

# NEWSLETTER



O.I.C. RESEARCH CENTRE FOR ISLAMIC HISTORY, ART AND CULTURE

April 1983

No: 3

## EDITORIAL

The third issue of our Newsletter is now in your hands. Until now we have been well on time, thanks to the hard labour put in by members of the editorial board, which is headed by Dr. Muhammad Aslam. I hope they will continue working with the same dedication. We intended and still have the intention to make it a quarterly, but for the time being, it does not seem feasible. The major obstacle is bringing it out in three international languages namely, Arabic, English and French, and we do not have enough specialised staff for this purpose. The Newsletter has evoked a good response and is proving immensely useful as is confirmed by a streak of congratulatory letters which we have been receiving over the past quarter. A selection of these is being published under the caption "Comments from Our Readers". We are grateful to our readers for this cooperation.

The second fortnight of April shall be extremely busy for the Centre. Three important events shall be taking place in succession. The second Governing Council meeting of IRCICA will be held on 16-17 April 1983. The first international symposium organised by IRCICA shall commence on 18th April and will end on 22nd April. International Commission for the Preservation of Islamic Cultural Heritage will hold its first meeting on 21-22 April 1983. It will be chaired by H.R.H. Prince Faisal bin Fahd and H.E.

Habib Chatty, Secretary General of the OIC will also honour the meeting with his presence. The proceedings of these events shall be covered in a subsequent issue of the Newsletter.

This issue carries a detailed diary of the first session of the OIC Permanent Information and Cultural Commission held at Dakar on 18-19 January 1983. A brief historical survey of earliest Quranic translations has been given under the title of "Focus on Islamic Culture". A selection of the Press reviews on IRCICA is given under the caption "Gleanings from the Press".

It is hoped that all this information shall be found interesting. We shall look forward to comments from our readers.

Permanent features such as "Research and Publications", "Peoples and Events", "Social and Cultural Round-up", "Spotlight on Cultural News", "Rare Books from IRCICA's Library", etc., are also expected to be informative and stimulating.

May God guide us to the right path and crown our efforts with further success!

**Dr. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoğlu**  
**Editor-in-Chief**

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**The Inaugural Session of the Permanent Committee for Information and Cultural Affairs, Dakar, Senegal  
18-19 January 1983**

The first session of the Permanent Committee for Information and Cultural Affairs was held at Dakar, Senegal on 18-19 January 1983. The said Permanent Committee was created as a result of the decision taken at the 3rd Islamic Summit held at Makkah Al-Mukarramah and Taif, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on 25-28 January 1981. The meeting was opened by H.E. Abdou Diouf, Chairman of the Committee and the Senegalese Head of State, in the presence of H.E. Mr. Habib Chatty, Secretary General of the O.I.C. The representatives of Saudi Arabia, Bangladesh, Gabon, Guinea, Morocco, Senegal, Iraq, Oman, Indonesia, Sierra Leone, Palestine (PLO), Niger, Maldives - and heads of the O.I.C. organs, namely ISESCO, IRCICA, IINA and ISBO attended the session. The IRCICA was represented by Dr. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoğlu, Director General, and Mr. Ahmed Ladjimi, a staff member.

In this speech, His Excellency President Abdou Diouf emphasised the vital role of the Committee and commended the 3rd Islamic Summit for the "exemplary initiative", with regard to Islamic Cultural Policy, he opined: "We must prove our common will to mobilize all our resources and all of our potential in order to preserve our integrity and cultural specificity, first of all. Secondly, to

open them up to other cultures in a spirit of mutual enrichment so that we can contribute to a balanced dialogue between cultures that is free of any sectarianism, if only to fulfill the legitimate aspirations of our people for a new world cultural order."

H.E. Mr. Habib Chatty, Secretary General of the Organisation of Islamic Conference, while underlining the importance of culture, said: "It constitutes one of the main supports in efforts by the Organisation of the Islamic Conference and the member states in asserting the Islamic nature and towards the preservation and enrichment of our noble heritage."

Working sessions which followed the opening speeches were chaired by H.E. Mr. Moustapha Niasse, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Senegal. The agenda for the consideration of the Committee was brought up by the report of the Secretary General of the O.I.C. which was also examined and discussed in detail. The IRCICA distributed a special 26 page report amongst the delegates which formed the basis of ensuing discussions. The Director General also briefly addressed the Committee, explaining the work done until now and the problems being faced. The delegates highly appreciated the notable achievements made in a short span of existence and urged the member states to expedite their payments of the mandatory contributions. The Resolution No. SMCIC/I-83/REC.I/CS/REV.I on Istanbul Centre said in Clause (A):

"The Committee puts on record its appreciation at the direct practical steps taken by the Centre, the progress made in its projects and the actual results achieved within a short period of time despite its limited potentialities; and calls upon the member states to speed up the payment of their contributions and arrears so that the Centre may achieve its objectives in the service of the Muslim World."

The Commission, taking note of the urgent need of the Centre, for a more spacious building, launched an appeal for donations for carrying out repairs and restoration of "Çit Qasr" which is already under way. Clause (B) of the Resolution said:

"The Commission puts on record its appreciation and thanks to the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the Republic of Turkey for the financial and technical support they provided to the project of restoration of the historical buildings of Yıldız Palace which the Turkish Government has allocated to become the headquarters of the Centre. Since it was this support that facilitated the completion of the first phase of the building restoration within a very short time; and appeals to the member states and to the Islamic Solidarity Fund to give donations to this project so as to enable the Centre to complete its following phases."

The Commission also urged upon member states and cultural institutions to extend fullest possible cooperation to the Centre in the execution of its projects. Clause (C) of the Resolution thus said:

"The Centre is asked to circulate the document it had distributed at the Committee meetings, to all member states and to the cultural institutions engaged in fields similar to those of the Centre and requests the member states and the cultural academic institutions to effect cooperation and coordination with the Centre in the achievement of its objectives and the completion of its projects that are of interest to the Muslim World."

