Islamic Library in Gatesville, although it is situated in a mosque complex, operates independently from the mosque. The Islamic Library in Gateville can also be defined as a community library because it is maintained and funded through resources made available by the community and was established at the request of the community.

The term **Islamic library** and the name Islamic Library should not be confused for the purpose of this study. The term **Islamic library** refers to the Islamic library in general. The name Islamic Library is the name of the library, which is currently located in Gatesville.

The **Islamic library** is also referred to in some literature as the mosque library (Sibai, 1987) or as the Muslim (Moslem) library (Imamuddin, 1983; Aman, 1975; Thompson, 1983). These terms will in some cases be used interchangeably in this study.

Information is defined as “*knowledge acquired from study or experience*” (**Afrikaans-Engelse woordeboek: English-Afrikaans dictionary**, 1988 : 928). Prytherch (1995 : 319) defines **information** as “*An assemblage of data in a comprehensible form of communication.*” **Information** applies to “*things one has learned through being told by people or from books or through observation*” (**World Book Dictionary**, 1990 : 1163). **Information** is thus the communication of knowledge.

Knowledge on the other hand is defined as “*facts or understanding gained through study or experience*” (Afrikaans-Engelse woordeboek: English-Afrikaans dictionary, 1988 : 951); and is also defined as “*understanding of or information about a subject which has been obtained by experience or study, and which is either in a person’s mind or possessed by people in general* ” (Cambridge International Dictionary of English, 1995 : 787). **Knowledge** applies to “*the understanding of an organized body of facts and principles*” (World Book Dictionary, 1990 : 1163). **Knowledge** is thus the *understanding* of a subject matter via learning.

1.5 LITERATURE REVIEW

Imamuddin (1983b : vii) discussed quite elaborately the development of Islamic libraries with special reference to the Indo-Muslim libraries. He discussed for example the Abbasid Library, the Fatimid Library, libraries of Muslim Spain and other leading Muslim libraries. Another book of Imamuddin (1983a), *Arabic writing and Arab libraries* gives a brief overview of Arabic writing and also discussed the development of Islamic libraries.

The study of Taher (2000) deals with the history of the book in particular and to the history of libraries in general, in the context of Islamic civilization. His aim is to develop an outline of the status of the historicity of book development and to prepare a profile for writing a readable history of the book in a holistic sense.

Monastra (1995 : 2) refers to the Qur'an with its command "*Read*" which provided the groundwork for the production of learning and literature, leading to the growth of organized, well-managed book collections. A brief description on the development of Islamic libraries is discussed and reference is made to Islamic librarianship, which has been in a generally sorry state in the twentieth century. Issues for librarians today especially in the Islamic world is: automation, freedom of access to information and above all, library cooperation and networking. Monastra (1995 : 3) refers to the GULFNET online database of which Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states led the way in regional cooperation. This could also be a model for other Muslim countries.

Aman (1975) in his paper refers to the preservation of Islamic books in the early Islamic history and gives an overview of the origin of Arabic writing and Arabic calligraphy. He also gives a brief overview of the development of Islamic libraries. Aman (1975 : 105) refers to Islamic libraries as Moslem libraries : "*Moslem libraries grew out of the interests and need of cultivated individuals, literacy societies, and institutions of learning. From the very early history of Islam, rulers and caliphs took serious interest in educating the followers of this religion and in disseminating information, mainly religious and historical, to the followers of the Moslem faith.*"

Wilkins (1994 : 296) refers to the development of Islamic libraries : "*These libraries not only nourish intellectual and spiritual life, but also played an important role in the classical learning and its transmission to medieval societies outside the Islamic world.*"

Wilkins (1994) in his paper covers the development of Islamic libraries to 1920.

Thompson (1983) covers the historical development of Islamic libraries in the Medieval era which include libraries in the Near East before the Mongol Invasion in 1258 A.D., Egypt, Spain, the Maghreb and Italy. He also refers to Islamic libraries as Moslem libraries in his article.

The historical study of Elayyan (1990 : 119) deals with the development of Arabic-Islamic libraries in the 7th to the 14th century : “ *It discusses the factors that lead to the rising of the different types of libraries which are ; mosques, private, public and academic libraries. The study gives, in some detail, information about the most famous libraries in the Arabic-Islamic civilization. It also talks about management and organization of these libraries. Finally, the study discusses the factors behind the destruction of the Arabic-Islamic libraries.*”

The study of Krek (1993) deals with the historical development of Islamic libraries from the 7th to the 17th century.

Merlet (1989) also discusses the development of Islamic libraries in the Middle East from the beginning of Islam in the 7th century to the 13th century.

Dohaish (1987) discusses the growth and development of Islamic libraries as well as the role of Islamic libraries in the Islamic society. Dohaish (1987 : 227) refers to the Islamic

libraries formerly known as “*Khizanat al-Kutub*” and later as “*Makataba*” or as “*Dar al-Kutub*” which played an important role in the lives of individuals and communities in providing food for thought and in forming public opinion .

Sibai (1987 : x) gives a historical review of mosque libraries, especially in the Middle East. This study of Sibai expounds upon issues, which include the management and financing of these libraries, their procurement and lending policies as well as other regulations pertaining to their support on maintenance.

BenAicha (1986 : 253) refers to mosques as libraries when he states: “*With the establishment of Islam as the cultural and political foundation of the Arab world, mosques flourished beyond being mere places of worship. Used as schools and informal gathering places for the exchange of ideas and impromptu poetry readings, mosques were a natural choice for establishing libraries in the Arab world.*” The focus of his paper deals with mosque libraries in the Islamic civilization in the period 700-1400 A.D., how these libraries developed and their role in nurturing the germ of the European Renaissance.

Haron (2001 : 56) refers to case studies of personal and community libraries from the Cape Muslim community. The purpose of his study is to show to what extent these libraries have functioned as storehouses of knowledge and purveyors of information, and to assess the role they have and are playing within the South African Muslim community. He also briefly discusses the role of Islamic libraries in their religio-philosophical

foundations and context in general. A historical overview of Islamic libraries in South Africa is also briefly covered in his study.

In contrast with the above-mentioned authors, who give an historical perspective of Islamic libraries, Sardar (1988) discusses the role of information in Muslim societies. He also dedicates a chapter to the responsibilities of the Muslim librarians and information scientists.

It is against this background that the researcher would like to discuss the historical development of Islamic libraries internationally and in South Africa to put the Islamic Library in Gatesville in context.

1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research was conducted in two parts: a literature survey and an empirical investigation.

A survey of the published literature was executed to establish the extent to which the historical development of Islamic libraries internationally as well as in South Africa took place.

In the empirical investigation, structured interviews were conducted with the staff and with some of the executive committee members of the Islamic Library in Gatesville to

glean information on their perceptions of the historical development of this library and services rendered. This method of data collection was chosen to ensure that the respondents reacted to the same set of questions and to afford the opportunity of clarification of questions to the respondents. The information acquired in this way contributed to the presentation of the case study in chapter 5.

1.7 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This research covers a review of the historical background of Islamic libraries.

This study itself is limited to the Islamic Library in Gatesville and will compare its development with other Islamic libraries internationally and in South Africa through the literature review.

1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Islamic libraries are intended not only for Muslims but also for the wider community.

This study will benefit other organizations that want to initiate a similar structure for a specific information centre within their communities.

1.9 OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

The thesis analyses this research in six chapters:

Chapter one covers the general introduction to Islamic libraries. The chapter further explains the statement of the problem, the purpose and objectives of the study, definition of terms, an overview of the literature review, the research methodology, the scope and limitation of the study and the significance of the study.

Chapter two covers three areas namely: Arabic writing, calligraphy and the birth and maturity of the Arab-Islamic book

Chapter three discusses the historical development of Islamic libraries internationally referring to mosque libraries, private libraries, public libraries, academic libraries and some great libraries in Islam.

Chapter four discusses the historical development of Islamic libraries in South Africa in general and also referring to examples of Islamic libraries in the Western Cape .

Chapter five discusses the Islamic Library in Gatesville as a case study. The historical development of the library and the services rendered at this library are discussed.

Chapter six states the conclusion, recommendations and motivation for further research.

CHAPTER 2

ARABIC WRITING, CALLIGRAPHY AND THE BIRTH AND MATURITY OF THE ARAB-ISLAMIC BOOK

2.1 ARABIC WRITING

Islam and the preaching of the prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) contributed to the development of Arabic writing and to the birth of the Arabic-Islamic book in Arabia and throughout the Muslim world. The Qur'an is considered to be the masterpiece of the Arabic language (Aman, 1975 : 90)

Arabic belongs to the group of Semitic alphabetical scripts in which the consonants are mainly represented in writing. The Arabic alphabet contains 18 letter shapes but by adding one, two or three dots to the letters with similar phonetic characteristics a total of 28 letters is obtained (Sakkal, 1993). In the earlier stages Arabic consonant letters did not have dots and diacritical signs (Imammuddin, 1983a : 9).

The Arabic alphabet developed from script used for Nabataean, a dialect of Aramaic used in northern Arabia and what is now known as Jordan.

The discovery of two inscriptions namely the trilingual (Greek, Syriac and Arabic) inscriptions of Zebed which dates from 512 A.C. and the bilingual (Greek and Arabic)

inscriptions of Harran in the Lija dating from 568 A.C. are the earliest monuments of Arabic writings (Imamuddin, 1983a : 9).

Arabic writing became an art unto itself, because of the importance of the Arabic language as a sacred language and the cursive nature of the alphabet. The principle art form of Islam is calligraphy, which is the artistic rendering of writing (Hooker, 1999).

Figures 1 and 2 are examples of the Arabic alphabet.

خ Xaa'	ح H'aa'	ج Jiim	ث Th'aa'	ت Taa'	ب Baa'	أ 'Alif
ص Ṣaad	ش Shiin	س Siin	ز Zaay	ر Raa'	ذ Thaal	د Daal
ق Qaaf	ف Faa'	غ Ghayn	ع 'Ayn	ظ Th:aa'	ط Ṭaa'	ض Ḍaad
ي Yaa'	و Waaw	ه Haa'	ن Nuun	م Miim	ل Laam	ك Kaaf

Figure 1 : Arabic alphabet

The Arabic alphabet is read from right to left (Arabic alphabet, 1999).

