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REMEMBRANCE OF AN APOSTLE  
IMAN ABDULLAH HADON

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

**Remembrance of a Martyr - Iman Abdulla Haron**

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September 1994

ISBN 1-875047-01-8



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Silk Road International Publishers & Distributors  
Centre for Development Analysis

Published by

Silk Road International Publishers & Distributors  
P.O. Box 2281, Cape Town, 8000, South Africa  
Tel. (021) 24 3650 • Fax. (021) 24-5842

Cover Design by Yunis Casker.

**REMEMBRANCE  
OF A  
MARTYR -**

**IMAM ABDULLA HARON**

## CONTENTS

Foreword	1
Preface	3
Funeral of Imam Abdullah Haron	5
Biographical Sketch of the Imam	11
Detention of Imam Haron	19
Activities of the Imam	23
Reaction to the Death of Imam Haron	35
The Relevance of the Imam Today	41
Dedication	49
Sources of Reference	55

## FOREWORD

Twenty-five years have passed since the Martyrdom of As Shaheed Imam Abuljallal Haron - the small man with the big heart. Yet the eternal spirit of Imam lives on and his charisma still fills the air. His indomitable and indefatigable spirit continues to guide the Mujahideen in their firm advance towards the sublime goals of Islam and the establishment of a just social order based on the comprehensive concept of Islamic justice.

The forces of darkness prevalent at the time tried to extinguish the candle lit by Islam, which binds and confounds them. It is light which stimulates the sense of sight; light not only makes its own presence felt visible but it is also the only means by which all other things are made visible. Light wipes out darkness and truth destroys falsehood. Unfortunately darkness still covers large parts of our lives. Were there more Imam Harons the darkness would have disappeared immediately.

The satanic forces prevalent at the time failed to extinguish the small light but instead made it burn more steadily and radiantly. If these satanic forces have proved anything, they have proved the truthfulness of the promise of Almighty Allah:

*They desire to put out the light of Allah with*

*Remembrance of a Martyr - Imam Abdulla Haron*

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*their mouths, but Allah will perfect his light,  
though the disbelievers may be averse.  
(Qur'an 61:8)*

His mind was culminated with truth and therefore his actions were truthful. He had an enriched mind and enriched other minds. Imam Haron was a seeker of truth, a disseminator of truth, an example and an agent for social change in the community.

The youth were looking for a role model: an Islamic challenge. It was at this stage that Imam raised his head. He lit two candles: one illuminated our rich Islamic Culture and Heritage and the other lit the path leading to the future.

Let us keep his memory alive by not bowing to the onslaught of the Western media on Islam. Let us not be used as puppets or pawns.

Let us tell our children about Imam Abdullah Haron and how he sacrificed his life so that we can today be proud of our Identity, Mentality and Personality as Muslims.

Imam Ebrahim "Sep" Davids  
Kromboom Road Mosque, Fondebosch East  
September 1994

## **PREFACE**

The introduction of Islam to South Africa coincides with the arrival of Muslim slaves at the Cape of Good Hope in 1653. A strengthening of the Muslim community of the Cape, was caused by the arrival of a number of exiles in particular political leaders. Amongst them was Shaikh Yusuf who is regarded as the most influential Muslim leader of all times.

Muslims in South Africa make up just over 2.5% of the total population of 40 million. This justifies the Muslims as a minority group, but as a minority group, they are indeed a force to be reckoned with in the political, social and economic developments in this country. Muslims managed to establish themselves as traders, professionals, businessmen, artists and craftsman during the building up era. Today they are playing an important and an integral part in all the spheres of society.

**Imam Abdullah Haron** was a religious leader of the Muslim minority. Imam Haron's life and role is very important because it symbolizes the Muslim struggle within the South African context. The Imam was an ordinary man who was concerned with the plight of the oppressed, the needy and the poor people. He stood firmly in his belief against the unjust regime of South



*Remembrance of a Martyr - Imam Abdulla Haron*

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Africa and he lost his life in this process.

The death of the Imam marked a turning point in the socio-political history of the Muslim community. This led to many organisations emerging, to voice their opposition to the regime of that time. His death, which can be called a sacrifice, made him into a Muslim martyr in the liberation struggle according to Muslim activists. The Imam was not a revolutionary. His martyrdom came about because of the sacrifices he made and because of his great concern with spiritual matters.

The CDA researchers are very much indebted to Muhammed Haron and Rashid Omar who kindly made their research material available for this special publication. To Imam "Sep" Davids who wrote the foreword also a special word of gratitude. We also want to thank everyone who contributed, in whatever way, to making this publication possible.

This publication is an attempt to give a perspective on the life of Imam Abdullah Haron. The information used was gathered from various research material and sources. It is hoped that the book will inspire Muslims and non-Muslims, to look into the history of the Imam who stood as a symbol of liberation and to relate what he stood for, in the present situation in South Africa.

CDA, Cape Town  
September 1994

### **FUNERAL OF IMAM ABDULLAH HARON**

*"The earth in which the Imam is buried would not be satisfied with what the unjust regime had done to the Imam"* one of the thousands of mourners recited this verse in Urdu at the graveside of martyr Imam Abdullah Haron on September 29, 1969, two days after the Imam's death in detention.

Little did the thousands of mourners realise that the earth would indeed respond to the brutal killing of the Imam. On that very same evening, an earth tremor shook the Western Cape. The earth tremors occurred again three days after the Imam's burial and on the seventh day, fortieth day and hundredth day. These days are significant for Muslims who practise intense Qur'anic recital after someone's death. On the Imam's 20th Commemoration, September 27, 1991, a mild earth tremor shook Cape Town again.