The Islamic states were also reminded of their duty towards forging of cultural solidarity and cooperation. In the words of the Final Communique issued at the end of the meeting:

"Islamic culture is today vested with the major role in the image of the role it once played only a while ago in building the foundations of modern civilisation. It is for that reason that the Committee is convinced of the Islamic States' obligation to strive in all fields of culture towards close spiritual relations between Muslims by taking inspiration from our steadfast Islamic values and within our heritage by drawing on whatever is capable of bringing Muslims together, fortifying and enhancing their contribution to universal culture, and to cleanse our societies of any inclination to social disintegration, strife and deviation."



## 1. 'Çit Qasr' Restoration

In the last issue, detailed information was given about repairs and restoration of the additional building known as "Çit Qasr" in which the headquarters of IRCICA shall be housed. A plan of the building containing technical data for spaces and uses was also given and an appeal was made for generous donations. Meanwhile, the essential restoration work had already been started with the first contributions which had then been received from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the Government of Turkey. The first phase of restoration work shall be completed soon, enabling the Centre administration to reduce the over-crowding on the present premises.

Extensive and comprehensive restoration shall be completed in various phases and will require substantial amounts. The recently concluded first meeting in Dakar (18-19 January 1983) of the Permanent Cultural Commission also launched an appeal "to the member states and to the Islamic Solidarity Fund to give donations to this project so as to enable the Centre to complete its following phases."

It is hoped that the requisite funds shall be made available soon to complete the restoration work on schedule. This will solve not only the space problem of the Centre, creating more congenial working conditions but also restore a historical building which has been a nerve centre of a grand by-gone era.

## 2. International Symposium

The first international symposium on Islamic arts to be organised by the Centre on 18-22 April 1983 has evoked a good response. (Actually, the event will be over by the time this issue of the Newsletter is out). The detailed report on the proceedings of the symposium shall be given either in the next issue of the newsletter or in a special issue to be brought out immediately after the symposium. About 50 scholars have already confirmed their participation. They hail from Algeria, Egypt, East Germany, England, France, Iraq, Italy, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Mali, Morocco, Malaysia, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Switzerland, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, United States and West Germany. The General Secretariat of the Organisation of Islamic Conference shall be represented by a four member delegation including H.E. Mr. Bakary

Dramé, Assistant Secretary General for Cultural, Social Affairs and Islamic Solidarity Fund and Mr. Hasan Megag Samater, Advisor to H.E. the Secretary General and Director of the Hajj Department. The international organisations such as UNESCO, ALECSO and ISESCO shall also be sending their representatives and observers.

The Symposium is synchronised with the Islamic Arts Exhibition being organised by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Turkish Government in connection with the advent of the 15th Century Hijra. This exhibition shall be inaugurated by H.E. Mr. Bülend Ulusu, Prime Minister of Turkey and shall consist of many components, i.e. photographs of Islamic architecture, Sacred Relics, Islamic art objects of worship, Islamic tiles and contemporary ceramic arts, rugs and carpets, calligraphy, metal and woodwork, slides of works of Islamic art. The venues for these series of exhibitions to be opened simultaneously shall be the Atatürk Cultural Centre, Topkapı Palace, Çinili Köşk (Tiled Köşk), Vakıflar Halı Müzesi (Carpet Museum of Waqfs), Süleymaniye Library, Türk-İslam Eserleri Müzesi (Museum of Turkish-Islamic Works of Art.), respectively.

## 3. Inaugural Meeting of the International Commission for the Preservation of the Islamic Cultural Heritage

Preliminary work has been completed for the first meeting of the above-mentioned commission in Istanbul. It will now be held on 21-22 April 1983. H.E. Mr. Habib Chatty, Secretary General of the O.I.C. and H.R.H. Prince Faisal Bin Fahd, Chairman of the Commission shall be attending this meeting. It must be emphasised here that the IRCICA will function as the Executive Body of this Commission and the Director General of IRCICA shall act as Secretary of the Commission which will have the same headquarters as IRCICA.

## 4. Second Governing Council Meeting of IRCICA

The Second Governing Council Meeting of IRCICA will also convene on 16-17 April 1983, simultaneously with the meeting of the Commission. This has been so arranged because members of the Governing Council of IRCICA are also ex-officio members of the International Commission for the Preservation of Islamic Cultural Heritage.

## 5. The Late Hamid Aytac

In the last issue of our Newsletter, a detailed article was given about the great calligrapher, the late Mr. Hamid Aytac and his works. It was highly appreciated by art scholars in general and calligraphers in particular. The article was translated in Urdu language and published in "Mashriq" a national daily of Pakistan, in its magazine section on 11th February 1983. Sheikh Shamsul Haq, a scholar from Pakistan, in his letter addressed to the Director General, wrote about the late calligrapher:

"I was deeply grieved to read the news of the death of Hamid Aytac... I had a love to see Ustad Hamid and I was successful in seeing a film presented by World of Islam Festival of Hamid Aytac posing and writing with his pens but alas!

Sir, if you do not consider it an embarrassment, please help me in sending all the printed books calligraphed by Ustad Hamid because I want to keep a record with me for the benefit of calligraphers here. You have mentioned a few pupils of Ustad Hamid but in my opinion, all the living calligraphers have been benefitted with his art in one way or another. I am also making a contact with Pak-Turkish Relations Society here and in future we may publish a comprehensive book on the late Hamid."

Moreover, condolence messages were also received from 'the Centre for the Revival of Eastern Sciences', 'The Working Journalists Calligraphers' Union', the organisation 'Al-Jehad' all based in Lahore, Pakistan. Another famous calligrapher from Lahore, Mr. Gohar Qalam, in his letter of 13th February 1983, commented as under:

"The death of Ustad Hamid Aytac has created a vacuum which shall never be filled. There is no doubt, however, that he died only physically but his art shall ever live.... It would not be inappropriate if we call him "Medina-tul-Funun" (The City of Arts). On his sad death it would be right to say that a bright star of the Kingdom of Calligraphy has set in."

The news of his death was also carried by "Jang", the largest national daily of Pakistan in its issue of February 13, 1983, under the caption of "The Muslim World has lost a great Calligrapher in the death of Ustad Hamid Aytac", and refers to a statement given by Mr. Gohar Qalam quoted above.

