

APPENDIX I

A WORD ABOUT THE SHĪ`A PRESENCE AND ACTIVITY IN THE UNITED STATES

Although there are no precise statistics of the number of Shi`ite Muslims in the United States, my best estimate is that they make up between 15% - 20% of the entire Muslim population which now is estimated at five to eight million. When I moved in 1982 from Maryland to Virginia, there was only one Shġ'a center, the Islamic Education Center in the Potomac, Montgomery County, Maryland, the founding of which I witnessed, typing its mortgage application and documenting the story of its establishment in my book titled *Mary and Jesus in Islam*. Now there are eight such centers only in the Metropolitan Washington D.C. area which is comprised of the District of Columbia (D.C.) where the American capital is located, some counties in Maryland and some areas of Northern Virginia. What are these centers doing? Do they get involved in any intellectual activity? Do they publish books and other publications for the enlightenment of their communities and to satisfy the curiosity of non-Muslims in general and non-Shġ'as in particular? Do they have outreach programs to extend their hands to shake those of non-Muslims? Do they have media watch programs to defend the Islamic faith against the daily attacks to which it is subjected? Are they documenting the spread of the Shġ'a faith in the United States? Perhaps I always expect too much...!

All these questions need to be answered. One may ask me: "Why do you not answer them yourself, Mr. al-Jibouri?!" And it is a valid question, especially in the light of the fact that I spent so many years of my life propagating the Islamic faith in general and the faith of the Ahlul-Bayt ﷺ in particular. For the sake of brevity, I can give you these answers: It depends



on each center's human and financial resources to serve Islam, the Muslim community and the world at large, and it depends on the imām or director of each center or mosque, on whether he is energetic or sluggish, pragmatic or close-minded, fanatical or open-minded... Imāms of these centers set the stage for all activities, organize committees for this service or activity or that and determine the overall policy. Some imāms were appointed for political reasons, others due to ethnic or sectarian considerations. Some imāms worked hard to rally people behind them so they would lead them in prayers and other activities, in the end succeeding to establish mosques and communities of their own with perhaps support from outside the United States in this form or that, particularly with funds and *fatwas* permitting the faithful to pay them their religious taxes. One cannot generalize. Some imāms are more concerned about maintaining their positions than anything else, and these imāms have their own weaknesses, biases and prejudices, so you cannot expect much from them.



Ghulamraza Hassanali, sitting right in the first row, and other members of SANA of New York, the first Shī'a organization in U.S. history

If you trace the history of the establishment of the first Shī'a organizations, I admit that mine, i.e. the Islamic Society of Georgia, Inc., which I founded in 1973, was not the first. It was preceded by SANA, the Shī'a Association of North America, which was founded perhaps one or two years before mine, and the name of its founder deserves to be credited for this honor. He was the late

Ghulamraza Hassanali (pictured in two photos on the previous page).

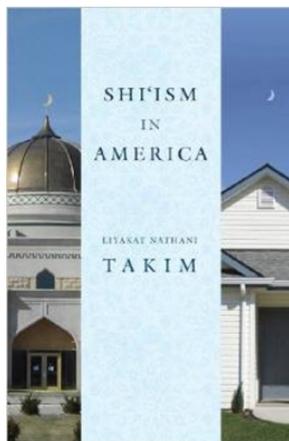


Originally from Dares-Salam, Tanzania, Marhoom Hassanali was a man of dedication, zeal, straightforward character and a very big heart. He hosted me more than once at his New York apartment, and I will never forget the time I spent with him there and how he treated me as a member of his great family. His son, Riaz, is now a cosmetologist doctor, and he has been kind to provide me with photographs of his late father which I would like to share with the readers.



Dalai Lama speaking to some Shī'a Muslim ladies in Washington, D.C. How wonderful! We need such outreach programs and invite representatives of other faiths to come and worship with us. Our Lord and theirs is One and the same.

As for documenting the history of the Shī'a community in the United States, to the best of my knowledge, there has been only one single writer/intellectual who has taken the time and effort to do it. He is Professor Liyakat Nathani Takim whose book *Shi'ism in America* remains to be the only thorough research of this subject. This book was published by the New York University Press in 2009 and its hardcover edition bears ISBN 978-0-8147-8296-5, and I am unaware of a softcover or electronic edition of it. It is available to order through Amazon (www.amazon.com) which also markets my books. There is no shortage of writers or scholars in the American Shī'a community, but there may be a lack of interest in such documenting, which is deplorable. All communities are proud of their history and legacy, and our Shī'a community is no exception at all. Here I should tell the reader more about Professor Takim whom I met in the 1980s in Maryland where he used to deliver very interesting and informative speeches, then in 2013 here in Baghdad when he came to visit the holy shrines:



Dr. Liyakat Nathani Takim was born in Zanzibar, Tanzania, in February of 1957, earned in 1978 his B.Sc. in Economics from the Department of Economics, City University, London, U.K., his M.A. in 1983 in History of Religions from the Department of Religious Studies, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia, U.S.A., writing his thesis on "A Study of the Doctrine of Messianism in Islam", and his Ph.D. in 1990 from the History of Religions, Department of History, School of Oriental and African Studies, London, U.K., writing his dissertation on "The *Rijal* of the Shi'i Imāms as Depicted in Imāmi Biographical Literature". He also studied at Iran's Qum *hawza* during the period from 1983-85 where he conducted an extensive research in Islamic jurisprudence, biographical and *hadith*/literature,

Qur'ānic exegesis, Arabic, and principles of extrapolating Islamic law. He also delivered numerous lectures on Islam in Canada and the U.S. and wrote many books which include the following:

1) *Shi'ism in America*. New York: New York University Press, September 2009; 2) *Shi'i Islam in North America: United States of America and Canada*. Dix Hills: 2012; 3) *The Heirs of the Prophet: Charisma and Religious Authority in Shi'ite Islam*. Albany: State University of New York, 2006; 4) Translation of *Ziyarat Guide: Selected Supplications*. Toronto: MEBS, 2000; 5) Translation of *Pilgrims' Guide: Selected Supplications*. Toronto: Hyderey Press, 1998; 6) Translation of *Questions of Jurisprudence: A Comparative Study of Muslim Ritual Practices*, by Sharaf al-Din Sadr al-Din al-Musawi. Toronto: Hyderey Press, 1996; 7) Translation of *Ask Those Who Know: An Exposition of the Shi'ite Creed*, by Muhammad al-Tijani al-Samawi. Toronto: Hyderey Press, 1995. Many of his lectures and essays are posted on the Internet.

Why did I include the above text about Prof. Takim? It is due to my conviction that those who document the presence and activity of our Shī'a community in the U.S. deserve recognition. If you read Harvard University's "Islam in America" report, which is included here for you as Appendix II, and my comment on it, you will see how rarely the Shī'a community in America is mentioned despite the large number of intellectuals and proselytes who live and work in it. Read it and judge for yourself...





Imam al-Abbas عليه السلام, brother of Imam al-Hussain عليه السلام, Kerbala, Iraq