On the evening of Saturday, September 27, 1969, two security policemen broke the news of the Imam's death to his wife, Mrs Galiema Haron at their Athlone home. The news of the Imam's death spread rapidly with a mixed reaction of horror and disbelief. This tragic event was to change the role of the Muslim clergy, conservative institutions and organisations. The Haron

*Remembrance of a Martyr - Imam Abdulla Haron*

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family requested a post mortem to establish the true cause of his death. They succeeded in getting the state to allow a private pathologist at the post mortem examination which took place on Sunday, September 28. On Sunday, thousands of mourners crowded outside the Imam's house and students and mourners recited from the Holy Qur'an throughout the night. A very close friend of the Imam after seeing the body, said: *"He had a very pleasant face ... but this was really a face of agony. It was pathetic to look at him. It broke a person. The agony in his cheeks and in his body - the red flecks and broken ribs. They really gave him hell."*

On Monday, the day of the funeral, the Imam's house was filled with mourners, mainly relatives and friends while thousands of people (Muslims and non-Muslims) made their way to pay homage to a martyr. Members of the Judicial Council were requested to leave the room in which the Imam's body was being washed according to Islamic rites. This was an angry reaction from the Imam's close friends and congregations to the Muslim Judicial Council (MJC) who had disassociated themselves from the Imam during his detention. As poet, Mr James Matthews, who also worked with the Imam at the MUSLIM NEWS newspaper, said, *"As a person who was close to the Imam, I was very upset and disgusted by some of the members of the MJC who had shunned the Imam while he was in detention, and yet crowded the platform upon which the Imam's bier was on the day of the funeral."*

*Funeral of Imam Abdulla Haron*

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At 1pm shops and businesses in the Athlone area closed as a mark of respect to the to the funeral. After one of the Imam's young pupils gave a heart-rendering and sobbing call of the Azaan, the Imam's bier was taken to the City Park Rugby Stadium in Belgravia as the numbers of mourners continued to swell to more than 7 000 and the crowd could not be accommodated inside the St Athans Road Mosque or the Habibiyah Mosque. The janazah salaah (prayer for the dead) was led by Imam Salem Davids, one of the Imam's students who later succeeded the Imam at Al Jami'a Mosque. Many speakers followed after the janazah-tul salaah which included a speech by Victor Wessels of the Teachers League of South Africa and Shabir Seria of the Muslim Assembly. In his speech, Wessels said, *"Imam Haron's mission was the mission of the people. He died not only for the Muslims. He died for his cause - the cause of the oppressed people - and for that he will be remembered."*

The funeral service lasted for two hours after which an emotional crowd of mourners walked to the Mowbray cemetery about five miles away to bury the Imam. The mourners, displaying the Oneness in Allah and equality, linked arms, walked shoulder to shoulder and chanted all the way to the cemetery, *"There is no God except Allah, and Prophet Muhammad is his last messenger."* There were also cries of *"Shahid! Shahid!"* (Martyr! Martyr!). The mourners, who had now numbered to 30,000, armed with their grief and intense anger, were emotionally charged and it was feared that any provocation would have sparked off a riot. People of all political and social

*Remembrance of a Martyr - Imam Abdulla Haron*

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persuasions followed the funeral procession which took about three hours to reach the cemetery. This was during peak traffic time and the procession brought traffic to a standstill along the Victoria Main Road in Woodstock.

James Matthews from the then, *Muslim News* (October 3, 1969), reported about the funeral of Imam Haron as follows:

*"The young boy breaking into sobs as he performed Athaan prayers epitomized the sorrow of all those who attended the funeral of Al-Haj Imaam Abdullah Haron who died in prison while being detained under the Terrorism Act."*

*"The large crowd made it impossible for a service to be held in the nearest Mosque and the bier was taken to a sports ground opposite the house where prayers were performed. The stand was packed with women. Hundreds stood six-foot deep around the fence bordering the field. Midfield, in front of the stand, the bier was placed on the turf. Standing in the serried rows, shoes removed from their feet the male mourners performed prayers. Eulogies were read and relayed to the crowd over the loudspeaker system."*

*"The dead man would most probably not have approved of a homage paid to him. Imam Abdullah Haron was a SIMPLE MAN, a man very much of the people. Although he was at ease with all sections of the community; white, black and brown, his sympathies were always with the under-privileged. IMAM HARON WAS A HUMBLE MAN, FREE OF THOUGHTS OF SELF-AGGRANDIZEMENT, BUT HE WAS ACCORDED A ROYAL FUNERAL."*

*Funeral of Imam Abdulla Haron*

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It was the first time that such a large number of Muslims assembled together and also expressed their emotions against the apartheid regime. Imam Haron lived for a cause and his love and concern for his fellow man drew him into a battle with the oppressors.

At the cemetery, more speeches were delivered by Mrs Eulalie Stott of the Black Sash and Shaikh Nazeem Mohamed who is now president of the MJC. The anti-apartheid speeches delivered at the funeral service and graveside, were feelings of anger against the racist regime built up over a long period by a once complacent community. The then Labour Party leader, Mr M.D. Arendse remarked after the funeral, "...more than just a funeral procession. It was a political demonstration."

A memorial service took place in St Paul's Cathedral, London on the 5 October 1969 for Imam Haron, which was attended by the leaders of Britain's Muslim community. Anglicans and Muslims sat together in tribute, where readings from the Qur'an, from Rabindranath Tagore and the Christian writer James Taylor were read.

The Haron family received several letters, telegrams and messages of support and sympathy from local and international organisations. For days after the funeral, janazah salaah were performed in other parts of the country, in Mecca, Pakistan and London.

*Remembrance of a Martyr - Imam Abdulla Haron*

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**It took the death of Imam Haron to make the Muslim community at large aware of the great man who had lived amongst them.**

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## **BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE IMAM**

### **Background**

Imam Abdullah Haron's forefathers came from Java (Indonesia) and Ireland respectively. His paternal greatgrandfather, Boeta Haroentjie, came from Java and had three sons Moosa, Dien and Bakhi. Bakhi was the Imam's grandfather.