Letter Name	Isolated Form	Final Form	Medial Form	Initial Form
Alef	ا	ا		
Ba	ب	ب	ب	ب
Ta	ت	ت	ت	ت
Tha	ث	ث	ث	ث
Jeem	ج	ج	ج	ج
Ha	ح	ح	ح	ح
Kha	خ	خ	خ	خ
Dal	د	د		
Thal	ذ	ذ		
Ra	ر	ر		
Zai	ز	ز		
Seen	س	س	س	س
Sheen	ش	ش	ش	ش
Sad	ص	ص	ص	ص
Dad	ض	ض	ض	ض
Toa	ط	ط	ط	ط
Zhoa	ظ	ظ	ظ	ظ
ʿAin	ع	ع	ع	ع
Ghain	غ	غ	غ	غ
Fa	ف	ف	ف	ف
Qaf	ق	ق	ق	ق
Kaf	ك	ك	ك	ك
Lam	ل	ل	ل	ل
Meem	م	م	م	م
Nun	ن	ن	ن	ن
He	ه	ه	ه	ه
Waw	و	و	و	و
Ya	ي	ي	ي	ي

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Figure 2 : Arabic alphabet

“1. The Arabic Alphabet has 28 letters. The shape of these letters changes depending on their position in the word, whether isolated; in the beginning of the word (initial); in the middle (medial); or at the end (final)” (Sakkal, 1997).

2.2 ARABIC CALLIGRAPHY

Calligraphy is handwriting, a tool for recording and communication; but in the Arab world it is an art with a remarkable history. Arabic calligraphy is characterized by flowing patterns and intricate geometrical design which is a fine writing, referred to as a “*spiritual technique*” by the Alexandrian philosopher, Euclid (**Arabic writing and calligraphy**).

The Qur’an played a central role in the development of Arabic script. To record the Qur’an precisely, the Arabs were compelled to reform their script and to beautify it so that it became worthy of the divine revelation (Safadi, 1978 : 9). Writing may express ideas, but to the Arab it must also express the broader dimension of aesthetics.

Imamuddin (1983a : 11) refers to calligraphy by stating “*Viewing fine handwriting is a pleasure to the eye, joy to the heart and fragrance to the soul, because of the religious restrictions on the representation of living beings of the early Muslims stimulated the art along decorative channels – specially in the realm of book production, in the art of copying and illuminating manuscripts, Islamic calligraphy may, therefore conveniently claim a place among the greatest achievements of man’s artistic activity.*” Lings and Safadi (1976 : 15) emphasized that “*...perfect calligraphy was held to be a manifestation of spirituality ...*” and that “*purity of writing is the purity of the soul*”. Mubireek (2000)

refers to Arabic calligraphy as a “*symbol representing power and beauty*” and “*is not merely an art form but involves divine and moral representations*”.

Arabic calligraphy were not only used in producing copies of the Qur’an, but for all kinds of other artistic purposes as well on porcelain, metalware, carpets and other textiles, on coins as well as architectural ornament - primarily on mosques and tombs and in the later years on other buildings (Arabic writing, 2002).

Arabic calligraphy is thus a primary form of art for Islamic visual expression and creativity.

The nature of the Arabic script and some of its other peculiarities made its adaptation to printing difficult and delayed the introduction of the printing press, so that Arab world continued for some centuries after the time of Gutenberg to rely on handwriting for the production of books especially the Qur’an and other legal documents. The Arabic scripts tended to develop in the direction of calligraphy, while in the West the trend has been toward printing and the development of ornamental and elaborate type faces (Arabic writing, 2000).

The Kufic and Nakshi scripts were the two major scripts which were developed for Arabic writing. The Kufic script renders Arabic letters with straight vertical and horizontal lines meeting at ninety-degree angles, which gives the written language the character of stability and unity. The Nakshi script renders words with highly cursive and

flowing letters. These letters curve and twine around each other and give the language a character of temporality and change. All the calligraphic arts of Arabic and the Islamic tradition arose from these two basic scripts (Hooker, 1999).

Six major scripts according to the classical tradition of Islamic calligraphy are identified (Safadi, 1978 : 19). These scripts are the Thuluth, Nakshi, Muhaqqaq, Rayhani, Riq'a and Tawqi.

Thuluth : A statistic and somewhat monumental script, which was mainly used for decorative purposes in manuscripts and inscriptions.

Nakshi : Ease-to-write cursive geometric form, without any structural complexities. Used mostly for ordinary correspondence, especially on papyri.

Muhaqqaq : A decorative style, the letters are thick and bold characters. This script became the preferred style of the professional scribes during the caliphate of al-Ma'mun (813-33).

Rayhani : A delicate script which is derived from Nakshi and which also have the features of the Thuluth script.

Riq'a : Also known as Ruq'ah (small sheet), derived from Nakshi and Thuluth. Strokes move like a creeping snake or the ripples of a stream. Extensively used as the preferred script of handwriting throughout the Arab world today.

Tawqi (signature) : Also known as Tawaqi, derived from the Riyasi script which the Abbasid caliphs used when signing their names and titles.

Figures 3 and 4 are examples of Arabic calligraphy scripts. The English translation in **figure 3** means “In the name of Allah (God)”, of which the Arabic transliteration is “*Bismillahirrahmanirrahim*” which are written in five different Arabic calligraphy scripts.

The English translation in **figure 4** means “There is no God but Allah and that Muhammad (Peace be upon him) is the messenger of Allah”, of which the Arabic transliteration in **figure 4** is “*Laa illaa ha illallaah Muhammadu rasulullaah*” which are written in 8 different Arabic calligraphy scripts.

Typical tools for a calligrapher included reed and brush pens, scissors, a knife for cutting the pen, an inkpot and a sharpening tool. The reed pen was the preferred pen of the Islamic calligraphers (Mubireek, 2000).



Figure 3 : Arabic calligraphy scripts

“7. Samples of Cursive Styles of Arabic calligraphy. From top to bottom: Naskh, Thuluth, Muhaqqaq, Nastaliq, and Riq'a”(Sakkal, 1997).

Sakkal, Mamoun. 1997. **Sakkal design: art of Arabic calligraphy**. [Online]. Available:

http://www.sakkal.com/Arab_Calligraphy_Art7.html [site visited 7 June 2002].

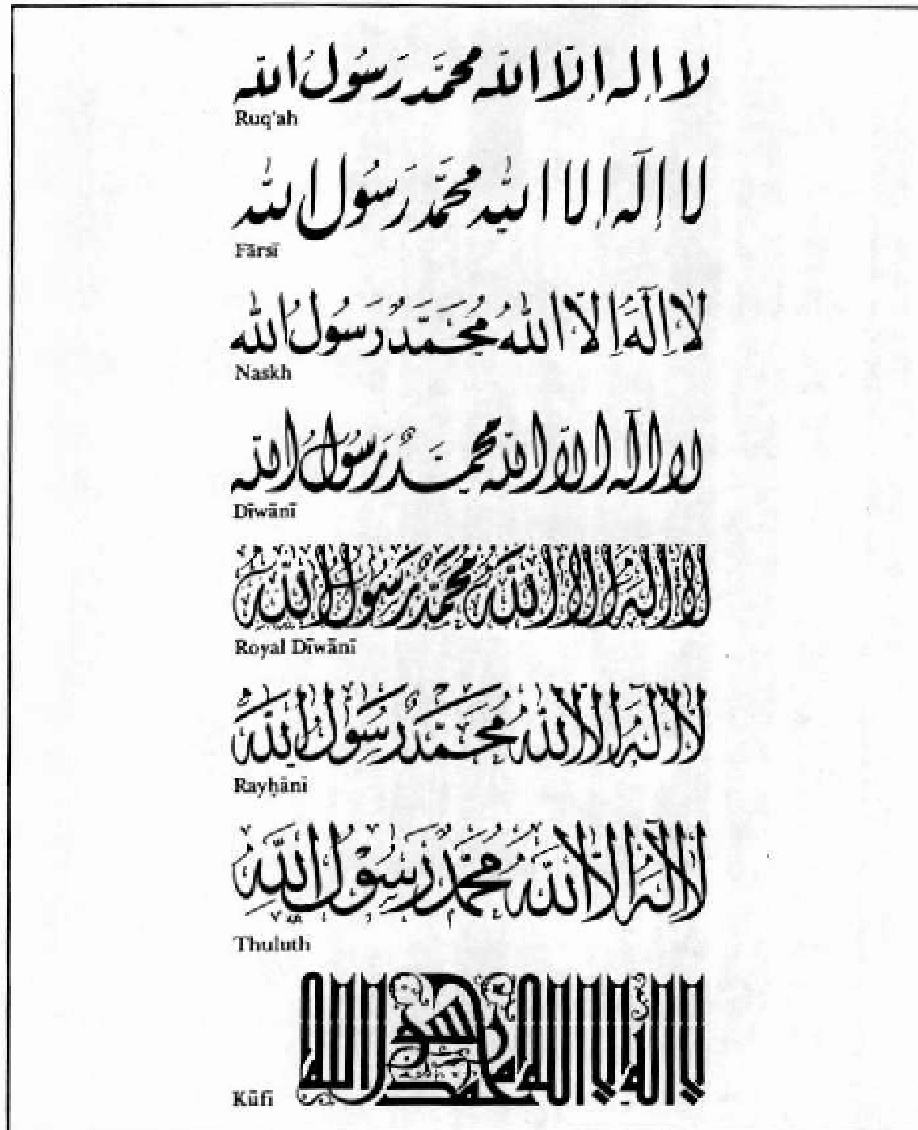


Figure 4 : Arabic calligraphy scripts

Arabic writing and calligraphy. In: **Arab Civilization.** [Online]. Available:

http://www.freearabvoice.org/acArabicWritAndCall_2.html [site visited 4 June 2002].

2.3 THE BIRTH AND THE MATURITY OF THE ARAB-ISLAMIC BOOK

The first revelation came to the Prophet Muhammad with the Arabic word “Iqra” meaning “Read”. Muslims attitudes towards reading and research into all matters political, social, economic etc. developed with this message of “Read” (Gaibie-Dawood, 1999 : 41). The message was revolutionary because it came in a predominantly illiterate society, which had an oral culture. The Arab had no known written literature before the time of the Prophet Muhammad. Legends, poetry and genealogies were transmitted orally from generation to generation (Aman, 1975 : 90). Oral traditions predominated during the first century of Islam and were the chief vehicle for the dissemination of information (Sardar, 1999).

The first book in Islam is the Qur’an and as the Prophet Muhammad received the revealed message it was written by scribes on a variety of sources for example on leaves, date seeds, bones, stones, etc. and are also preserved to the total memorization by many Muslims. Uthman bin Affan, the third Caliph of Islam arranged for the compilation of the Qur’an in a single written source. This led to the standardization of the reading and writing style of the Qur’an, and the spreading of copies of the newly collected single book, the Qura’n throughout the Muslim world (Taher, 2000).