Mr. Mohammad Yousuf Sadeedi, a calligrapher from Saudi Arabia in his letter to the Director General, wrote:

"I was very happy when I saw the best calligrapher of the world, Mr. Hamid Aytac in Al-Muslimoon dated 13th August 1982. I and some of my friends intended to meet him under your supervision. We thought that we would get a certificate in

calligraphy. But I was shocked when I read that the Best Calligrapher has died."

There is a proverb in Persian that says: "Attain the heights of an art so that you become a beloved of the world." No doubt, the late Hamid Aytac achieved those heights in the art of calligraphy and truly deserves all the tributes being paid to the Master Calligrapher. May his soul rest in peace!



## 6. Dr. Zeki Ali

In the last issue of our Newsletter, we carried a story about Dr. Zaki Ali and his generous donation of his personal library to IRCICA. The Director General of IRCICA met him in Geneva, Switzerland, on his way back from Dakar in January 1983. The purpose was to give his personal thanks to the esteemed patron for his most magnanimous gesture. The meeting was also planned to sort out the details and mode of transfer of the library. It is announced with pleasure that the first installment of his valuable collections shall soon be handed over to the Centre. The Director General is hopeful to see him again in Geneva to talk about the delivery of the second installment. Let us hope this noble example set up by the illustrious Dr. Zaki Ali proves the first drop of rain and encourages others to follow suit.

P.S. As the Newsletter was going to press, we received two large boxes of books from Dr. Zaki Ali, as the first part of his donation to our library. IRCICA once again thanks for his generosity.

## 7. Interest in IRCICA Publications

Publications of IRCICA particularly the "Ottoman Year Books (Salname and Nevsal)" and "The Muslim Pious Foundations and Real Estates in Palestine" have been widely welcomed and there is an incessant demand from the national and international organisations. These publications may be obtained through:

Otto Harrassowitz  
P.O. Box 2929 D-6200 Wiesbaden  
WEST GERMANY

# FOCUS ON ISLAMIC CULTURE

## **A Historical Review of Earliest Quranic Translations \***

According to some Fiqh sources, Selman the Persian -God's Mercy be Upon Him- was the first person who translated the Quran -the surah "Fatiha"- into Persian, a language other than Arabic in which the Quran was revealed. Since then it has been considered quite normal to translate the meanings of the Quran into other languages with the objective of teaching the principles of Islam to those who entered the fold of Islam.

We cannot say that the history of the translations of the Holy Quran has been written precisely. The reason is that this subject has not yet been studied in depth. The lack of comprehensive bibliography of the translations of Holy Quran explains this omission. (Here we should mention the pioneering and creditable work done by Prof. M.Hamidullah.) There are, of course, many fields of research, especially on translations in manuscripts since they are important in defining the earliest translations. Istanbul Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture, related to the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, has already initiated a project of preparing a world bibliography of the Quranic translations in all the languages of the world. (Attention of all scholars and institutions working in this field is requested for the support of this project).

We now have certain information about the earliest translations in the languages of the Muslims and we managed to discover the existence of some texts. We may sum up the information as under:

### **The Earliest Known Translations in the Languages of the Muslims**

#### **Persian Translation**

The earliest translation in the Persian language was done during the period of Samanide King Mansur Ibn Nuh (348-364 H/961-976 A.D.). It was of "Tafsir of Tabâri" by Muhammad Ibn Jeru al-Tabari who died in 310 H/923 A.D. It was a literal translation.

#### **Turkish Translation**

Opinions differ about the beginning of the translations into Turkish. But it is definitely known now that the translation made in the Eastern Turkish language in 734 Hijra/1333 A.D. is the oldest Turkish translation and is available in the Turkish-Islamic Museum of Antiquities in Istanbul

under No. 73. It is noticeable that this translation was made on the model of the Persian one.

#### **Urdu Translation**

In Urdu language, which is relatively of recent origin, the first complete translation of the Holy Quran is commonly considered to be that done by Moulana Shah Rafi-ud-din in 1777 A.D./1190 A.H. (Shah Rafi-ud-din was the son of Shah Wali Ullah, who was the first person in the Sub-Continent to translate the Quran into Persian in 1150 A.H./1737 A.D.). There is also evidence that there exists a partial translation (last paragraph of Quran) in old Deccani Urdu belonging to the beginnings of the 10th century H./16th century A.D.

#### **Indonesian Translation**

The first translation into an Indonesian language (Malayo) was done towards the middle of the 11th century H./17th century A.D. by Abdul Rauf al-Fansuri, a famous scholar of Singkel, Aceh Province. The Malayo language is the basis of the modern Indonesian language.

#### **Bengali Translation**

In the case of partial Bengali translations, the first translation of the 30th Para of Quran is stated to have been done by Ghulam Akbar Ali of Mirzapur in 1285 H/1868 A.D. The first complete Bengali translation is stated to have been done by Garish Chandra Sen, a Brahman by religion, in 1298-1303 H./1881-1886 A.D. However both these claims are disputed.

### **Earliest Translations in other Languages of the Sub-Continent**

#### **Hindi Translation**

The oldest Hindi translation up to Sura "Yasin" is reported to have been made in 270 H./883 A.D., at the request of Raja Mahrook of Punjab and Kashmir. The first full translation in Hindi is reported to have been done by Dr. Ahmad Shah Messihi in 1333 H./1915 A.D. Idiomatic Hindi has been used without any Arabic text.

#### **Sindhi Translation**

The first available Sindhi translation was done by Akhund Azizullah Muta'lawi (1160-1240 H. or 1747-1824 A.D.) of Mityari, District Hyderabad and was published by Qazi M. Ibrahim from Mohammadi Printing Press, Gujrat.

#### **Pashtu Translation**

The earliest known commentary of Quran in Pashtu language is reported to be that of Moulana Murad Ali which was completed in 1284 H./1867 A.D. He was an eminent scholar and had command over Arabic, Persian and Pashtu languages.

\* This is a shortened version of the paper read by Dr.Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, Director General of IRCICA, at the Second International Quran Congress held at New Delhi, India on 12-17 December 1982.

## Punjabi Translation

The earliest known complete translation of the Quran in the Punjabi language is reported to be that of Nabi Baksh Halvae. The first part was published in 1320 H./1902 A.D.