One of Bakhi's children was Amrien who married Asa Martin and who was of Irish descent. She gave birth to five children, three daughters and two sons. They are in chronological order Amina, Indries, Kulsum, Waybah and Abdullah (the Imam). His father's second marriage to Asmar Abder Rauf, produced eight children.

Abdullah Haron was born on the 8th of February 1924 in Wilkenson Street, Westerford Bridge, Newlands, which was once a densely populated Muslim area. His name was given to him by Imam Abu Baker ibn Abdullah ibn Abder Rauf, a religious leader of the Muslim community at that time. This Imam also proceeded with the circumcision ceremony of the Imam.



Abdullah Haron's mother died when he was very small and because the Imam's father and his children could not look after him, he was adopted by his father's sister Maryam. Auntie Maryam had a great influence in his Islamic outlook and cared for him until his marriage in 1950. Maryam nurtured the Imam's basic Islamic religious education, which played a major role in his life later on.

### **Education**

The Imam accompanied Maryam to Mecca in 1931 when he was seven years of age. Upon his return almost a year later, he attended the Talfalah Muslim Primary school. This school, presently known as Sherwood Park Primary, was a Muslim Missionary school run by Muslim and non-Muslim teachers. The Imam attended the school until he reached standard four in 1937.

He was considered a bright student at school with above average performance. Before he completed standard four he left school, but no satisfactory reason could be established for his sudden departure. This did not mean the termination of his studies. In the beginning of 1939 he went on his second trip to Mecca. He went there especially to pursue his Islamic studies under the guidance by a well known Muslim scholar Shaikh Abdurahman Alawi. There he spent a period of two years in which he gained and strengthened his knowledge of Arabic.

Upon his return, he undertook voluntary fasts every Monday and Thursday, a highly recommended practise by Prophet Muhammad, with the objective to attain Allah-consciousness. By the age of sixteen, Abdullah Haron was prepared to make material sacrifices and abstain from the basic human needs like food and drink. This helped him tremendously in his spiritual growth. The Imam continued to carry out his intentions until he passed away.

He carried on with his studies in Cape Town under the guidance of Shaikh Ismail Ganief and Shaikh Abdullah Gamiieldien. Both these teachers gave him in-depth knowledge into the Islamic-Science. He wanted to share his aquired knowledge with others and decided to embark on giving Islamic Study classes. He followed this teaching career for the rest of his life.

The Imam was also a sportsman who participated in rugby and cricket in his community, which were their main sporting activities. In 1957 he played in the finals for the Muslims Cricket Club against the Roslyns Cricket Club which was Cape Town based. It is said that his keen interest in sporting activities, brought him closer to the community in general and taught him much about the their mentality and behaviour. He saw sport as a sort of entertainment and most importantly it created a harmonious relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims, which was one of the major problems the oppressed communities faced amongst themselves at that time.

### **Marriage**

The Imam's foster-mother wanted him to marry a girl she thought was best suited for him. Although he was not keen on the idea, he was eventually forced to become engaged to the girl who was a friend of the families daughter, Gawa Solomons. This engagement only lasted from 1947-1948. His foster-mother was very disappointed when he told her he intended breaking the engagement. That eventually caused him to move to Johannesburg where he stayed with a friend, Imam "Piesang" (Banana), for a few months. His foster-mother emigrated to Mecca where she died in 1969.

From his school days, the Imam knew and was interested in a woman Galiema Sadan. The Imam decided to conclude the marriage to Galiema in March 1950, which took place at home in Hansbury Avenue, Landsdowne. In December 1950 he fathered a daughter who was named Shamiela. At their new home on the corner of Jefferson and Laurier Roads, he fathered a son, Muhammad in October 1955 and another daughter Fatima in September 1963.

The year that his son was born, coincided with the time that he was officially appointed Imam at Al Jami'a Mosque, Stegman Road, Clermont. Before that, he was called "Hadjie" by Muslims and non-Muslims alike. A title given to him because he used to fulfill the necessary rites of pilgrimage. At that time he was considered as the youngest "Hadjie" in the Muslim community.

### **Community Involvement**

The Imam's activities were numerous and varied. After he became Imam, he started editing the *Islamic Mirror*, a Muslim magazine, as well as the *Muslim News*. He also managed his father's business, became a part-time travel agent, Da'wah worker (propagationist for Islam) and a sales representative.

Some of his activities during the period 1955-1956 involved the following. He started retyping and cyclostyled books and relevant articles in English, when he became aware that various aspects of Islam were not readily available. This caused Islamic ideas amongst students to become widespread.

He also introduced a five minute lecture after the Tarawih Salah (rest prayer). These lectures dealt with the sections of the Qu'ran read on that particular night, or covered a theme related to one of the verses that were read.

Another activity of his was the giving in kind of assistance to the poor and the needy. Parcels were made up, filled with essential groceries and given. This is referred to as zakatul fitra (obligatory donations). During this time period, the Imam carried on with his ideas of uplifting and assisting the community. He was continuously criticized for the new ideas, but he continued unaffected and undeterred.

During 1958 the Imam started teaching the ladies of the

*Remembrance of a Martyr - Imam Abdulla Haron*

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community every Wednesday night. This was of course unheard of or even an unwelcome practice. He received a lot of criticism for his new "venture". The general attitude of the Imams or Shaikhs was not to let women grow intellectually and to participate more fully in the growth of the society. The Imam continued with these classes until his death.

Imam Haron introduced a long-forgotten principle to the Muslim community: *The Imam is accountable to the people*. This principle of the Qur'an as followed by Imam Haron, set him apart from the MJC. Imam Haron believed that interaction with the community was of great importance and contributed to its development. This meant that the teachings of Allah's was not restricted to Mosques alone, but that the *Earth is Allah's mosque*. He believed that the streets were as much a place to learn and to teach as was the mosque. Many Muslims saw him as the Imam. He was expected to do what most Imams did; lead the prayers and deliver sermons, officiate at weddings and bury the dead. But, an Imam was not expected to involve himself in politics, it was not part of his job. Imam Abdullah Haron did just that. He spoke out against the social injustices that prevailed at that time. When Imam Haron entered the political arena, he pioneered the revival of the early Muslims in South Africa's resistance against colonialism and imperialism.