Papyrus, parchment and prepared leather were the writing materials most preferred by the Muslims. Zaid Ibn Thabit wrote the first completed edition of the Qur'an, which consisted of sheets. Anas Ibn Malik, a devoted companion of the Prophet Muhammad also attempted some early Muslim documentation, which is said to have written down sayings and sermons uttered by the Prophet. Abd Allah Ibn al-Aas, an early convert to Islam is reported to have written down ten thousand sayings spoken by the Prophet. His work was known as *Sahifa-i-Sadiqah*, which literally means "True sheet", but logically the collection of ten thousand sayings would be the "True kitab" or the "True book". (Sibai, 1987 : 43). The Arabic translation of the word book is "kitab".

During the Umayyad dynasty (661-750 A.D.) in Damascus the first beginnings of prose literature and the genuine interest in writing and book collecting appears in the Muslim society. The literary awakening emphasized the acquisition of basic skills in reading and writing by the Muslims. Elementary education was also established during the early Umayyad period.

The cultivation of poetry was the most characteristic of the Umayyad period, but the early Muslim rulers encouraged the writing of books on other subjects. The *al-Muwatta* is an example of a handbook for lawyers and jurists, which was written by Malik Ibn Anas. Muhammad Ibn Siri in his book *Kitab al-Ghawami* investigated the divination of dreams (Sibai, 1987 : 45-46). Books on different subject matters were written over different periods.

Mackensen quoted by Taher (2000) and Sibai (1987 : 48) refers to the beginning of Muslim libraries :

“Whether the early books were merely a collection of student’s notes and little treatises in the form of letters or more formal books, of which there were at least a few, the collecting of them, the recognition that such materials were worth keeping, can legitimately be considered the beginning of Moslem libraries.”

Muslim scholarship attained its zenith during the “Golden Age of Islam”, a term used by historians to designate a specific period in history, which roughly extends from the rise of the Abbasid dynasty in the middle of the eighth century A.D. to about the middle of the thirteenth century A.D. (Sibai, 1987 : 136). Bookshops and several other learning centers flourished during this period in the Muslim society, which included the mosque, the *kuttab* for private elementary schooling; the *madrasah* for advanced public instruction; and the *nizamiya* for specialization and university-level education. Public libraries, literary salons and houses of learned men were also used for imparting of knowledge (Sibai, 1987 : 135).

It is against this background of Arabic writing, calligraphy and the birth and the maturity of the Arab-Islamic book that the researcher wishes to discuss the historical development of Islamic libraries.

CHAPTER 3

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF ISLAMIC LIBRARIES INTERNATIONALLY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

A great deal of literature was accumulated during the early period of Islamic civilization. This resulted in the establishment of new institutions to collect, arrange and preserve this literature, which led to the growth of the mosque library, as well as private, public and academics libraries during the Middle Ages (Elayyan, 1990 : 120). The first libraries in Islamic civilization were at the mosques and the first book to enter the mosque was the Qur'an (Taher, 2000).

Arab-Muslims who emerged from the Arabian Peninsula had no libraries and no library or book tradition, but their interest in books and libraries developed as they conquered the centres of old civilization. They adopted Persian literature and Greek science and also developed their own book industry by the seventh century and libraries by the ninth century (Aman, 1975 : 105).

Islamic libraries played a major role in the shift from oral to a written culture amongst the Muslims. The concept of learning was a firmly established principle in classical Islamic civilization (Wilkins, 1994 : 297).

The Qur'an with its command "read" provide the groundwork for the production of learning and literature. Muslims were also motivated by this sacred text to ponder, read, study and investigate (Monastra, 1995 : 2; Haron, 2001 : 56).

The existence of libraries in the Islamic society indicated the growth and development of Islamic civilization. These libraries consisted of public libraries at the central mosques, schools and hospitals as well as state libraries, which were established by the caliphs and private libraries which are owned by religious scholars, jurists and others (Dohaish, 1987 : 217).

The scheme for shelving of books varied from library to library, with the exception of the location of the Qur'an, which was always placed on the highest shelf, a practice that is still in the mosques (BenAicha, 1986 : 256). One of the earliest known library catalogues is known as the al-Fihrist, written by Al-Nadim (987 A.D.) using the dominant method of cataloguing of his time, which ranges from the Qur'anic studies and exegeses to literature, philosophy and the sciences.

The ten main classes listed by Al-Nadim were :

1. Qur'an
2. Grammar
3. History
4. Poetry
5. Dogmatics

6. Jurisprudence
7. Philosophy
8. Light literature
9. Religion
10. Alchemy

The first six classes dealt with literature of Islam and the last four with non-Islamic literature (Aman, 1975 : 107-108). Other classification schemes are used in libraries today of which the Dewey Decimal Classification scheme is an example.

Muslim history bear testimony to the numerous libraries which were established and flourished throughout the ages (Haron, 2001 : 57). The written word played a powerful role in shaping intellectual, philosophical and religious ideas throughout the Muslim world. This led to Islamic collections which developed in Western Europe and North America, which were therefore a fundamental bridge in communication between the East and the West (Roman, 1990 : x).

3.2 MOSQUE LIBRARIES

The mosque is primarily a place of worship, but it also serves as a classroom for Islamic teaching (BenAicha, 1986 : 255). The first libraries in Islamic civilization were at the mosques (Taher, 2000). A large number of mosque libraries began as Qur'anic libraries. Whenever a mosque or mosque library was established, it was general custom to present it with multiple copies of the Qur'an (Sibai, 1987 : 51). This tradition still exists today.

Famous mosque libraries existed in the Islamic world. The most famous mosque library is the Al-Azhar Mosque in Cairo, which was founded in the 9th century, but gained university status in the 18th century. The Al-Azhar University of Cairo in Egypt is a natural expansion of the great mosque of Al-Azhar. The Al-Azhar University is known to be the oldest university in the world with 1000 years of scholarship. This institute has produced thousands of eminent scholars, distinguished educationalists, preserving Islamic heritage and strengthening Islamic identity. Al-Azhar University up to today pride itself with the teaching of Qur'anic Sciences ('Uloom al-Qur'an), Prophetic Traditions (al-Hadith), Theology ('Ilm al-Kalam), Jurisprudence (al-Fiqh), Fundamentals (al-Usul), Arabic Grammar (al-Nahu), Conjugation (al-Sarf), al-Balagha, Arabic Literature (al-Adab), History (al-Tarikh), Medicine, Philosophy (FSTC Limited, 2001).

Elayyan (1990 : 121) and Dohaish (1987 : 219) give examples of mosques which had very large libraries :

Al-Unawi Mosque (Damascus);

Al-Azhar Mosque (Cairo);

Al-Mansour Mosque (Baghdad);

Al-Kamariah Mosque (Baghdad);

Al-Zaitunah Mosque (Tunis);

Al-Masjid Al-Jame'a (Merv);

Mecca and Medina Mosques.

The important libraries in the Arab world are no longer associated with mosques, but instead are attached to the European-style secular universities and institutions (BenAicha, 1986 : 259).

3.2.1 TEHRAN MOSQUE LIBRARIES

Harvey and Musavi (1981) described eight case studies of mosque libraries located in Tehran, the capital and largest city in Iran. Table 1 list these mosque libraries:

Table 1 : Tehran Mosque Libraries

LIBRARY	DATE FOUNDED	COLLECTION
Imam-e.Zaman Mosque Library	1975	6000 Monographs, some of them children's books
Darol Islam Mosque Library	1975	Contain several thousand volumes, include 300 for children, most of them religious
Hadrat-e-Mahdi Mosque Libray	1977	3000 adult & 1000 children books
Alajvad Mosque Library	1969	8500
Abofazl Mosque Library	1975	3500
Shafa Mosque Library	1969	3000
Hazrat-e-Amir Mosque Library	1976	2000
Sepahsalar Mosque and Library	Dated from 1880	10 000 volumes plus 4000 manuscripts

The following generalizations are made from the above case studies by Harvey and Musavi (1981 : 393-394) :

- *“Mosque libraries were started by mullas (ministers) to provide educational material for neighborhood persons.*
- *Budgets for material varied greatly but were supplemented by gifts, memorials and membership fees.*
- *Most libraries had only small reading areas.*
- *Few libraries had card catalogs or widely accepted classification systems.*
- *Sexes were often segregated in library use days and in reading room seating.*
- *Most staff members were teenage boys and a few girls; who were volunteers and reported to the mulla.*
- *Library assistants were prepared to provide reading guidance for users*
- *Library assistants usually carried out selection.*
- *Censorship was found to be a problem in some libraries.*
- *Many libraries had a few manuscripts and rare books*
- *Collections were composed primarily of Islamic books.*
- *Many libraries had children material and some non-religious material.*
- *Users were mostly elementary, secondary and college age boys and a few girls, very few adults.*
- *Use was restricted to members who usually paid a small fee and provided a photo for membership card.*
- *Use of material varied greatly but averaged five to ten items circulated per day*

- *Libraries were usually open for two to three hours each afternoon, six days a week, but were closed on the religious day, Friday.*
- *Use through charge cards was for recreational reading and self-education.*
- *Service was primarily to neighbourhood persons.*
- *Certain libraries advertised their services in Tehran religious newspapers or through posters.*
- *Many libraries carried out non-traditional library functions, such as guard service, publishing and serving the poor.*
- *Several mosques provided course work and lectures for members in a variety of subjects.”*

3.3 PRIVATE LIBRARIES

The preponderant type of library in early Islam was the private library.

Caliphs and scholars in the different branches of knowledge mainly owned private libraries. Many of the private libraries were open to students and scholars and sometimes to the public. Other private library collections were intended only for the use of the owners and their immediate friends. The private libraries of caliphs and others found their way to mosques and public libraries (Krek, 1993 : 394-395; Elayyan, 1990 : 121-122).

Many private libraries and public libraries existed during the Abbasid dynasty from the 8th to the 12th century. Baghdad, the capital of Iraq was the centre of cultural and intellectual activities. Some examples of private collections during this period, was that of the Arabian historian Omar al-Waqidi (737/8-824 A.D.) who possessed one hundred and twenty camel loads of books. Ibn al-Alkami's library consisted of 10 000 volumes, but was perished when the city was attacked and ransacked by the Mongols in 1258 A.D. (Merlet, 1989 : 131).