## Earliest Translations in other Languages

### Chinese Translation

Sheikh Liu Che had translated some chapters of the Holy Quran before the beginning of the 20th century, followed by Sheikh Mofushu who completed 20 volumes before he died.

### Japanese Translation

The first translation of the Holy Quran in Japanese appeared in 1339 H./1920 A.D. The translation was done by Mr. K. Sakamoto, a Buddhist and was based on an English translation. This was reprinted in 1348 H./1929 A.D. by Kaizo-sha Press under the title "Koran Kyo".

### Swahili Translation

According to available information, the first translation of the Quran in Swahili, a widely spoken language in the countries of East Africa, was made in 1342 H./1923 A.D. by a Zanzibar priest, Mr. Godfrey Dale.

### Latin Translation

The first translation of the Holy Quran in Latin was made in 508 H./1143 A.D. by a scientific commission appointed by Peter Venerable (485-552 H./1092-1157 A.D.) but could not be printed before it was recommended by Martin Luther in 950 H./1543 A.D.

### Spanish Translation

It is mentioned in the Jewish Encyclopaedia that Abraham of Toledo translated 70 Suras into Spanish on the command of Alphonse X (650-682 H./1252-1284 A.D.). This Spanish translation was the base of the translation made into French by Bonnaventure.

### French Translation

Andre du Ruyer made a direct French translation of the Holy Quran from Arabic. It was known as "Alcoran de Mahomet", published in Paris in 1057 H./1647 A.D. This translation forms the basis of many European translations.

### English Translation

According to available information, the first English translation of the Holy Quran was done by Alexander Rose in 1059 H./1649 A.D. and was based on the French translation of du Ruyer.

While this project continues, information is now being collected about the translations in manuscript form. Gathering information about the oral translations of the Quran in African languages is also envisaged.

During the course of the last quarter, some research projects have reached the stage of maturity and are ready to go to print after the technical details are sorted out. A brief description of these projects is given below.

### 1) A Bibliography of Publications on Arabic, Turkish and Persian Manuscripts

The bibliographical information has been collected about the publications relating to Arabic, Turkish and Persian manuscripts found in various libraries of Turkey e.g. national, city, private libraries. Both printed and hand written publications shall be included. The data have been collected through a meticulous study of catalogues, bibliographies, books, periodicals and papers. The publication of this book is expected to be of assistance to scholars working in this field.

### 2. A Bibliography of the Translations of Meanings of the Holy Quran:

The intended publication of the subject will be a by-product of the main research project concerning the compilation of a World Bibliography of Quranic Translations. Information has been collected about the printed translations in the major European languages, the languages of the Indian sub-continent (India, Pakistan and Bangladesh) and Turkish. The handlist shall contain bibliographical information about 2,000 translations in more than 60 languages.

### 3) Catalogue of the Holy Ka'ba Keys.

Whenever Holy Ka'ba underwent repairs or constructions, the keys were replaced and the old ones were put among the Holy Relics. Data have been collected about such keys belonging to different periods and found in Istanbul, a seat of the Khilafat for many hundred years. This part of the research is finished but research is still in progress on keys to be found in other places so that a comprehensive and illustrated catalogue of Holy Ka'ba keys is finally brought out.

### 4) Documents Related to Repairs and Constructions Carried Out in The Holy Cities (Holy Ka'ba and Medina) In The XVI-XIX Centuries:

Valuable original documents have been located in various archives in Istanbul pertaining to "Haramain Al-Sharifain" and their repairs and constructions. It was thought that uncovering these documents would shed more light on the history of the Holy places. The project has already been completed and preparations are under way for its publication.

# SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ROUND-UP

Under this caption, social and cultural activities of the Director General and the staff are detailed. These visits, meetings and conferences provide excellent opportunities of direct contacts and become instrumental in initiating and promoting mutual cooperation and coordination. Given below is a description of such activities in chronological order.

14/11/1982:

The Director General of IRCICA visited Rabat, Morocco to attend the Executive Council Meeting of ISESCO. (The Islamic Education, Science and Culture Organisation). The possibility of cooperation with ISESCO has arisen as a result of his appointment to the Executive Council of the Organisation by the secretary General of O.I.C.

10/12/1982:

The Director General of IRCICA attended the 2nd International Quran Congress in New Delhi, India, organised by the Indian Institute of Islamic Studies of the Hamdard Foundation. The Congress was inaugurated on 12th December 1982 by the Indian Vice-President, H.E. M. Hidayatullah. The Director General presented a paper on "The Origin and History of Quranic Translations" which was highly applauded by the delegates. He also visited Aligarh Muslim University where he delivered a lecture about the IRCICA. He was also granted a private audience by the Indian Vice-President.

13/12/1982:

Dr. M. Aslam, a staff member of IRCICA represented the Centre and the Director General at the 5th International Mevlana Congress held at Konya, Turkey, under the auspices of Konya Tourism Association. He also presented a paper on "Iqbal and Mevlana Rumi".



Director General of the Centre with H.E Niaz Arbab during his visit to Islamabad

19/12/1982:

The Director General visited Pakistan on the invitation of H.E. Mr. Arbab Mohammad Niaz, Minister of Culture, Sports and Tourism of Pakistan. In Islamabad, he was received by the Minister and was briefed about the cultural and archival treasures of Pakistan. He also met Mr. Masood Nabi Nur, Secretary of the Ministry and also called upon Mr. Zafar Fauroqi, Secretary of Education, Government of Pakistan. He was assured full cooperation in the execution of the Centre's projects. Later on, he visited Lahore, cultural centre of Pakistan where he visited historical sites, museums and libraries and held discussions with their officials. While in Lahore, he also met Prof. Shabbir Ahmad Mughal who is conducting a preliminary survey of Quranic translations in Urdu and other regional languages of Pakistan and reviewed the progress of his work.

8/1/1983:

The Director General went to Fez, Morocco, to attend an extraordinary session of the Executive Council of ISESCO of which he is a member.

18/1/1983:

The Director General attended the first meeting (18-19 January 1983) of the Permanent Committee for Information and Cultural Affairs, established by the 3rd Islamic Summit, Taif in January 1981. The meeting was held in Dakar, the capital of Senegal. (See details in the article under the caption of "Dakar Diary").