The Imam became involved in the black communities when he was puzzled why black people did not embrace Islam on a larger scale. He wanted to help the blacks in their suffering and knew

*Biographical Sketch of the Imam*

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that Islam held the prospect for their delivery from subjugation, it also offered them a complete way of life. Imam Haron began working in black communities, which angered the authorities. The mix between Islam and blacks, was seen as a threat to their privileges.

On a social level, Imam Haron was against the annual coon carnival and angered by it. He felt that the Muslims were making "coons" of themselves. He saw the coon carnival as a boost for the annual tourist trade and the main attraction for the white South Africa. He also saw it as self oppression which kept the real Muslim cultural values from being developed and expressed.

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**Remembrance of a Martyr - Imam Abdulla Haron**

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بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

الحمد لله رب العالمین  
والصلاة والسلام  
على من لا نبي بعده

والله اعلم  
بما نزلنا  
في كتابنا  
والله اعلم  
بما نزلنا  
في كتابنا

والله اعلم  
بما نزلنا  
في كتابنا  
والله اعلم  
بما نزلنا  
في كتابنا

### **DETENTION OF IMAM HARON**

Imam Abdullah Haron was detained on Wednesday, 28 May 1969, under Section Six of the Terrorism Act of 1967. A general police swoop on that same day took over 40 people into custody.

The response from the Muslim community was two-sided. There were those who were of the opinion that the Imam had been detained because of his activities outside those of Islam. They viewed politics as outside the realm of Islam. The other side was sympathetic towards the Imam and his plight because it was viewed as a political struggle against the ongoing oppression and injustice. This was according to them, part of the Islamic consciousness.

What makes the Imam's detention even more significant, was the fact that he was detained on the eve of the Prophet Muhammad's birthday. The various mosques throughout the Western Cape were filled that same evening with Muslims. The Imam was to have led the night's proceedings at the Stegman Road mosque. The deputy Imam was forced to make an announcement of the Imam's detention after enquiries of the



*Remembrance of a Martyr - Imam Abdulla Haron*

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Imam's whereabouts. This caused an outcry which led the more than 1000 members of the congregation to immediately started contacting Sheikhs and Imams all over the country and other Muslim bodies in Cape Town, in support of their protest against the Imam's detention.

It need to be noted that throughout the period of the Imam's detention, no protest letter was published from a Muslim religious leader or any other Muslim. There might be a number of reasons for this besides political complacency which certainly accounts for this channel of protest not being utilised to its full potential by the Muslims.

An article which appeared in the June 6th issue of the Muslim News read as follows:

*"Imam Abdullah Haron, editor of "Muslim News", had been taken into custody by the authorities and detained under the 180 Days Law; the reason for his detention is not known to "Muslim News". But it is safe to assume that Imam Haron is not being detained for his religious views and that he is not being detained for spreading the doctrine of Islam. If Imam Haron is being held because of his political views, then there is nothing "Muslim News" can do about the situation, as Imam Haron's position as editor was to express the religious aspects of the community. "Muslim News" would not hesitate for one moment to register the protest of all Muslims if our Deen (religious) were imperilled."*

As predicted by various people in the community, no reasons for

*Detention of Imam Haron*

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the Imam's detention would ever be given. [Despite requests made in Parliament on this issue, the then Minister of Justice, Mr Muller in reply to the Imam's detention said that it was not in the interest of the public to know why he was detained.

A few of Imam's students were also hauled in for questioning by the security branch at the end of June. This resulted in those who had been close to the Imam to take a low profile and go underground.

Despite continuous pleas to Shaikhs and Imams of the MJC to issue a formal protest demanding the Imam's release, none was ever issued. The general feeling was that the Imam's detention was a "political affair" and that they did not want anything to do with politics.

Imam Abdullah Haron died on the 27th September 1969, the 123rd day of his detention.

It was reported in the Cape Times of 6 April 1970, that Galiena Haron, widow of Imam Haron, claimed damages totaling R22,125 from the Minister of Justice and the Police, on the grounds that she and her children lost the support of their father. This claim was later dropped by Mrs Haron. The then Minister of Police disclosed that the State made an *ex gratia* payment of R5000 to the widow of Imam Haron on 18 May 1971.

During his period of detention, the Imam had no access to his

*Remembrance of a Martyr - Imam Abdulla Haron*

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family or any lawyer. A post-mortem report from a private pathologist revealed the following injuries to the Imam:

- bruises ranging from as large as 10cm x 3cm to as small as 1cm x 1cm;
- the 7th rib was broken;
- a haematoma of 2,5cm near the base of the spine;
- at least 10 bruises had been sustained seven to ten days before his death, mostly on the right leg;
- at least eight bruises had been sustained one to three days before death, mostly on the legs and
- the stomach was empty.

According to the police, the Imam sustained his injuries when he slipped down a flight of stairs at Caledon Square. Their evidence suggested that he slipped on his buttocks and side. The questions that arise are how did the Imam get bruised over a wide area of his body, front and back? And how did he get two different set of bruises if he only fell down the stairs once?

September 1994. Twenty-five years after the Imam's death, these questions still remain unanswered.

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### **ACTIVITIES OF THE IMAM**

On the eve of the Imam's detention, the Muslim community's affairs were dominated by politically conservative organisations who were locked in the battle for the allegiance of the Muslim masses. These forces played a crucial role in the types of organisational response to the detention and death of the Imam.