The Royal book collection in Bukhara is also an example of a private library, which was used by the famous Arab physician and philosopher Abu Ali Ibn Sina, known as Avicanna (980-1037 A.D.).

Many Islamic scholars of today have their own library collection and are mainly for own use or used by other scholars.

3.4 PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Public libraries in Islam arose and developed gradually from three types of libraries, those of the caliphs, mosques and of the madrassah (school).

The first Islamic public library was established in Damascus 689 A.D. A large number of Islamic public libraries were established in Baghdad during the Abbasid dynasty. The public library during that time offered unusual facilities for study to serious scholars and provided entertainment and a means of education through reading, lectures and discussions to the general public. Two of these libraries were at al-Basra. One was founded and opened to the public by a certain Ibn Sawwar and the other one mentioned by al-Hariri, the author of the Maqamat. Both these libraries were burnt down when the Bedouins invaded the town in 1090 A.D. (Merlet, 1989: 131).

Elayyan (1990 : 124) gives examples of the spread of public libraries in large Islamic cities in table 2 :

Table 2 : Public libraries in large Islamic cities

Location	Library	Founder	Date (A.D.)
Baghdad	Bait Al-Hikmah	Al-Ma'mun	9 th century
	Dar Al-Ilm	Sabur Ibn	991
	Nizamiyah Library	Alp Arsalan	1064
	Mustansiriyah Library	Al-Mustansir	1233
Mosel	Dar Al-Ilm	Ibn Hamdun	935
Al-Basra	Al-Basra Library	Ibn Sawwar	-
Halab	Hamdani Library	Hamdanidi Prince	10 th century
Tripolis	Banu Ammar Library	Banu Ammar	11 th century
Cairo	Al-Azhar Library	Al-Aziz	980
	Dar Al-Hikmah	Al-Hakim	1004
	Fadilliyah Library	Al Fadil	-
Merv	Nizammiyah Library	Nizam Al-Mulk	11 th century
	Aziziyah Library	Aziz Al-Din	12 th century
Shiraz	Adid Ad-Dawla Library	Adid Ad-Dawla	977
Cordova	Al-Mustansir Library	Al-Mustansir	961
Fas	As-Saffarin Library	Sultan Abdul-Haq	1195

3.4.1 PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN SAUDI ARABIA

Saudi Arabian public libraries can be divided into two categories according to date of establishment and the nature of their collections and development. The first category comprises libraries founded before the establishment of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, located in Makkah and Al-Madinah (Medina), noted for their collections of manuscripts and rare books dating from the early Islamic period. The other category comprises of libraries that have been established since the ending of Dual Monarchy and the establishment of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1932 (Abbas, 1994 : 141).

Table 3 list the distribution of public libraries in Saudi Arabia (Abbas, 1994 : 147-148) :

Table 3 : Public libraries in Saudi Arabia

A. Controlled by the Ministry of Education

	Library	Established	Personnel	Holdings	Population in thousands
1	Buraydah	1944	15	40 207	254
2	Hariq	1953	5	14 632	3.6
3	Hutat Bani Tamim	1956	5	20 017	15
4	Hutat Sedair	1957	6	9 205	9
5	Unaizah	1959	16	25 050	50
6	Hafuf	1961	4	30 751	250

7	Dammam	1962	7	49 625	418.5
8	Delum	1964	6	8 522	14
9	Muzahiniyah	1965	4	20 017	10
10	Huraymila	1968	6	20 048	5.5
11	King Faisal St., Riyadh	1968	5	63 150	1 417
12	Al-Madinah	1969	4	25 070	500
13	Russ	1970	3	1 646	30
14	Mudannab	1971	3	18 726	15
15	Rodat Sedair	1971	7	5 057	5
16	Tabouk	1972	3	22 117	150
17	Zulfi	1972	7	25 076	29
18	Bukairiyah	1973	5	20 067	15
19	Shagraa	1973	4	23 171	18
20	Mujma	1973	5	21 514	21
21	Kubar	1974	3	21 085	00
22	Jizan	1974	2	19 517	79
23	Abha	1974	2	10 117	60
24	Quwayah	1975	3	20 047	9.4
25	Oshaygir	1975	3	15 033	-
26	Baha	1975	3	7 032	50
27	Taif	1976	12	41 518	283
28	Hail	1976	11	12 217	101

29	Najran	1976	3	8 017	53
30	Bisha	1977	5	19 075	22
31	Yanbu	1977	4	25 082	52
32	Layla	1977	3	32 195	-
33	Dawadmi	1977	2	8 020	32
34	Jeddah	1977	6	31 975	1 312
35	Makkah	1977	8	34 322	742
36	Karj	1977	8	17 097	97
37	Mizal	1978	1	5 027	-
38	Sakala	1978	4	22 074	55
39	Kamis Mushait	1979	4	12 018	164
40	Qunfuda	1980	1	13 017	11
41	Qurayat	1980	3	10 539	43
42	Durma	1980	3	11 567	6
43	Kamaseen	1981	2	12 017	-
44	Daumat al-Jandal	1981	2	11 017	14
45	Qusb	1981	2	5 018	-
46	Mirat	1982	5	5 017	4
47	Tamir	1982	6	4 065	4.8
48	Muhayal	1983	3	10 587	9
49	Riyad at Madur	1987	3	39 518	1 417
50	Oaynah	1987	2	4 020	2.5
51	Masim at Riyadh	1987	2	40 067	1 410

52	Qatif	1987	4	5018	167.5
53	Hafur al-Badin	1988	1	15 023	52
54	Al-Qaysumah	1988	1	16 023	-
55	Al-Qun	1988	3	7 130	-
56	Silyl	1988	4	6 028	7.28
57	Jubail	1988	4	11 856	28
58	Sharura	1988	3	6 028	15
59	Arar	1989	2	4 041	65
60	Thadik	Recently	-	-	3.7

B. Controlled by the Ministry of Pilgrimage & Endowment

1	Mahamudayah Al-Madinah	1821		7 7025	500
2	Arif Hikmat Al-Madinah	1853		7 997	500
3	Al-Elmiyah Al-Saliyah	1953		10 100	
4	Abdullah ibne Abbas at Taif	1958			283
5	King Abdul Aziz Library	1960		16 304	
6	Makkah	1971		12 000	
7	Mushaf	1980		1 744	

C. Controlled by the General Directorate of Holy Mosques Supervision

1	Al-Haram al-Maki	1850		31 000	741
2	Al-Haram al-Madni	1923		6 345	

D. Controlled by the Directorate General Judiciary Decree, Propagation & Guidance

1	Al-Saudia at Riyadh	1950		19 850	
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3.5 ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

Elementary as well as advanced Islamic education began from the mosques, but was strictly connected with theological studies and in most cases the mosque had its own library. Schools and colleges gradually arose in Islamic civilization of which Islamic education had a wide scope. History, grammar, philosophy, medicine, mathematics were taught in the schools of Baghdad, Damascus, Cairo and elsewhere. This led to the establishment of academic libraries at these educational institutions (Elayyan, 1990 : 125).

Students were allowed in the stacks and were permitted to look into any book and were allowed to take notes, copy or write remarks and were given a pen, ink, paper and a place

to sit in the stacks by the librarian (Merlet, 1989 : 135). The academic libraries were in most cases also open to the public.

As early as 1001 A.D. the Sadiriyyah school was founded in Damascus and also in other countries for example in Baghdad, Nisapor, Mosel and elsewhere, libraries were generally associated with these schools in these countries.

Colleges came in prominence during the Seljuk period (1037-1300 A.D.) in Syria, Iraq and Iran and with them college libraries were established (Elayyan, 1990 : 125).

One of the great academic libraries was established in the Islamic world in 1223 at the Mustansiriyah College in Baghdad. Precious books in all the categories of sciences were kept in this library (Elayyan, 1990 : 126).

Many scholars bequeathed their private collections to libraries of their favourite schools.

3.5.1 ACADEMIC LIBRARIES IN IRAQ

Academic libraries are regarded as the best developed among the libraries in Iraq, in respect of their buildings, professional staff, equipment and services. There are 90 libraries serving 11 universities and institutes of technical higher education.

The University of Baghdad library services are the oldest and largest in the country. It has a central library and 28 college libraries. In 1992 the annual circulation figures for all library materials were recorded at close to 480 000.

The Central Library of Al-Musil (Mosul) University with its 14 constituent college libraries is the second largest in the country.

From the late 1980s onwards, new universities and libraries have been in the process of development for e.g. University of Tikrit (Tikreet), Al-Qadisiya University, Al-Anbar University, Al-Kufa University, and Saddam University (Al-Kindilchie, 1994 : 99).

3.5.2 UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN EGYPT

It was during the modern history of Egypt under Gamal Abdel Nasser (1954-70) and his successors, Presidents Anwar Sadat (1970-81) and Hosny Mubarak (1981 onwards), that the present network of state universities and libraries came into existence in Egypt . (Macmillen, 1994 : 82).

The university libraries of Egypt are listed in the Table 4 (Macmillen, 1994 : 83) :

Table 4 : Egyptian University libraries

Name and location	Founded	Branches	Student numbers	Libraries
Cairo	1908	Beni Suef; Fayoum	95 000	1 000 000 vols; 7 400 serial titles
Alexandria	1942	-	92 000	1 100 000 vols.
Ain Shams (Cairo)	1950	-	104 000	not known
Assiut	1956	Sohag; Qena, Aswa	43 000	250 000 vols; 2 400 journal subscriptions
Tanta	1972	Kafr El Shayk	36 000	not known
Mansoura	1973	-	43 000	not known
Zagazig	1974	-	95 000	not known
Helwan (Cairo)	1975	-	31 000	not known
Minya	1976	-	16 000	not known
El-Munifia (Shebine El Kom)	1976	-	18 000	not known
Suez Canal (Ismailiyya)	1976	Suez, Port Said	10 300	not known
American University in Cairo	1919		3 900	225 000 vols; 2 130 serial titles
Al-Azhar	1961		100 000	80 000 vols; 30 000 manuscripts

3.6

THREE GREAT LIBRARIES IN ISLAM

The three greatest libraries in Islam were : the library of the Abbasid Caliphs in Baghdad (The House of Wisdom also known as Dar al-Hikma); the library of the Fatimide Caliphs in Cairo (The House of Science also known as Dar al-Ilm) and the library of the Umayyad Caliphs in Spain (The Library of Cordova) (Elayyan, 1990 : 126).