20/2/1983:

The Director General paid a visit to the O.I.C. headquarters in Jeddah to report to H.E. Mr. Habib Chatty, Secretary General and H.E. Mr. Bakary Dramé, Assistant Secretary General for Cultural and Social Affairs, and the Islamic Solidarity Fund about the affairs of IRCICA, the Symposium and the meetings planned in the month of April 1983.

He also went to Riyadh where he was granted an audience by H.R.H. Prince Faisal Bin Fahd who is also the Chairman of the International Commission for the Preservation of Islamic Cultural Heritage. While in Riyadh, the Director General was invited by Dr. Abdullah B. Abdul Muhsin Al-Turki, Rector of Islamic University of Imam Mohammad Bin Saud and the possibilities of mutual cooperation in various fields of research were discussed. He also called upon Sh. Abdul Aziz Bin Baz, General President of Religious Affairs, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. He participated in the award-giving ceremony of the King Faisal International Prize for Services in the Cause of Islam. This award was jointly shared by Tunku Abdul Rahman, first Secretary General of O.I.C. and Sheikh Hassanain Makhlouf, an ex-mufti of Egypt.

## SPOTLIGHT ON CULTURAL NEWS

### **Conference on "Can Islam Inhabit the Future of the West", Paris, France**

"Islam and the West", a Paris-based association, organised an international conference on Can Islam Inhabit the West at the Paris headquarters of UNESCO in mid-November 1982. H.E. Mr. Habib Chatty, Secretary General of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, was the chief guest and patron of the Conference. The Conference brought together Rev. Father Michel LeLong, a famous French thinker and writer, and Roger Garaudy who recently embraced Islam. In the speech that he delivered, H.E. Mr. Habib Chatty underlined the Islamic roots of Western science and technology. He also laid stress on the fact that the exchange of ideas between the Islamic and the Western civilisations was never interrupted despite the historical wrongs done by the West.

### **The Institute of Islamic Theology, Peking, China**

The Government of the People's Republic of China recently allowed the reopening of the Institute of Islamic Theology in Beijing. The Institute, established in 1955 to train Imams and religious leaders to serve Communist China's several million Muslims, was closed down by the authorities during the Cultural Revolution of 1966-1967. Already about 40 students have been permitted to enroll. The nature and extent of the curriculum is still undecided. The Institute is run by the China Islamic Association whose national committee announced the re-opening of the Institute at a recent meeting.

### **The Second International Quran Congress, Delhi, India**

The Indian Institute of Islamic Studies organised the 2nd International Quran Congress at New Delhi from 12th to 17th December 1982. The Indian Vice-President, His Excellency Mohammad Hidayatullah opened the Congress which was attended by scholars from more than a dozen countries, including the Director General of IRCICA, who presented a paper on "The Origin and History of Quranic Translations". An exhibition of Islamic calligraphy was specially organised for the occasion. The National Museum of India also participated in this important event mostly by arranging an exhibition of Quranic manuscripts.

### **The Announcement of Hijra Award, Islamabad, Pakistan**

The Hijra Award was instituted by the Government of Pakistan for outstanding services in the cause of Islam and the Muslim Ummah. The award carries a medal and a cash prize of one million rupees (\$ 100,000). According to the decision of a celebrated panel of judges, the first Hijra Award will go to His Excellency Tunku Abdur Rahman Putra, the first Secretary General of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference. Besides a long record of public service in his own country, Tunku also played a leading role in the establishment of the O.I.C. and its major subsidiary organs such as the Islamic Development Bank. He has also been awarded another coveted prize "The International Faisal Prize" by Saudi Arabia which he will share with 3 Egyptians and a British national.

### **Encyclopaedia of Islam in Bengali, Dhaka, Bangladesh**

The state-sponsored Islamic Foundation of Bangladesh has recently published a shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam consisting of 1200 pages in the Bengali language. The encyclopaedia has been published in two volumes and contains about 695 entries on different aspects of Islam. It incorporates 37 entries, with minor modifications, from the Urdu Encyclopaedia of Islam published by the University of the Punjab, Lahore, in addition to the 99 original writings. The rest is based on publication of the same title. The chapter on biography covers the lives of 18 prophets including that of the Prophet Mohammad (Peace be upon Him), 48 companions (Sahaba) and 53 other eminent Muslims.

### **The Centre for World Cultures (Maison des Cultures du Monde), Paris, France**

The French Government has recently established this new cultural institution. Its declared objective is to provide the French people and other Europeans with better knowledge and understanding of other world cultures. Until now it was like the one-way traffic. Europe has been exporting its culture to other nations. But now the organisers think that time has come to turn this one-way cultural traffic into a two-way exchange. A three week Middle East Festival of traditional art is proposed to be held sometime in May 1983 - the arts which have not been influenced by the West, e.g. music, song, puppets, popular theatre, etc.

### **Quranic Printing Complex, Medina, Saudi Arabia**

His Majesty, King Fahd of Saudi Arabia, recently laid the foundation stone of the one-billion SR. Quranic printing complex in the holy city of Medina. When completed, the complex will have a capacity to produce 7 million Quran copies a year, including 2 million copies containing the meanings of the Holy Quran in at least 15 majors languages of the world. In addition, it will also be possible to produce 100,000 cassettes per annum. While addressing the teachers and students of Medina University, he also expressed Saudi Arabia's willingness to open branches of the Medina Islamic University in other parts of the Islamic world to impart Islamic education and train Imams and teachers.

### **The Spectre of 'Cultural Plunder' in Lebanon and Palestine**

The Executive Board of UNESCO recently condemned Israel by 36 votes to 2, for its war against the Palestinians on the cultural front. The resolution took serious notice of the destruction and pillage of the educational and cultural institutions by Israeli invading forces in Lebanon, especially those belonging to the Palestinians. There have also been widespread cases of arbitrary arrests of students, teachers and intellectuals and seizure of archives and documents from the Palestinian Research Centre. The destruction of cultural heritage of Palestinians seems as outrageous as the colossal destruction of human lives with the same serious consequences. The situation with regard to the West Bank University is no less serious.