The Imam was very committed to his youth base at the Stegman Road mosque up to the time of his detention. He also played a key role in the Ibadur-Rahman Study Group (formerly the Claremont Muslim Youth Association - CMYA) as well as the protest campaign against the Group Areas Act. He also became increasingly involved in activities of the PAC, providing relief for the families of those who had been banned, exiled or imprisoned. He also went abroad in 1966 and late 1968 where he attended a number of Islamic conferences. During his visits abroad, he came in contact with South African political exiles.

After his appointment as Imam in 1955, he edited a magazine of the CMYA, the *Islamic Mirror* and also *Muslim News*, a newspaper. The Imam saw the need to bring about social changes in the Muslim community who at that time were involved in gambling and the annual coon carnival festivities.

Without alienating people from him, the Imam made them aware of the negative aspects of such activities. These views did, however arouse opposition to the Imam. In fact he highlighted the social shortcomings in the community such as the education of their children, an area in which money used for gambling or coon carnival festivities could be spent. The Imam knew that to change a society, one had to start with the youth. In an attempt to draw the youth away from gambling, the Imam started a recreational club at the Talfalah Muslim primary school which kept the youth off the streets.

In 1956 he started to hold classes at the Al Jami'a Mosque and it was here that the congregants started to revolutionise their thinking. After a failed attempt to start a Muslim school after the secular school hours, two of the Imam's students started to give classes to children from the mosque under the guidance of the Imam. The Imam made available copies of books dealing with various aspects of Islam, to his students through which the Islamic ideas spread. During the month of Ramadaan, the Imam encouraged his students to memorise the Holy Qur'an and to lead the Tarawih Salah (rest prayer). After the rest prayer, he would give a five minute lecture on verses of the Qur'an which were read on that particular night.

The Imam saw the mosque not just as a place to perform prayer, but also an avenue to develop the youth intellectually by starting a discussion group with some of the young members of various backgrounds. The Imam was instrumental in the

publishing of the country's first Muslim newspaper, *Muslim News* in 1960. With the launching of the newspaper, the political situation in the country was very volatile and *Muslim News* did not publish any statements condemning the government policies. The CMYA and his congregants criticised him for the passive stance of *Muslim News*.

Prior to May 31, 1960, the Imam and Shaikh Nazeem Mohamed were invited to participate in a march organised by the Christian anti-apartheid protesters. Although they were in favour of the march, they disagreed that it be led under the banner of the church because during that time, Islam was under constant attack from the Christian missionaries. The Imam was also invited by non-Muslim groups to address their meetings and to explain the Islamic viewpoint on justice.

Close to the end of 1960, the Imam succeeded in uniting the leading Muslim organisations, the CMYA, CMYM, Islamic Welfare Society, Wynberg Muslim Vigilance Association and Nyanga Muslim Association under the banner of the Good Offices Committee. It was one of the Imam's major objectives to see all Muslim organisations united and then to speak out against injustice. In 1961 the CMYA and Claremont Muslim Youth Movement (CMYM) took another step closer to unity by producing a pamphlet entitled *The Call of Islam*. The Imam also asked the Muslim community to conduct Qunut salaah (special prayer) to ask the Almighty to remove the unjust system and all atrocities. This request was during the Sharpeville uprisings and

*Remembrance of a Martyr - Imam Abdulla Haron*

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the implementation of the Group Areas Act.

On May 12, 1961, Imam Haron condemned Bantu education, Coloured Education, Group Areas Act as "inhuman, barbaric and un-Islamic." He warned the parents against the "so-called education which aims to enslave the minds of our children to make them serfs and slaves. The Group Areas Act is designed to cripple us educationally, politically and economically. "

During a march in 1961, led by the Pan African Congress (PAC), the Imam delivered an important Friday sermon, emphasizing the importance of brotherhood in Islam and the role of Muslims to bring Islam to the Africans who were the hardest hit by the notorious apartheid legislation. The Imam came in contact with the PAC and they were very impressed with the message of Islam delivered to them by Imam Haron. During that time, Robert Sobukwe remarked that the Muslims had got a revolutionary prophet, but that they were still asleep. There developed a close relationship between members of the PAC and Islam, in particular with the Imam.

During 1962 the Imam travelled throughout South Africa to meet with various Muslim organisations and groups to discuss the establishment of a Federation of all Muslim organisations. The initial objective of these discussions was to create a strong working relationship amongst the various groups which was to lay the eventual foundation for a National Muslim Organisation, which was born from the Goodwill Mission. During this tour, he

had the opportunity to meet with Chief Albert Luthuli.

In the meantime, through the contact of Mr Zubayr Sayyid, the Imam was able to find a job as sales representative for Willson Rowntrees. He had to conduct sales in all the black areas (Coloured and African) which made him more popular even amongst those classified as Indians. The Imam's kind and non-discriminatory attitude developed a closer relationship with the "Indians" and "Africans" who were even discriminated against by "Malay" Muslims. As sales representative, this position afforded the Imam more time to be in contact with the communities in Nyanga, Langa and Guguletu. He also conducted his da'wah activities without any restriction.

In June 1962, the Imam was elected as vice-president of the Cape Peninsula Indian Traders Association of which the term "Indian" was dropped after the Imam's request. He was very much opposed to the use of terms such as "Indian" and "Malay". He also helped the "Indians" and "Africans" to reclassify them as "Coloureds" which would enable them more freedom of movement. The Imam's concern for the community went much further as he sought to alleviate the problems South African Muslims faced when they went on pilgrimage to the Holy City of Mecca.

In 1966 he worked as a part-time travel agent for Parkers Travel Agency and represented them at the 10th General Meeting in Cairo which was held under the auspices of the Association of



Travel Agents in the Middle East. The Imam encouraged South African Muslims to meet and visit other Muslims in the Middle East so that they could realise that Islam was not confined to geographical boundaries.