These libraries held an important place in the cultural life of Muslims. It were not only seen as store houses for books, but has been seen as centers for learning and teaching (Elayan, 1990 : 126).

3.6.1 DAR AL-HIKMA (HOUSE OF WISDOM), BAGHDAD

Dar al-Hikma was founded in 830 by the caliph al-Ma'mun (reigned 813-833 A.D.) during the Abbasid period (750-1100 A.D.) (Monastra, 1995 : 2). This institution was established in Baghdad and consisted of an astronomical observatory and a library. This was the first institution of higher scientific studies amongst the Arabs, which was a combination of a library, an academy and a translation bureau (Imamuddin, 1983b : 25). This library was open to the scholars and to the public all over the Islamic world.

The librarians of the House of Wisdom were great scholars who were chosen for their knowledge of sciences and books. The library existed until the Mongols came to Baghdad in 1336 (Elayyan, 1990 : 127).

3.6.2 DAR AL-ILM (HOUSE OF SCIENCE), CAIRO

During the 9th and 10th centuries the Fatimide caliphs tried to build a centre of culture in Cairo similar to the House of Wisdom in Baghdad. The Dar al-Ilm library was founded in 1004 by the caliph Al-Hakim in Cairo. Books in all sciences and literatures of exquisite calligraphy were housed in this library (Merlet, 1989 : 134).

This library existed for about sixty years. Turkish soldiers invaded the library and plundered it thoroughly. Fine leather bindings were torn from the books and shoes were made of it, whilst the manuscript papers were burnt in a place near Cairo, which were known as the Hill of Books for a long time (Elayyan, 1990 : 128).

3.6.3 THE LIBRARY OF CORDOVA, SPAIN

The greatest library in Spain was founded by caliph Al-Hakim II in 976 in Cordova. The library contained from 400 000-600 000 volumes which were mostly catalogued by the caliph himself. The library staff were librarians, copyist and binders. Under the caliph Al-Hakim II the library was reported to have given employment to over 500 people. This library remained until the end of the dynasty in 1031, when the smaller Muslim kings divided Spain amongst themselves and books were dispersed (Elayyan, 1990 : 129).

The aforementioned three libraries cannot be considered as national libraries, but were the most outstanding central institutions in their countries at the time and were financed

by public revenues. These libraries were often short-lived because frequent political upheavals destroyed the libraries and their collections (Krek, 1993 : 395 ; Elayyan, 1990 : 129).

3.7 CONCLUSION

The history of the Arabic-Islamic libraries is ignored in most of the foreign resources dealing with library history, but the Arabic Islamic civilization was host to most of the types of libraries known today (Elayan, 1990 : 132). Mosques, private, public and academic libraries were established from the early Islamic period during all the centuries and from the above discussion one can clearly see the continuous development of libraries especially in the Arab world. Most of these libraries especially the academic and public libraries do not have only Islamic literature but also literature pertaining to the secular education of the country.

Mosque and private libraries continued to be founded over the centuries and constitute the most enduring form of Islamic libraries (Wilkins, 1994 : 298).

The only new kinds of libraries which emerge in the Islamic world between the fall of Baghdad and World War I , were inspired by nonindigenous models and were introduced by elements which were often hostile to Muslim culture. French colonial authorities for example established national libraries in Algeria, 1835 and in Tunisia, 1885. Libraries of

new secular universities appeared in Algiers, 1879 and in Cairo, 1908 . (Wilkins, 1994 : 303).

It is against this background of the development of Islamic libraries internationally that the researcher would like to discuss the development of Islamic libraries in South Africa in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 4

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF ISLAMIC LIBRARIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Muslim communities such as those in South Africa were motivated by the past history of Muslims to establish Islamic libraries in their country. Certain notable individuals and a few community organisations have made painstaking efforts to establish them (Haron, 2001 : 57).

Imaam Achmat Salie in his address on the opening of the Husami Sautush Shabaab Cravenby Islamic Library on the 4th of January 1998 emphasized the importance of reading and that it is a personal obligation on each and every Muslim. He also referred to mosques which in the past served many purposes such as libraries, open universities, schools, bookshops, social welfare offices, training centres, places for refugees etc. and that this should continue in this manner (Salie, 1998 : 24). It is noted that these kinds of activities do exist at some of the mosques in the Cape Town area. The establishment of libraries is thus important within any community whether it is public or any kind of library, so that people can nurture the love to read and to gain knowledge.

4.2 ESTABLISHMENT OF ISLAMIC LIBRARIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

During the latter part of the twentieth century the South African Muslim community has been able to work towards the establishment of Islamic libraries. During the 1950s and the 1960s the Arabic Study Circle (est. 1950) in Durban, collected a sizeable number of books printed in India, Pakistan and the United Kingdom and these were housed not far from the Jumua Mosque in Grey Street, Durban. In the early 1980s the library was burnt down and none of the catalogued items were saved. This library was then replaced by a smaller one (Haron, 2001 : 57).

The Mia family in Johannesburg laid the foundation of the Waterval Islamic Institute (est. 1945) where many children went to memorise the Qur'an and learn about Islam. The family established an invaluable library alongside this institute, which contains a rich collection of books in Arabic, Urdu and Persian (Haron, 1997b : 5; Haron, 2001 : 57).

In Cape Town many attempts were made to create mosque libraries but not many succeeded due to the lack of adequate finance and the absence of trained librarians and managerial skills. During the late 1970s a laudable effort was made by the late Professor Habib-ul-Haq Nadvi (died 1993), then the head of the Department of Arabic, Urdu and Persian Studies at the University of Durban Westville, and the late Mr Salie Mohamed (died 2000) to establish the Arabic and Islamic Studies Library located at the Habibiya Mosque Complex in Rylands Estate, Cape Town. (Haron, 2001 : 58).

Muslim religious leaders are keen in purchasing, exchanging, collecting, shelving, storing and studying literature. Many obtained their literature during their sojourn as students, pilgrims or travels to South West Asia or South Asia. The establishment of Islamic bookshops in most of the major cities has facilitated the importance of books in the 1960s. These bookshops contributed to the growth of personal libraries and have indirectly played a part in the emergence of community or special libraries for Muslims in South Africa. Local religious leaders relied on these bookshops since it became difficult for them to import books (Haron, 2001 : 58).

Shaykh Abu Bakr Najaar (1926-1993) was one of those religious leaders who over the years collected a fair amount of material on Islam in Arabic. In the late 1940s he studied in Damascus (Syria), Tripoli (Lebanon) and Mecca (Saudi Arabia) and collected a variety of classical and modern texts in Arabic. The shaykh occasionally sold and distributed books amongst his colleagues who were all members of the Muslim Judicial Council (MJC - est. 1945) and to students who were keen on reading Arabic literature.

The shaykh wrote a few basic texts in Islam. In 1962 he published his popular work *I am a Muslim* (Part 1) and in 1978 he completed *I am a Muslim* (Part 2). Posthumously both parts appeared in one volume in 1994. Other publications of the shaykh: *The church thrust against Muslims* published in 1986; *Haj and umra made easy: the pilgrim's companion* published in 1990 and in December 1992 *Seventy seven selected stories from the Qur'an* was published . (Haron, 2001 : 59-60).

Shaykh Abu Bakr Najaar's personal library in Cape Town contains mainly literature on Islamic traditions with more or less a collection of 2000 books. The shaykh indicated prior his death that his collection should remain private, but can be made available for interested students and researchers. The private library is open over weekends on a non-lending basis to any interested researcher (Haron, 2001 : 60).

Other collections in the Cape are those of the Gamieldien brothers, Shayks Shakier and Igshaan, both were Al-Azhar University graduates from Cairo and were also prominent MJC members in the early 1960s and 1970s. Also the collection of Shaykh Mahdi and Shaykh Mujahid who were Meccan-trained shaykhs, whose collection has been richly complemented by the additional material bought by their two nephews Shaykh Siraj and Shaykh Ahmad who graduated from the Umm-ul-Qura University in Mecca. Also the collection of Shaykh Salih Dien, an American University of Cairo graduate, who is the current life president of the MJC. These collections are not accessible to the public (Haron, 2001 : 60-61).

The Muslim community in the Cape made many attempts to establish libraries in order to stay abreast of information on Islam and the Muslim world. In the 1950s the Muslim Youth Movement (1957-1962) established a small library for their organisation. It was rivalled by the Al-Jamia Mosque in Claremont, where the Claremont Muslim Youth association (1958-1963) was the active body. The library functioned until the early 1970s.

In 1986 Rashid Omar, the resident Imam at the Salt River mosque in Tennyson street, also tried to establish a library. Other mosque committees for e.g. Worcester, North Pine etc. attempted to establish libraries at their mosque complexes. Some of these libraries only worked for a short period due to lack of interest in sustaining the activities (Haron, 2001 : 61).

The Islamic Literature Media (1980-1995) was based at the Habibiyah Mosque Complex in Rylands Estate. This organisation pursued book campaigns to encourage the reading of Islamic literature and also held three successful book exhibitions in 1983 and 1986 respectively and in 1995 it was a joint effort with other organisations (Haron, 2001 : 62).

4.3 ESTABLISHED ISLAMIC LIBRARIES IN THE WESTERN CAPE

This section emphasizes three Islamic libraries currently in the Western Cape, namely the Islamic Library in Gatesville, the Husami Sautush Shabaab Cravenby Islamic Library and the Southern Islamic Resource Centre and Library (SIRCAL) at Al-Munouwar Mosque, Retreat.

4.3.1 ISLAMIC LIBRARY

In September 1987 the Islamic Library opened its doors to the community of the Cape with only 300 items at the time (Gaibie-Dawood, 8 : 1997). It began as a small home library in Primrose Park in the Athlone area, which then moved to another location. Currently the Islamic Library is situated in Gatesville at the Al-Aqsa Mosque Complex (also known as Masjidul Quds). The case study of the Islamic Library in Gateville will be put in historical perspective in the following chapter.

4.3.2 HUSAMI SAUTUSH SHABAAB CRAVENBY ISLAMIC LIBRARY

The Cravenby Islamic Youth succeeded in establishing a library at the Husamia Mosque in Cravenby Estate in the main hall in 1998 known as the Husami Sautush Shabaab Cravenby Islamic Library.