A joint letter signed by 11 eminent British professors titled "Noose Tightens on West Bank Campuses" was recently published in the **Guardian Weekly** of January 9, 1983 drawing the world attention to innumerable instances of harassment and expulsion of teachers by the Israeli occupation authorities.

### **Publication of the 2nd Volume of Fiqh Encyclopaedia, Kuwait**

The 2nd part of the Fiqh Encyclopaedia has been published in Kuwait under the supervision of the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs. The second volume, consisting of 414 pages, contains 81 Fiqh terms with illustrated explanations. Words starting with alphabet 'alif' have been examined.

The work on the preparation of an Encyclopaedia of Mathematics in Arabic by the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research is also in progress. The encyclopaedia is expected to contain 4000 mathematical terms for use in teaching at the university level.

## **Exhibition on "Arts of the Islamic Book" New York, USA**

An exhibition on "Arts of the Islamic Book" was held at the Asian Society in New York in October/November 1982 as a result of efforts made by Messrs. Anthony Welch and Stuart Cary Welch. On exhibition were more than 90 samples of Muslim painting, calligraphy, illumination and book-binding. The samples displayed were mainly borrowed from the collection of Prince Sadruddin Agha Khan, and pertain to Ottoman, Persian and Indian works from the 9th to the late 19th Century. After New York, the exhibition was supposed to travel to other U.S. cities such as Texas City, Kansas City and Fort Worth. Writing about the exhibition, 'Newsweek' art correspondent said: "It is good to remember, therefore, that Islamic civilisation has also produced some of the sweetest, most graceful and witty of images... which could charm a stone." Another exhibit on Islamic calligraphy "The Celestial Pen" was on display simultaneously at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

## **The Earliest Islamic Contact with the Korean Peninsula, Seoul, South Korea**

A Korean Muslim student of history, Mr. Jamil Lee Hee Soo, in his unpublished research study, asserts that Islam was introduced in Korea long before than is generally thought. The said thesis has been submitted in early 1983 to the Department of Middle East Studies, Graduate School, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, Seoul, South Korea. The main thesis is in Korean language but an abstract has been given in English. In this abstract he says: "The exact date at which Muslims first came to Korea has not yet been determined, but it is believed that they, with their Islamic cultural influence arrived in Korea during the Unified Shilla Dynasty of Korea (661-935 A.D.) via China which had very close relations with Persian and Arab Muslims travelling to China along the Silk Road or by sea route through the Indian Ocean during the T'ang Dynasty of China (618-907 A.D.)."

It is hoped that this preliminary study shall trigger off further research in this direction. (The IRCICA is thankful to Mr. Jamil Lee for sending a copy of his dissertation to the Director General.)

Founding of the Korean Muslim Community is quite recent. Writing about this, Mr. Joung Yole Rew in the **Journal** of the Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs, Jeddah, remarked:

"The Korean War of 1950 was a turning point in the history of Islam in Korea. The arrival of the Turkish brigade, a constituent of the U.N. Forces, offered an opportunity to those Koreans who wanted to learn more about Islam. They established personal

contacts with the Turkish troops and from 1953, some of them started attending Friday Services at the Turkish army base... On September 15, 1955, an "Inauguration service for the Korean Muslims" was held in Seoul at which an Imam was elected. Thus emerged an organised Korean Muslim Community, under the name of Korean Islamic Society. On March 25, 1966, it was replaced by the Korean Muslim Federation, which is now coordinating the activities of Muslims in Korea."

## **First International Islamic Youth Training Camp in Seoul, S.Korea**

The Korea Muslim Federation is holding a youth training camp in Korea from 6-10 August 1983. The camp is being organised in cooperation with the O.I.C. and WAMY (World Association of Muslim Youth) and will be the first of its kind in 30 years of recent Islamic history in the country. Main topic for discussion will be: "Islamic Da'wah and Traditional Culture in the Far East-Harmony and Conflicts". The Director General of IRCICA has been nominated as one of the five speakers from abroad. Korea Muslim Federation (C.P.O. Box 2865, Seoul, Korea) is also concentrating on the project of establishing an Islamic College in Korea.



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## **V A C A N C Y**

The Research Centre For Islamic History, Art and Culture, Istanbul (a subsidiary organ of the Organisation of Islamic Conference) needs an experienced editor for its publications which are brought out in three languages namely, English, Arabic and French. Only nationals of the O.I.C. member countries need apply. Please write to the adress below alongwith Curriculum Vitae and one recent passport-size photograph. Salary and other fringe benefits negotiable.

Director General  
The Research Centre For Islamic  
History, Art, and Culture,  
P.O. Box 24,  
Beşiktaş, Istanbul.  
Turkey

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# GLEANINGS FROM THE WORLD PRESS



IRCICA on account of its stepped up research and cultural activities, found a fair coverage in the world press - mainly in journals and periodicals. A few extracts from the articles published in various journals at different points of time are given below:

## **The Muslim World League Journal, Vol.9 - June 1982, No.8:**

Writing under the caption: "Mirror of Glory", the Journal remarked as under:

"The present situation of the Muslim world necessitates intense and wide-ranging work by the Centre to attain its objectives. It cannot be said that at present the heritage of the Islamic world, throughout its entire extent, has been properly explored and determined as required by the modern academic standards in any of the various fields covering history, art and culture. Today Western sources on Islamic history are full of errors, often deliberate ones, as is admitted even by some Western scholars. The common desire of all intellectuals and scholars of the Islamic world is to learn about their cultural heritage from sources that are not misleading or discriminating but which are based on elements of common understanding and the will to preserve national heritages within the integrating framework of Islamic concept of culture and civilisation and its desire to unite the Muslim people instead of dividing them. The Centre has drawn up a programme of activities within the framework of collecting knowledge, evaluating and interpreting and making them available for study."