In 1963 the CMYA elected the Imam as Honorary Life President and the association continued to jointly produce the magazine, Islamic Mirror with the CMYM. The CMYA fell under the Security Branch surveillance because of their contact with the CPC. The Imam was involved with a group of Muslims in establishing the Cape Muslim Charitable Fund (CMCF) which was launched in March 1963 but failed to develop further. The MJC was not prepared to give its assistance to the CMCF and because of a lack of community support, it had a short life.

In May 1963 the Imam was involved in unity talks between religious leaders from the Western Cape and Eastern Cape. Shortly after the unity of the two provinces, the Imam looked forward to the realisation of the work of the Good Offices Committee which laid the necessary ground work for the formation of the Cape Islamic Federation (CIF). The CIF was launched and the Imam was elected as vice-president and Shaikh Nazeem Mohamed as president.

The CIF had its first public meeting in July 1963 at the Cape Town Drill Hall where it addressed the social conditions and immoral activities of the Muslims. However, the CIF did not exist for long as Dr Hoosain Kotwal with the support of Shaikh

Nazeem, announced the formation of the Muslim Assembly. The CMYA and the CMYM without the knowledge of Imam Haron, produced a pamphlet, *The Wreckers of Unity* in which they criticised Shaikh Nazeem and Dr Kotwal for causing disunity. With the implementation of the Group Areas Act, several "Coloureds" rushed to become city councillors. The Muslims who joined the city council, were Babs Essop and Shaikh Nazeem. The Imam was approached to join the city council, but was advised by the CMYA not to do so as the Council was not working in favour of the oppressed communities.

With the disintegration of the CIF, CMYA and defunct of the Islamic Mirror, members of the CMYA established the Ibadur Rahman Study Group (ISG) which was named after a group in Lebanon. The CMYA also changed its name to the ISG in an effort to end Security Branch surveillance on them. But this was too late as at that time, the Imam had developed a closer relationship with the PAC and of which the Security Branch was well aware of.

When the government formed the Coloured Representative Council, the Labour Party of South Africa was formed in opposition to the Federal Party. Imam Haron and Shaikh Nazeem Mohamed were asked to join the LPSA, but refused as they regarded the Party as compromising with the oppressive system. It is known that the Imam held the non-collaborationist view of the Non-European Unity Movement.

*Remembrance of a Martyr - Imam Abdulla Haron*

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In February 1966 the Imam and his wife, Galiema Haron, went on hajj and visited Cairo and London. The Imam then met with the PAC members in exile who had been in contact with him. Prior to performing hajj, he went to Cairo to attend the 10th Annual Conference of the Association of Travel Agents of the Arab lands. On his return to Mecca, he met Abraham, a former member of the CPC and held long meetings with the PAC regarding the political situation in the country and the assistance the Imam gave to the families of those who were banned, exiled or imprisoned.

Days before the actual performance of hajj, the Imam produced a pamphlet, hoping to conscientise South African Muslim pilgrims on the existing injustices in their country. The Imam thought since the SA pilgrims were in a spiritual environment, the pamphlet might help to create an awareness in them on the plight of fellow oppressed people at home. After performing hajj, he and his wife left for Cairo where he attended an important Islamic Conference held under the auspices of the Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs in Egypt.

He had personal contact with the secretary general, Dr Muhammad Tawfiq Oweidah, a member of the Egyptian parliament. At this conference which was attended by various Muslim leaders of different Muslim countries, the Imam addressed the conference and lobbied support for the PAC, ANC and for Muslim minorities in South Africa who were experiencing religious and racial oppression.

He was then able to meet with government officials from Syria and Jordan and to visit Palestinian refugee camps. It was also the Imam's intention to highlight the plight of Palestinians to South African Muslims. On his return to Cairo, the Imam once again visited the PAC offices to strengthen his ties with the organisation. Before returning to South Africa, he travelled via London to meet with Canon Collins of St. Paul's Cathedral who headed the Christian Action Organisation who founded the banned charity organisation, Defence and Aid Fund.

After six months abroad, he continued his teaching career and provided his congregants with more insight into the Qur'an and hadith (sayings and practices of the Prophet), and drew from these fundamental Islamic sources to interpret social justice in South Africa. He was concerned about the lack and low standard of Muslim education. In 1966 the Imam convened the amalgamation of a few Muslim schools to form the Cape Islamic Madaris Association. During that same year he started Sunday schools at the Al Jami'a Mosque for children who were unable to attend school during the week. He also delivered a speech on "The Youth's role in the propagation of Islam" in Port Elizabeth and East London. At the same time he received a substantial amount of financial assistance from overseas to distribute to the destitute, needy and oppressed families.

With the Arab-Israeli conflict in 1967, the directors of the Wilson Rowntrees requested Imam Haron and Shaikh Nazeem Mohamed not to make their feelings known to the company's Jewish

*Remembrance of a Martyr - Imam Abdulla Haron*

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clients. Both were not happy with the company's decision and Shaikh Nazeem made a formal protest which led to his resignation from the company. The Imam had always taken a strong anti-Zionist stance but did not follow suite with Shaikh Nazeem to resign. He held his position as sales representative dearly, since it gave him the contact and access into the townships to meet with PAC members.

During 1968 to 1969 life became more difficult for the Imam as the Security Branch were watching his movements more closely. At the beginning of 1969 after settling his eldest daughter in at a college in London, he went to Saudi Arabia to meet with the Minister of Education, Hasan Abdullah Ali Shaikh to discuss educational issues. The Minister then arranged for him to meet with King Faysal at the Royal Palace in Riyadh. The Imam was allowed to address the Muslims on Saudi Arabian television about Muslims in South Africa. From Riyadh, he went to Cairo to meet with the PAC and to address a conference of Muslim representatives, which was also attended by PAC and ANC members.

Before going to London, Imam Haron stopped over in Holland where he met with the Director of the International University Exchange Fund, Lars Gunnar Ericksson. In London he met with the PAC members, including Barney Desai, who had been in close contact with the Imam's activities against the oppressive regime. Barney Desai then advised the Imam to leave the country as the Security Branch was closely perusing him. The Imam

considered emigration and sent his papers to the Canadian Embassy, but was refused and he realised it was too late.