The Husami Sautush Shabaab (translated as ‘Husami voice of the youth’) of Cravenby commenced as an organisation on 2 August 1982 with the late Sayed Abdul Kadir as life president. The establishment of an Islamic library was one of their long term goals. Funds were raised and books were purchased which the members initially used. The organisation was not active for a while, but the books were kept at the secretary’s house. Advice was given to the secretary that the books should be put to use, which then led to

the activation of the organisation in 1992 with the support of the Imaam of the mosque at that time, Hafiz A. W. Hamdulay and the community. By 27 February 1997 a library cabinet was purchased for the old books and about 200 new books. The Islamic library cabinet operated from the Husami nursery hall on Sundays only from 11h00 to 13h00. On 27 May 1997 the youth representatives met with the Cravenby Muslim Educational and Cultural Society to discuss a new Islamic library location. A section of the Husami main hall was given to the youth for this purpose. About 4000 books were bought from the Habibia Bookshop for the library and the youth constructed their own partitions, book shelves, counters, tables etc. Special library stationary were designed and printed. The official opening of the new Islamic library at the Husami main hall was on 4 January 1998, known as the Husami Sautush Shabaab Cravenby Islamic Library (Pathan, 1998 : 36).

Rules and regulations and library topics :

Loan periods : Books – 14 days

Videos – overnight use

Reserve loan books – overnight use

Loan Quota : 2 Books

1 Video

(Renewals on books only)

Renewals : Books may be borrowed once, personally or telephonically for a maximum of 7 days.

Fines and penalties : Fines and/or penalties will be imposed on borrowers who return items late.

Books : 50c per day **Videos :** R1.00 per day **Reserve books :** R2.00 per day

Borrowers responsibility : Borrowers are responsible for the replacement of lost or damaged books and videos.

Subjects :

1. Economics
2. Sufism
3. Dawah
4. Health and medicine
5. Africa (general)
6. Art (general)
7. Indo-Pak continent
8. Europe
9. Middle East
10. Iran
11. Asia
12. South African History
13. Movements
14. Occupied Palestine
15. Western Society
16. Women
17. Morality
18. Death
19. Hajj and Umra
20. Duas and Prayers
21. Education
22. Companions
23. Biographies
25. Social science
26. Law
27. Politics
28. Science
29. Tajweed
30. Arabic
31. Fiqh
32. General
33. Quraan
34. Philosophy
35. History
36. Comparative religion
37. Philosophy
38. History
39. Novels
40. Poetry
41. Children books (junior)
42. Children books (senior)
43. Children's elementary books
44. Urdu
45. Magazines
46. Pamphlets (current information)
47. Newsletters
48. Videocassettes
49. Audiocassettes
50. Reference books

1998/1999 EXCO :

Husami Sautush Shabaab (Cravenby) ‘Voice of the Youth’ (Cravenby)

Life President : Sayed Ismail – (Bilal) Husami Mosque

President : Hafiz A. W. Hamdulay – Emaam Husami Mosque

Vice-President : Hafiz Reedwaan Ismail – CMECS Ass. Secretary

‘Presidency will advise and guide Husami Sautush Shabaab (Cravenby) in all their activities and ensure that the correct books be placed on the Islamic library shelves’

Chairman : Mr Dawood Gaffoor

Vice-chairman : Dr B. E. Mowzer

Secretary : Mr Iqraam Pathan

Ass. Secretary : Ms Haniefa Parker

Treasurer : Ms Ariefa Parker

Ass. Treasurer : Ms Tasneem Ahmed

4.3.3 SOUTHERN ISLAMIC RESOURCE CENTRE AND LIBRARY (SIRCAL): RETREAT

Information about this library was given by one of the founder members, Fadeela Davids who is currently a librarian at Hangberg Public Library in Hout Bay during a telephonic interview on 29 May 2003 and the vision and mission statements and the objectives were obtained from a SIRCAL (2003) information pamphlet.

Founder members: Somayah Safedien, Tohirah Salie, Rowayda Suleiman, Shereen Khan and Fadeela Davids.

SIRCAL had its mini launch at the beginning of March 2003 which coincided with the starting of the new year of the Muslims the month of Muhurram.

SIRCAL is situated in the mosque complex of Masjied al Munouwar, Retreat. The library operates independently from the mosque.

The book collection is about 300 and video collection about 200 and 100 books on block loan from the Islamic Library in Gatesville.

Libray hours : Sundays 10h00-13h30

Every alternative Fridays : 13h30-14h30 (to target users attending the Friday prayers), started from middle May 2003.

The working committee who is also the founder members and some volunteers render their services to the library on a rotational basis. Funds are needed to acquire library materials.

Vision statement :

*‘The vision of **SIRCAL** is to empower the Muslim community through access to the services and resources required for their informational, educational, cultural and recreational needs.’*

Mission statement :

*‘**SIRCAL** is committed to provide a free Islamic resource center and library service to our community. With Allah’s kudrah, **SIRCAL** aims for excellence in providing a highly professional and cost effective lending, reference and community information service.’*

Objectives :

- *Provide professional information services to individuals and families*
- *Provide and expand basic need service delivery*
- *Contribute towards equitable library service delivery*
- *Sharing and focused utilization of resources (facilities, finances and books)*
- *Participation in community service delivery initiatives*

- *Promoting cost- effective and resource sharing principles*
- *Establishment of mutually beneficial professional relationships*
- *Undertake community empowerment and upliftment programmes*
- *Act as a resource for other agencies and organizations handling Muslim clients*
- *Empower members of the community to become actively involved in the provision of literacy and other information services at all levels*
- *Strive at all times to work towards building bridges between various religious and cultural groups*
- *Provide training courses for volunteer workers*
- *Facilitate educational lectures and workshops for members on various issues e.g.: Lifelong learning as well as issues concerning the family e.g.: parental skill courses*
- *Facilitate short life skills workshops to the youth e.g.: career guidance and youth development*
- *Co-operate with other organizations having similar aims and objectives for the benefit of the community at large*
- *To propagate Islamic values*
- *Act as distribution center for relevant current Islamic information*
- *Strive to keep the community informed of current news regarding Islam by having exhibitions*
- *Encourage the community to become actively involved in the Centre by contributing generously*
- *Striving to make this a sustainable project by forming partnerships businesses in the community*

- *Utilise this center to enable us to : Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave*

4.4 CONCLUSION

Islamic libraries in South Africa contributed to the development of libraries in general. The need of specialized Islamic literature for the Muslim community is essential. One does find that many individuals and religious scholars build up their private collections of Islamic literature, but a centralized location for this kind of literature is needed especially for those in the community who are not able to buy or just want to use it for reference purposes or to further their knowledge and understanding of a specific topic. Islamic libraries can fulfill this role.

The following chapter will put the Islamic Library in Gatesville in perspective.

CHAPTER 5

CASE STUDY OF THE ISLAMIC LIBRARY IN GATESVILLE

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents an analysis and interpretation of data of unpublished and published documents available in the library file of the Islamic Library in Gatesville as well as other published documents and also from the structured interviews (Appendix B is a copy of the questionnaire of the structured interview), which was held with the two fulltime permanent staff members of the library which has taken place on Thursday 22 May 2003 and with three executive committee members on 2 June 2003.

The main purpose of the study was to examine the historical development of Islamic libraries internationally and in South Africa and to examine the Islamic Library in Gatesville as a case study in order to understand in which way communities have sought to provide a solution for adequate library facilities for the specific needs of the Muslim community in the greater Cape Town area. The aim of this chapter is to give the historical background of The Islamic Library in Gatesville and the services rendered at this library.

5.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE ISLAMIC LIBRARY IN GATESVILLE

5.2.1 ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ISLAMIC LIBRARY

Ahmed Khan and Mohamed Jaffer are two of the founder members of the Islamic Library and currently on the executive committee. They belonged to a discussion group whereby each member had to prepare a discussion on a specific topic. Books were borrowed and also bought by the individual members. The idea of establishing an Islamic library came forth when their private collection started to grow substantially and they felt that they should share their resources with others (Roomaney, 1989 : 10).

The Islamic Library opened its doors to the public during the month of September 1987 and was then situated at the residence of Ahmed Khan at 35 Rayner Road, Primrose Park which is a few kilometres away from the Gatesville/Rylands area. The library was accommodated in one room (3m X 4m). The initial library members were ten and within two years the membership grew to 2000. The growth of the membership at that time gained popularity by word of mouth, constant pamphleteering and advertising in the Muslim Views newspaper.

Initially the library was only opened over weekends. The times were:

Saturdays 3-5 pm and Sundays 11 am – 12.30 pm.

Currently the library is open 7 days a week :

Mon – Thurs : 11:00 – 17:00

Fridays : 8:30 – 12:00

Saturdays : 14:00 - 17:00

Sundays : 10:00 – 13:00

- The open shelf book collection is for loan to users for 14 days.
- Reserve Loan Collection: is material, which are heavily in demand, and is on loan to users for 3 days.
- The video collection is on loan to users for 7 days.
- The reference collection is not available on loan

The borrowing of library material is free since its inception.

5.2.2 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

An executive committee was established to oversee the project of the Islamic Library.

Initial executive members according to an unpublished report of 1989 were:

Chairman :A. Khan

Treasurer : M. Jaffer

Secretary : Y. Omar

Three librarians : R. Ahmed

A. Parker

M. Davids

The current standing executive committee members are: Ahmed Khan, Mohamed Jaffer, Mahmood Sanglay, Dr Ilyas Parker and Ashraf Tayob.

Together with the current members two other past members were included on the committee Yunis Casker and the late Nazeem Weber.

The standing executive committee members consist of the founder members of the Islamic Library and some members of the Islamic Literature Media (1980-1995) who joined the Islamic Library in 1996.

5.2.3 FUNDING OF THE PROJECT

Donations from the community especially via debit order are a source of income towards the library project. A big walk is a major fundraising event for the library which for the past 4 years have the community involved in participating and driving the event on a yearly basis and is a major source of income towards the library project. The event for this year took place on 2 March 2003. The next big walk event is already set for 7 March 2004. A special committee independently of the Islamic Library organises the big walk event, whereby the Islamic Library and the Red Cross

Children's Hospital are beneficiaries. Previously the library depended on other fundraising efforts like e.g. eat and treats. Other personal donations are also given on request. No financial aid from the state is received. The projected expenditure for 1997 was in the region of R240 000. Projected running cost for the library for the financial year 2003/2004 is about R155 000.

In the past the organisation faced financial constraints and there were even times that the committee personally had to call upon business people within the community to come to their assistance. The annual big walk event as a major fundraiser assisted the committee to overcome their financial constraints.

5.2.4 LIBRARY STAFF

The first appointed qualified librarian was Aqeela Gaibie, who joined the Islamic Library at the end of 1991 and served the library until May 2000.