## **Arabia: The Islamic World Review: London, August 1982, No. 12**

Mr. Mushtak Parker, a special correspondent of the monthly Arabia, covered the opening ceremony of IRCICA performed by H.E. Mr. Habib Chatty, Secretary General of the O.I.C., and later on filed a report on the inauguration in the August 1982 issue of the journal. Here is an extract from the report which was captioned as "New Arts Centre in Istanbul":

"The long-awaited Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture has been officially opened in Istanbul by H.E. Mr. Habib Chatty, Secretary General of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (O.I.C.) and Turgut Özal, Turkey's Deputy Prime Minister... The Centre hopes to strengthen historic and cultural links between all the Islamic countries, thus creating an amicable working relationship throughout the community... Speaking at an international seminar entitled "The Arts in the Islamic Lands" the Director General of the Centre, Dr. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, praised the excellent work being done by scholars and organisations throughout the Islamic world but expressed regret that there was so little cooperation, coordination and cross-fertilisation of ideas and findings. He states that one of the primary objectives of the Centre would be to help bring together these various activities."

**Arab News: Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, 30 June 1982**

The daily Arab News, Jeddah, on 30th June 1982, carried a report about the Centre titled "Research Targetted at Islamic History" by Mr. Suresh Shah, a correspondent of the said daily. The report was mainly based on an interview with Dr. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, Director General of the Centre who was then in Jeddah on an official visit to the O.I.C. headquarters. Here is an excerpt from it.

"The Organisation of the Islamic Conference's Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture of Istanbul proposes to carry out an ambitious research programme in various aspects of history, art and culture, according to the Centre's Director General, Dr. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu. He told Arab News Tuesday that the programme to be realised with cooperation from Saudi scholars and organisations also will produce publications reviving these subjects. İhsanoğlu says that the Centre envisages to publish reference books on history of Islam and to make research on some aspects of history of Saudi Arabia, particularly in the Ottoman Period. "We have lots of reference material and documents for this period.", he added."

**Middle East Review: Istanbul, Turkey, November 1982, Vol. 4, No. 48**

The special correspondent of the journal, Afşin Yiğitkeskin, writing about the Centre under the caption "**Seminar on Islamic Art to be Held in Istanbul**" said:

"As Turkey gradually assumes a more active role in the Islamic world, an Islamic institution in Istanbul is quietly performing impressive tasks and making its voice heard at the international level... Elaborating further on the activities of the Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture, Dr. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu commented, "Our purpose is to correct the false prejudices concerning the Islamic world by means of scholarly studies in the fields of Islamic history, art and culture and to reveal the true face of that world. As its name indicates, our Centre's scope of activities is very broad."

**Yeni Forum: Ankara, 1st September 1982, Vol. III, No.72**

Commenting on the visit of H.E. Mr. Arbab M. Niaz, the Minister of Culture, Sports and Tourism of Pakistan to IRCICA, the special correspondent of the said fortnightly of Ankara, Şenel Özpölat wrote:

"The most fruitful part of the 'excursion' (reference is to the Minister's visit to Istanbul) was the visit to the Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture and the briefing given by the Director General about their activities. The Centre aims for the evaluation of the Islamic world in the contemporary sense and its socio-cultural development... Considering the true values of Islamic religion, relieving it of the myths and superstitions, will increase the credibility of this religion in the whole world. Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture which has been established for this purpose is functioning with many international experts."

**The Historical Research Review-Journal of the Libyan Jihad Centre Tripoli, Libya, Vol. 4, No. 2 July 1982**

The said journal carried a brief article on IRCICA in which the priorities of the Centre were explained.

"From 1980 - less than two and a half years - the Centre is working to establish the nucleus of scientific research and the library and documentation units in addition to completing the legal and diplomatic formalities.... The Director General of the Centre is very much interested in cooperating with scholars and scientific institutions working in the field of Islamic history, art and culture."

**"Al-Muslimoon" International Islamic Weekly, London: No.42, Friday, August 13, 1982**

The correspondent of the journal, Mr. Hassan Atwan of the Gulf Bureau, published a lengthy interview with the Director General of IRCICA under the caption "International Islamic Centre", in the above-noted issue.

Touching upon the subject of cooperation with other institutions, it was said:

"We are ready for cooperation with all cultural institutions both inside the Islamic world and outside of it. And we have already received many letters from Eastern Europe, Western Europe, USA and other non-member countries expressing their desire to forge cooperation with us and also tendered their proposals. Cooperation with these institutions is being promoted in line with the objectives of the Centre enshrined in its Statute which was approved by the Islamic Foreign Ministers'Conference of the O.I.C. We are working in Islamic field on a world-wide scale and in the service of Islamic culture."

In the previous issue of our newsletter, we introduced two of our staff members under the above-noted caption. In this issue, a brief life-sketch is being given for two more members. Other members of staff shall be introduced in subsequent issues.



**Dr. MOHAMMAD ASLAM**

Born in 1943, Jullundar (East Punjab), India. Graduated in 1st division from the University of Punjab, Lahore in 1964. (Subjects: Persian, Arabic, Economics, History and English). Did his Master of Arts in Economics from the said University in 1966 and Ph.D. from the University of Exeter, England in 1978. Has about 16 years meritorious experience in the field of teaching and research. Read papers at many conferences and congresses. Author of many published articles and research studies. Founder, Secretary General of Islamic Centre for South-West, Exeter, England. Has a command over English in addition to having done basic courses in Arabic, French and Turkish. Working with the IRCICA as expert since February 1982.

**Mr. ISMET BINARK**

Born in Istanbul in 1941, graduated from the Department of Librarianship, Faculty of Language, History and Geography, Ankara University in 1963/64 and was awarded the "Emily Dean" first prize for his thesis. Brings with him experience as librarian, archivist and a compiler of many famous bibliographies. He was trained and made researches in the libraries and archives of various European Countries. Also gave lessons on Archives at the Department of Librarianship, Hacettepe University, Ankara (1979-82). Participated in many conferences and congresses where he also read papers. (VI Turkish History Congress, Ankara, 1975; III International Turkology, Congress, Istanbul, 1978; IV International Turkology Congress, Istanbul, 1982, etc) His articles have appeared in many Turkish national journals and newspapers. Before joining the Centre as an expert on September 1982, he had been working as Director of the Department of Republican Archives in the Turkish Prime Ministry, Ankara. Knows English.



**VAN KULU LUGĀTİ  
(VAN KULU DICTIONARY)**

This is a Turkish translation of a very famous Arabic dictionary "**Taj al-Lugha wa Sihah al-Arabiyya**" whose author was Abu Nash Ismail bin Hammad al-Jawhari al-Farabi. This work has been accepted as one of the classical dictionaries of Arabic. Numerous other works in Arabic, Persian and Turkish are based on this dictionary. The author (D.393/1003) was a scholar of Arabic language, literature and calligraphy.