The Imam had been visited by the Security Branch on several occasions. They laid a trap for the Imam by sending an "African" informer to his house, under the pretext of being part of an underground network, to seek financial assistance. After the Imam had assisted him, he realised that it was a trap. Thereafter he was aware of being followed by the Security Branch and considered going into exile. The arrangements for exile were made too late and on May 28, 1969, the Imam was picked up by one of the Security Branch officers, Spyker Van Wyk. He was detained on the same day of the commemoration of the birth of the Prophet. It was also the last day his wife saw him.

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## **REACTION TO THE DEATH OF IMAM HARON**

The death in detention of Imam Haron brought about a change in the Muslim community particularly in that of the youth. The youth realised that being a Muslim, did not confine one's doings to activities in the mosque only, but that one had to move beyond the mosque to fully realise the demands made by Islam on a Muslim. The Imam's life therefore, was truly an example of what was demanded.

The announcement of the Imam's death, spread rapidly throughout the community - locally and internationally. The anger was so intense within the Imam's close friends, that they refused members of the MJC to participate in the washing of the Imam's body. The members of the Imam's congregation then requested that the MJC members leave the room in which the Imam's body was being prepared for burial and that a student of the Imam should lead the funeral prayer and not the MJC. The MJC was also reminded that its then president, Shaikh Ahmad Behardien, refused to issue a statement calling on the state to charge or release the Imam. The funeral was the largest ever seen in Cape Town and it was also an event which Muslims used to vent anger against the racist government. But as quickly



as Muslims got worked up with anger at the Imam's death, so too they crept back into the silence.

Although the MJC was silent over the Imam's socio-political life, they nonetheless sent a letter of sympathy to the Haron family. This letter was standard practice in the community in the event of death.

Generally Muslims were apolitical and to a large extent the average Muslim was not aware of the Imam's political activities which the Imam had also sworn to secrecy. It was the Imam's detention and his ultimate death, which made most Muslims aware of the role the Imam had played. There existed a political silence despite the fact that there were 18 deaths in detention prior to the Imam's death who was the 6th during 1969.

For the first time, a death caused a major uproar over deaths in detention. The Imam's death was vigorously taken up by the white liberals. Although the liberals were in a better position to protest against death in detention, they took all advantage of avenues opened to them such as parliament, press and major legal channels to keep the inquiry alive regarding the Imam's death.

Muslims though, in their state of political apathy, did not bother to examine or use the influence they might have had over the state, to take up the Imam's cause. The large number of Muslims at the Imam's funeral cannot serve as an indication that Muslims

were indeed politically conscious or identified with the plight of fellow oppressed in Azania. A large number of those present at the funeral, were there due to the fact that it was a prominent and well-known Imam who died and not an Imam who struggled to instill a political consciousness within the larger Muslim community.

During that time, Muslims constituted 1,3% of the South African population. The newspaper, *Muslim News*, was the only major Muslim media in the country. The Imam helped to change *Muslim News* into a newspaper which addressed political issues as well. Subsequently several editions of *Muslim News* were banned. However, there were no raids by the security members of the police at the offices of *Muslim News*. Reasons for that could be that the government was afraid to clamp down totally on the newspaper which would cause an uproar from the Muslim community, and that such action might have severed the government's relationship with Saudi Arabia regarding oil into the country.

It was then easier to clamp down on the Imam, since it was known that the Muslim clergy were mainly conservative and did not approve of the Imam's activities. It is not surprising though, that the youth who were students of the Imam, the youth of the late 1970's and 1980's, have blamed the Muslim clergy, Muslim organisations such as the MJC and the Muslim Assembly for being responsible for the death of Imam Haron. After the funeral, the Imam's memory was not kept alive and his death was only

commemorated after many years by militant youths.

On 3 October 1969, Muslim News published and distributed 15 000 copies of a four-page tribute to the Imam. However, the newspaper failed to condemn the appalling circumstances under which the Imam died. There was no formal commemoration at the first anniversary of the Imam's death and only the Al Jami'a masjid edicated the Friday sermon on the Imam. In their editorial, the Cape Times focused on the Imam's first anniversary whilst the Muslim News and Shura were both silent on the issue.

The inquest findings which were completed almost six months after the Imam's death, caused a new round of protests from the Cape Times, Mrs Catherine Taylor and Professor Hansi P. Pollak, chairperson of the Institute of Race Relations. The doubts of the inquest findings were supported by Rev. C.S. Sergell, Rev. J.A. Stewart and Mrs Mary Schurr of the Bellville Rectory, whom as members of the Christian community, expressed their concern and sympathy to the Muslim community, who they said, must have "*felt sickened with horror at the facts revealed at the inquest.*"

But whether the Muslim community was indeed "*sickened with horror*" at the inquest findings was not known, since they did not protest or comment against the findings. Neither did the Muslim clergy, Shaikhs, Imams or the *Muslim News* for which the Imam worked, comment on the findings. So one may argue that the Imam's death did not politically "awaken" the Muslim

community but rather drove them into further submission of oppression, racist politics and religious parochialism.

At the Imam's funeral, Shaikh Nazeem of the MJC asked: "*Where do we go from here? Did the Imam die in vain?*". Muslims decided to continue life under an apartheid and repressive regime and the Imam was then forgotten. His cause was only remembered by his faithful congregation and Parliamentarian, Mrs Catherine Taylor, whom for two years tirelessly fought to establish the true cause of the Imam's death in detention.

When it was clear that Mrs Taylor was getting nowhere with her persistent enquiries and requests for a judicial commission to investigate the Imam's death, an Anglican priest, Rev. Bernard Wrankmore decided to fast for 40 days at the shrine of Matura on Signall Hill in an effort to get the Prime Minister, B.J. Vorster to grant permission to appoint a judicial commission.