See Appendix C for pictures of library staff and of the executive committee members as at 1997.

Other library staff full time and part time over the past years included :

R. Ahmed

A. Parker

M. Davids

A. Khan

Khadeeja Ajouhaar

Nabeweya Darries

Alieya Haider – Qualified librarian : 1 June 2000 – Sept. 2001

Dr. Khadija Jaffer

Dr. Abdullah Jaffer

Achmat Toefy

Nessar Banderker

Current 2003 full time and part time staff members :

Full time staff:

Tougeedah Dollie : B. A. (UWC), Incomplete studies in Library and Information Science. Joined the Islamic Library beginning of October 1992 up till today.

Nathiera Crombie : Incomplete Law studies. Joined the Islamic Library beginning of October 1992 up till today.

Full time half day assistant : Gadija Rajap joined the library in 2001 up till today .

Weekend staff (Part time) :

Tasneem Gabier

M. Yusuf Kariem

Latiefa Lagardien

5.2.5 COLLECTION SIZE, CATEGORIES OF BOOKS AND OTHER TYPES OF LIBRARY MATERIAL

The library collection started off with approximately 300 items, which included books and videos in 1987. At the beginning of 1989 about 2500 books and 400 videos were in the collection. In 1997 the total collection were about 7000 items. The current collection consists of about 10 600 items which include books, videos, magazines and journals. There are about 35 magazine/journal titles within the collection, mainly donations.

Initially the books covered the following Islamic topics mainly: Fiqh, Hadith, Qur'an, History, Education, Philosophy, Arabic etc., but over the years the range of the subjects covered became wider. About 70 subject categories are identified which include Islamic literature of different countries.

The books are arranged on the shelves according to the wider subject categories and not interfiled in a specific order. The collection is catalogued on the library's computer system, Stylus and classified according to the Dewey Decimal Classical system on the computer only.

Islamic videos cover: lectures, documentaries, debates etc.

Other material currently in the collection includes an Urdu collection and focus files on relevant current issues. Also books from students who studied in Medinah, Saudi Arabia, known as the Islamic Resource Centre, a collection, which is used as reference works, are taken care of. Shaykh Abdullah Bayat coordinates this collection for the library, by obtaining these literatures from the students.

The Islamic library also took care of the private collection of one of the scholars, Shaykh Faiek Gamielien, a graduate from the Islamic universities in Islamabad and Kuala Lumpur respectively and the current Imam at a mosque in Rondebosch East when he left the country for a specific time period.

5.2.6 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

No specific mission and vision statement but the specific aims and objectives of the organisation are:

- *To provide the community with the opportunity of using Islamic video & literature free of charge, as a major means of acquiring Islamic knowledge.*
- *To make the message of Islam known throughout the land.*
- *To propagate and to implement Islamic values at an individual and societal level.*

- *To stimulate, activate, mobilize and motivate the Muslim population to a pure and sound Islam.*
- *To open Islamic libraries anywhere in South Africa.*
- *To co-operate with other organisations having similar aims and objectives.*

5.2.7 LOCATION OF THE LIBRARY OVER THE YEARS

A room of one of the founder members were used for the library from September 1987 – May 1990 in Primrose Park, The collection grew as well as the membership and the premises in Primrose Park was not big enough to accommodate this.

The committee were seeking for a larger premises . On 3 June 1990, the library was relocated at the Penlyn Madressah complex (Roomaney, 1990 : 20). During the period on this premises the library membership was about 5000 and the total collection of books were about 4000, with quite a big video tape collection. The library at that time offered research and study facilities for its members and a qualified librarian, Aqeela Gaibie was employed.

An eviction notice to vacate the premises the library occupied on the first floor of the Penlyn Madressah complex by 31 July 1991 was served at a library committee meeting between the library executive committee and the committee of the Penlyn Madressah and Cultural Society on the instruction of the Perth School Trust in whose name the property was registered (Hamdulay, 1991 : 4). In spite of a written agreement, the library still had to vacate the Penlyn Madressah premises, but the library only moved until it got another premises. It was during this period when the library committee was seeking for new premises and it was also at the time when the Masjidul Quds Complex in Gateville came in operation when a room for the Islamic Library was granted.

In February 1992 the Islamic Library moved to the Masjidul Quds Complex, where it is currently situated.

5.2.8 STAFF APPOINTMENTS

According to the executive committee members new appointed staff for the library are referred to by the existing staff members. Library experience and or with academic qualifications are recommended.

Staff is remunerated according to their qualifications and experience.

5.3 SERVICES RENDERED

5.3.1 KINDS OF SERVICES RENDERED

- Borrowing of library material is free of charge.
- Reference facilities.
- Internet facilities can be used at R12.00 for half an hour.
- Photocopy facilities available at 40c per page.
- Fax facilities (per page) :
 - R3.00 local
 - R5.00 national
 - R20.00 international
- Video copying: R50.00 without cassette & R25.00 with own cassette.
- Computer facilities which include typing of documents and also the printing of it. Typing and printing is R3.50 per page. Printing only R2.50 per page
- Laminating, R3.00 per page.

5.3.2 SELECTION, ACQUISITION, CATALOGUING AND CLASSIFICATION

The full time library staff members are responsible for the selection and acquisition of library material and equipment. They are also responsible to catalogue and classify the library material. They have computerized system to catalogue the books and use barcodes for the acquisitioning of the items and which are also used for loan purpose so that one can identify which item is on loan.

5.3.3 COMPUTER SYSTEM

The library has a computerised system, which is used for user registration and administration, cataloguing, an OPAC (Online Public Access Catalogue) and circulation functionalities.

The first library computer system was Bookworm. Currently the Stylus system is being used since 1993. Recommendations for a new system will be forwarded to the committee. A possible system that is being looked at as a recommendation is WINCAT.

5.3.4 LIBRARY COLLECTION

The library collection consists mainly of books, videos and magazines and serials.

The following subject areas are covered within the collection:

African literature	Afghanistan	Afrikaans	Arabic
Art	Bibliographies	Biographies	Children
Contemporary	Da'wah	Death	Deedat (Videos)
Duahs	Documentaries (Videos)		Drama (Videos)
Economics	Education	Egypt	Europe
Family	Film	Fiqh	General
Ghazali	Hadith	Hadj	History

India	Iran	Iraq	Jihad
Law	Lectures (Videos)	Middle East	Magazines
Medical	Moral, Ethics	Muhammad	Novels
Pakistan	Palestine	Parenting	Philosophy
Poetry	Politics	Qirah (Videos)	
Qur'an	Religions, Comparative		Russia
Sahaba (Companions)	Science	Shariah	Social Science
Sudan	Tajweed	Tougheed	Urdu
Women			

The book collection also includes children's books and an Urdu collection.

5.3.5 LIBRARY USERS

Although the focus of the library is on Islamic literature, it does not only serve the Muslim community but also open to the wider community.

Currently 15 000 members are registered, but all are not active users. Users are categorized into children, libraries, public, and students. The libraries referred to as users are other libraries which take books on block loan normally for a period of 3 – 6 months.

5.3.6 STATISTICS

User loan statistics for the past three years : 2000 – 2002

	2000	2001	2002
CHILDREN	2 233	1 491	1 363
LIBRARIES	176		
PUBLIC	15 560	14 160	12 272
STUDENTS	3 132	2 777	3 183
TOTAL	21 191	18 428	16 878

The above table indicates a decline of items loans over the three years. It was during this period also when the Rylands Public Library opened in the same vicinity as where the Islamic Library is situated and also due to the fact that many Islamic institutions which include the Islamic colleges (for e.g. ICOSA the Islamic College of Southern Africa situated at the Gatesville mosque complex and Darul Arqam also an institute for Islamic studies situated at the MJC complex in the Athlone area) and Islamic schools (for example the Mitchell's Plain Muslim High School and Islamia College in the Lansdowne area) are also establishing resource centres or libraries for their own specific needs. One can clearly see in 2002 the students loan statistics has increased from the previous 2 years, which give an indication that this library is more used by the student population.

5.3.7 NEW SERVICES

No new services are envisaged, but the staff would like to have closer relations with the already established “Friends of the Library” group who operates independently from the library. This group specifically meets regularly in the library for topic discussions.

5.4 FUTURE ROLE OF THE ISLAMIC LIBRARY

According to the committee they would like to broaden the base of the Islamic Library, by assisting other committees that want to establish a similar structure within their specific areas. If possible they would also like to establish a satellite library for e.g. in the Mitchell’s Plain area with the same kind of facilities if a proper structure is in place. To have established library facilities according to this nature one has to have dedicated and committed community members that will oversee the process, which is not always an easy task due to other commitments.

5.5 CONCLUSION

It is clear from the investigation that there will always be a need for this kind of library services which is rendered by the Islamic Library especially the free library facility towards the borrowing of Islamic literature to the Muslim community and to any other community that wish to make use of this facility.

In the following chapter the researcher will conclude this research with recommendations, which will be able to assist the Islamic Library staff and committee to enhance their existing library services.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 CONCLUSION

Arab-Muslims who emerged from the Arabian Peninsula had no libraries and no library or book tradition, but their interest in books and libraries developed as they conquered the centres of old civilization (Aman, 1975 : 105). Mosques, private, public and academic libraries were established from the early Islamic period during all the centuries and are still flourishing today. Mosque and private libraries continued to be founded over centuries and constitute the most enduring form of Islamic libraries (Wilkins, 1994 : 298).

Campaigning for the establishment of libraries, which will include mobile libraries and information centres in the townships and other areas are important. One should not always wait for government support; local resources can be manipulated to establish small viable libraries (Sardar 1988: 154). The Islamic library in Gatesville as well as the Husami Sauthi Shabaab Cravenby Islamic Library and the Southern Islamic Resource Centre and Library in Retreat are examples of this kind of libraries.

The establishment of Islamic libraries internationally and in South Africa started off with personal Islamic literature collections, which were gathered and were then used to make it accessible to the wider community. The Islamic Library in Gatesville started in the

same way, whereby a few individuals in the community felt that they should share their resources with others, which then led to the establishment of the Islamic Library in 1987.

Libraries in general play an important role in the development of society, to promote reading and to acquire knowledge. Islamic libraries are of no difference and promote the same ideas. The establishment of Islamic libraries played an important role of individuals and communities in providing food for thought and in forming public opinion. The Islamic Library in Gatesville therefore is not only aimed at the Muslim community in the greater Cape Town area but for all communities of all denominations.