The translator was Mohammad Bin Mustafa al-Wani who studied in Turkey. His main interest was fiqh and literature. He worked as qadi and mufti. He died in 1000/1592 when he was qadi of Al-Madina Al-Munawwara. His translation of **Taj al-Lugha** known as "**Van Kulu Lugati**" was the most famous of his works.

**Background Information:**

It is known that many books of Islamic culture have been printed in Europe since the 16th century in their original language mainly, Arabic, Turkish and Persian. Also there were printing houses in Muslim countries set up by non-Muslims that printed works of non-Islamic cultures. The first printing press established by a Muslim (Ibrahim Mutafarriqa) was set up in Istanbul, Turkey in 1727 and was called "**Dār al-Tibā'at al-ma'mura**".

The said printing house was established with the financial support of Sultan Ahmed III and the Grand Vizier Ibrahim Pasha. The objective was to print books on Islamic culture.

**Van Kulu Lugati** (the Turkish translation of **Taj al-Lugha**) was the first work printed in this printing house in 1141 A.H. (1729 AD). This is in two volumes consisting of 22+666 pages and 14+756 pages respectively.

IRCICA received many visitors in the last quarter: In the previous issues, we published brief accounts of their visits under the above-mentioned caption. The visitors included scholars, university professors, artists as well as administrators from the O.I.C. countries. Some Western scholars and intellectuals, both Muslims and non-Muslims, also came. All this manifested an increasing interest in the Centre, evoked through its research-oriented activities. These visits and the exchange of ideas have been very helpful in discovering the deficiencies and correcting our mistakes, besides being a source of encouragement and inspiration. This feature is thus being maintained with these objectives in mind and the benefits accruing from it.

- Dr. Hassan Al-Raiyan, a cultural adviser in the Jordanian Embassy, Ankara, visited the Centre on December 9, 1982. He spent some time in the library of the Centre and also visited the 'Çit Qasr' which is currently under repairs.

- Dr. Siham Al-Furayh, from Kuwait University, visited the Centre on January 28, 1983 in the company of another colleague and staff member of the Kuwait University, Dr. Leila Habib. They were briefed about the activities of the Centre and taken around its various departments. They recorded their impressions in the Visitors' Book.

Dr. Siham Al-Furayh wrote:-

"We are happy that we were given the chance of visiting this Centre and seeing its serious and fruitful work. We pray for the Centre and its staff on their work for the good of Islam and the Muslims."

Eng. Saddun al-Kassab, General Secretary for an Inter-Arab organisation, Damascus, Syria, visited the Centre on December 2, 1982 and spent a busy time in the Centre. He particularly showed keen interest in the 'Çit Qasr' restoration project and held useful discussions with the Centre's administrators and provided valuable guidelines. He recorded his impressions as under:-

"During our visit to the Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture, we were deeply impressed with the serious, sincere and scientific endeavours aimed at the revival of Islamic heritage and useful studies such as strengthening the cultural roots of Islam to withstand the trends against our monotheistic religion. We pray to God that the steps taken by those responsible in the Centre and other staff will always be in the right path and we wish them success."

# COMMENTS FROM OUR READERS

In the preceding issue, some comments from our esteemed readers regarding the inaugural issue were published under the above-mentioned caption. Though considerable times has passed, our readers still write to us from different parts of the world. Given below are a few more comments on the inaugural issue received lately by our office. We are carrying them below with thanks.

Editor-in-Chief

"I received the first issue of the Newsletter which I found very useful. If all the members of the Governing Council try to release this material for publication in their local dailies, it can be very useful in explaining the activities of the Centre and its Islamic objectives."

Dr. Saleh al-Mahdi Director, National Committee for Culture, Tunisia and Member, Governing Council IRCICA

"Congratulations on some simple but important points, which many, many organisations fall down on - the grammar, the spelling and the language used - you cannot imagine how terrible some of the so-called "English" publications turn out. The Newsletter also has a very clean appearance, is easy to read and contains the basic information you want to convey. It is so much better to be brief and straightforward and this you have achieved." Maureen Abdullah, Editor, 'Arabia' - The Islamic World Review, London, England

"I acknowledge with thanks receipt of pioneering copy of the IRCICA newsletter viz Vol. 1 of May 1982. The publication is informative and diverse in its coverage. Please go ahead with the project. Such newsprints are necessary in keeping the muslim populace informed of what is taking place in the abode of Islam. I am sure many literarists will be very eager to contribute to its promotion by way of articles and the like. My humble submission is that the Newsletter should carry a column for 'Correspondence from our Readers'."

Mohammad Obeid Kigozi  
Uganda National Exams. Board  
P.O. Box 7066  
Kampala - UGANDA

"We hereby acknowledge with many thanks the receipt of the "Newsletter" May 1982. I am sure it would be a valuable addition to our Institute's library....."

Shafi-un-Nisa  
Institute of Islamic History,  
Culture and Civilisation  
Islamic University  
Islamabad - PAKISTAN

"Thank you very much for sending us your first issue of the Newsletter. Though short and simple, it gives lots of important news of what is happening in the many countries regarding revival of muslim art and culture. I wish success to the Centre in its programme of activities in this respect. I request you to kindly keep posting us the Newsletter in future....."

Sherali Alidina  
President  
Dr. Alidina Memorial Library  
and Ismaili Archive  
Karachi - PAKISTAN

"I write this letter to thank you very much for your sending me a copy of the book entitled "The Muslim Pious Foundations and Real Estates in Palestine". The book is a leading step in publishing documents about Ottoman Waqfs in the Arab countries. It is a very useful work for researchers and scholars. I hope this scientific work will be the starting point of similar works to follow.

I was also pleased to receive a copy of your Newsletter which will be useful to anyone who wants to follow the activities in the service of the Islamic heritage."

Prof. Dr. Abdul Aziz Al-Dauri  
Faculty of Letters  
University of Jordan  
Amman - JORDAN

(It may be mentioned here that Dr. Abdul Aziz Al-Dauri is a famous Arab scholar and historian.)



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