The Islamic libraries are mainly linked to mosques or Islamic institutions and in some cases although these libraries are making use of mosque premises, they operate independently from the mosque. The Islamic Library moved to the Masjidul Quds complex in Gatesville in 1992 and operates independently from the mosque. Scholars from ICOSA situated at the Masjidul Quds complex in Gatesville and other Islamic institutions in the greater Cape Town area as well as students studying at local and national universities use the facilities of the Islamic Library extensively, the same way as scholars use Islamic libraries internationally and nationally.

Many attempts in the past were made to establish Islamic libraries especially in the greater Cape Town area (as described in chapter 4). The Islamic Library for the past 4 years from the year 2000 has overcome financial constraints largely, by being one of the beneficiaries of an annual big walk event whereby the community participate to generate funds.

Specific recommendations for the Islamic Library in Gatesville based on the findings of the researcher will be given which will be able to assist the Islamic Library staff and committee to enhance their existing library services and will also serve as a guide for other libraries.

6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

6.2.1 Librarian-in-charge

From the observation and discussions with the specific role players no specific staff member are in charge of the library since the previous qualified librarian has resigned. A dual responsibility between the current two full time staff members exist. For personal growth of staff members the researcher recommends that one of the full time staff members can be promoted to fulfill this responsibility as librarian-in –charge whilst the other one can be the deputy and will take full responsibility when the librarian-in –charge is not available. This will also encourage and motivate staff to enhance the existing library service especially pertaining to administrative duties, which will include for e.g. the writing of monthly and annual reports, which are not currently done. Staff should also be encouraged to complete their current studies, which can also result in a type of promotion.

6.2.2 Workshops and training sessions

Staff should also be encouraged to attend workshops and other training sessions in specific computer training skills to assist them with their day to day running of the library.

6.2.3 Arrangement of books

The researcher also noted the arrangement of books on the shelf. It is arranged according to the broad subject categories allocated to it, but not in a specific order. Books of the same title might easily not be standing together. If a collection is not in a specific order it can be frustrating to users if they need a specific book and a wide subject area exist, it can be time consuming to check the entire subject area. These books should at least be filed alphabetically according to the author and title in this specific category.

The researcher strongly recommended that these books should be arranged according to the Dewey Decimal Classification. According to the staff members the books are classified according to the Dewey decimal classification on the computer only. If this change does take place, users should be informed of the re-arrangement of the collection.

6.2.4 Library website

Another recommendation is to market this important library service intensively and to other communities, by launching a library website with its aims and objectives and also to promote new acquisitions of library material and to have the library's catalogue online. Links to other or similar library services in the community can also be made, if the necessary funding is available.

6.3 CONCLUSION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The above recommendations will enhance the current services rendered at the Islamic Library in Gatesville.

Close relations should exist amongst committees who would like to set-up similar library structures within their specific or broader areas, so that unnecessary pitfalls should be avoided. In this regard the committee of the Islamic Library in Gatesville should play a leading role in guiding other committees how to go about to set-up this kind of library structure, especially where no government assistance is obtained.

If a solid structure does exist, a recommendation for government financial assistance should be proposed to alleviate some of the financial constraints that do exist.

Public libraries should also try to build up their collections which will satisfy their clients' needs, at least to have a basic collection and in cases for specialised literature especially in the case of Islamic literature to be referred to the Islamic Library in Gatesville or to any other library which might have a specialised collection for e.g. university libraries etc.

6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The researcher recommends that a thorough survey should be done in the Western Cape Region to investigate the resources available especially to Islamic literature which will include other Islamic libraries, libraries attached to Islamic education which will include schools, colleges and universities and also private collections of the learned people which are unknown to the communities. With this research done one can then also recommend at least a central database to have these collections noted and where it is located if anyone need to get hold of it with the consent of the owner. The same research can be done in the other regions of South Africa or an overview of Islamic libraries in South Africa can be investigated.

In conclusion, I hope that this study will contribute to the development of Islamic libraries in South Africa.

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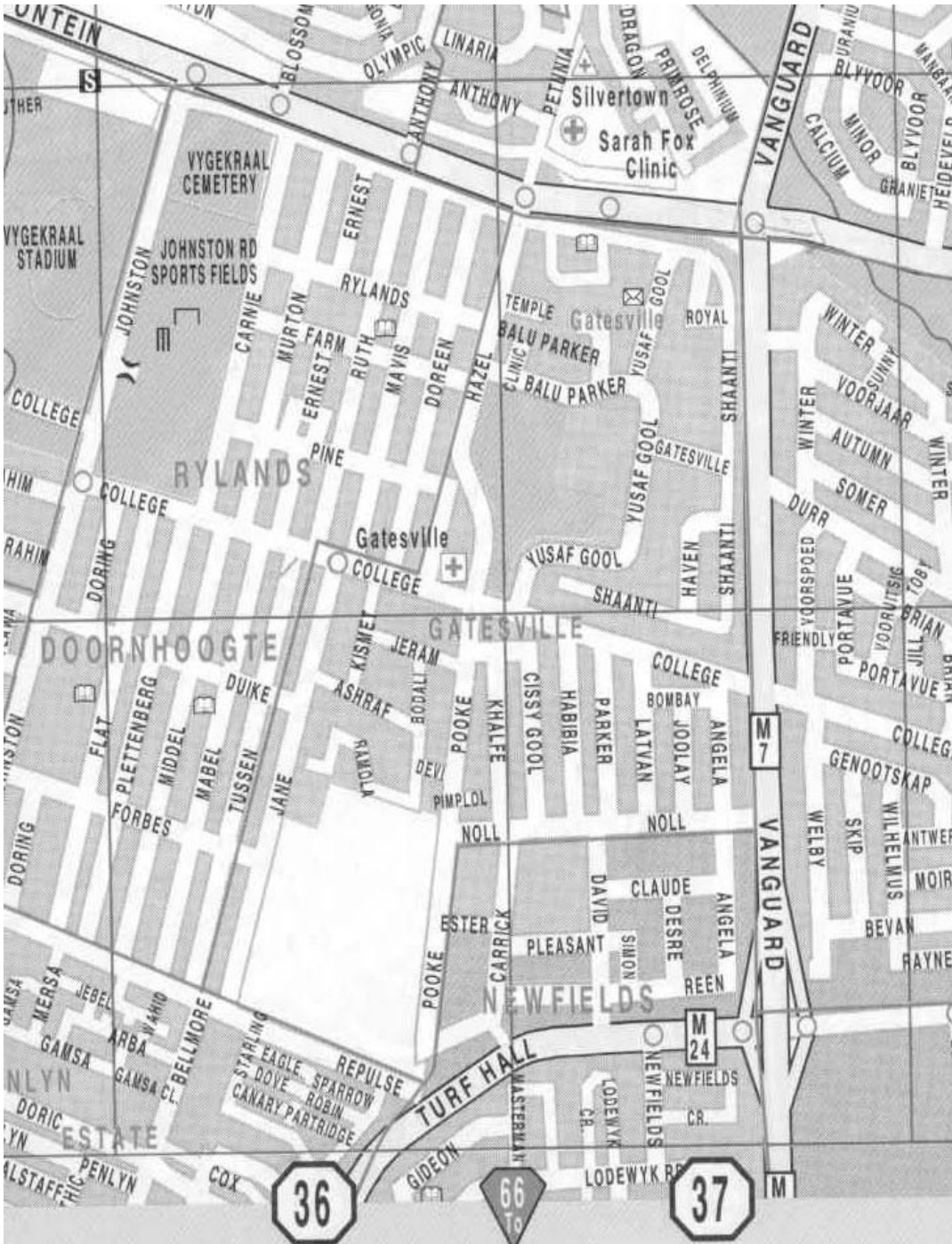
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

STREET MAP OF GATESVILLE AREA



APPENDIX B
QUESTIONNAIRE
(Islamic Library in Gatesville)

1. Historical background of the Islamic Library

- 1.1 When was the Islamic Library established?**
- 1.2 Was a committee established to oversee this project?**
- 1.3 How is this project funded?**
- 1.4 Who was the first appointed librarian?**
- 1.5 What was the size of the collection of the library when it started?**
- 1.6 What categories of books were in the library?**
- 1.7 What types of other material was stored in the library?**
- 1.8 What are the mission and or vision of this Library?**
- 1.9 Give a brief history of the location of the Islamic Library over the years.**
- 1.10 Briefly discuss the appointment of staff:**
 - 1.10.1 Should staff have at least library experience or any library qualifications?**
 - 1.10.2 Who is responsible for the appointment of staff?**
 - 1.10.3 Are staff remunerated on a specific criteria?**

2. Services rendered

- 2.1 What kind of services is rendered at this library?**
- 2.2 Who is responsible for the selection and acquisition of library material and equipment?**

- 2.3 Briefly discuss the different collections currently in the library.**
- 2.4 Who is allowed to use this library and to what community are your services rendered?**
- 2.5 How many items are allowed on loan and for how long?**
- 2.6 Who is responsible for the cataloguing and classification of library material?**
- 2.7 Do you have a computerised system in place?**
- If yes for what functions is it utilized?**
- If no, why not?**
- 2.8 Please provide any statistical figures for the last 3 years (2000-2002) of the following:**
- Collection acquisitions:**
- | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| User Lending: | Adults | Children |
| Registered users: | Adults | Children |
- Staff complement:**
- 2.9 Do you have any new services in mind for the near future?**
- 3. What future role will your library play? Any recommendations?**

APPENDIX C

ISLAMIC LIBRARY

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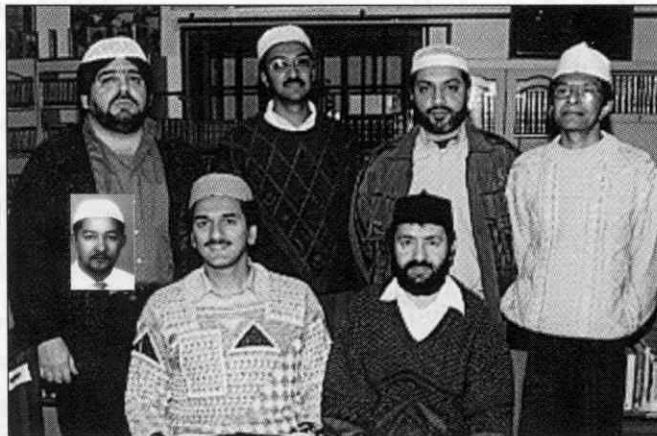
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ISLAMIC LIBRARY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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Front, left to right: Mahmood Sanglay, Ahmed Khan **Insert:** Nazeem Weber