Rev. Wrankmore went to see Mrs Haron and described himself as "*feeling so ashamed*" as after Mrs Taylor's vain struggles, the democratic process did not take place. He began his fast on August 19, 1971 and on September 27, 1971, he took a decision to continue his fast after the Prime Minister informed him of his refusal to appoint a judicial commission. On this same day the Reverend also held a prayer meeting at the shrine which was attended by more than 2000 people. The Reverend, whose fast lasted for 66 days, felt that this undertaking of his would

*Remembrance of a Martyr - Imam Abdulla Haron*

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stir the consciences of his society in order to see the implementation of justice, equality and freedom. It was also during this period that he came to learn about the Imam and that the *"Muslim Hierarchy did not agree with the Imam, but the people dearly loved him"*.

Mrs Taylor continued her battle in parliament for an inquiry until September 1975 when documentary evidence proved that the 26 bruises on the Imam's body were not due to natural causes, but as a result of assault by certain members of the Security Branch interrogation team. The dossier which contained the hard evidence which she was busy collating into a book, disappeared with the UCT lecturer who was assisting her.

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### **THE RELEVANCE OF THE IMAM TODAY**

The Imam's example was used by many political organisations in their struggle for justice. Today his name is on the lips of every activist and even President Nelson Mandela often reminds people of the sacrifices of Imam Haron and other martyrs.

The Muslim Students Association (MSA) and the Muslim Youth Movement (MYM) emerged and advanced Islamic consciousness followed by Qibla and the Call of Islam (COI). It was indeed the youth who revived the legacy of the Imam as they took a leading role in the liberation struggle and anti-Tricameral protests. The students were a driving force for Islamic resurgence and hoped that Muslims would "... see *Islam as a Revolutionary Message...*"

In 1982, Inqilaab, a mouthpiece of the MSA said in its editorial: *"During recent years, Muslims have come to play an increasingly more active role in the national struggle for freedom and justice. A significant milestone has been the martyrdom of Imam Abdullah Haron who "died" in prison in 1969 after being held in detention for 123 days incommunicado. After the Imam, there*

*Remembrance of a Martyr - Imam Abdulla Haron*

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*have been many others, especially, amongst the youth, who have been involved in demonstrating against prevailing injustices on all kinds of levels..."*

At mass meetings and funerals, large banners of Qur'anic verses were prominent. The international events in the Muslim world like the revival of the Intifadah in Palestine and the Islamic Revolution in Iran, had a significant impact on the lives of Muslims at a social, religious and political level. These international events and the Imam's example were used by many political organisations in their struggle for justice. The political unrest in the 1980's was also due to internal political awareness campaigns by various organisations.

The Qibla Movement published a pamphlet, *Tribute To a Martyr* on Imam Haron and during the Qibla/PAC trial in 1986, the movement also published a bumper sticker with photos of Imam Ayatollah Khomeini, Imam Abdullah Haron and Imam Achmad Cassiem.

The spirit of Imam Haron was revived so much, that state president PW Botha stated in parliament in 1984:

*"As you are aware we have a large Muslim community who, like all other religious denominations, enjoy complete freedom of religion. Furthermore, you also know that South African Muslims are respected citizens of this country. However, a small group has emerged within this community who, under the influence of Libya and Iran and with funding from those quarters, have*

*committed themselves, with the ANC and PAC, to terror and violence".*

The General Synod of the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (NGK) warned Muslims that: *"Participation in radical and revolutionary actions and the incitement of people towards acts of terror would seriously damage the relationships between Muslims and the majority of Christians in South Africa as well as endangering the peaceful co-existence of the various religions."*

The youth also came to learn that the fundamental difference between the Muslim clergy and Imam Haron, was that the Imam did not separate politics from Islam and vice versa. The Imam attracted many people to the mosque to listen to the Friday sermons he delivered. He addressed issues on contemporary events and of relevance such as socio, economic and political problems which was a breakaway from the monotonous sermons delivered by other Shaikhs and Imams. The Imam also gave opportunities to his young students to address the congregants on auspicious occasions. In 1958 the Imam gave Islamic classes to women once a week on Wednesday evenings. He was severely criticised by the MJC whose attitude was not to let women grow intellectually and to participate more fully in the growth of society. But their criticism did not persuade the Imam to terminate the classes for women and he argued that women's position was not clearly defined or understood. Women were also actively involved in the CMYA. The Imam's recognition of the rights of women and to improve the plight of women in



*Remembrance of a Martyr - Imam Abdulla Haron*

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society, was another breakaway of the Ulema patriarchy. During 1961 the CMYA invited different and prominent politicians, community workers and political activists to address them on activities and ideas existing in other communities. Those invited included, Dr. Zach De Beer (PFP), Ray Alexander of the Food and Canning Union; also a member of the Nationalist Party.

The Imam as a Muslim and true believer in Islam, could embrace people outside the fold of Islam which explains his "humanness" and his universality of brotherhood. The Imam had spoken to street dwellers "bergies" in the same manner as he spoke to the mayor and city councillors. His main objective was to fight against political oppression by a racist regime and not to display his anger towards an individual white face, but against the oppressive white government. He is described as a man of great tolerance and even more so of political tolerance.

The Imam continuously reminded Muslims that under no circumstances should they isolate their specific problems from the problems of fellow oppressed people. He encouraged the Muslims to become what the Almighty had commanded them to do, ie. propagate and implement universal justice and social action. He thus urged Muslims to become involved in the social problems prevailing in the country, and as Muslims to offer a solution and method of struggle. This only became a reality in 1985, 16 years after his martyrdom when the streets of the Cape Peninsula echoed with the *TAKBIR - ALLAAHU AKBAR* (ALLAH IS GREAT).

With the countrywide political uprisings in 1985, the militant youth reminded the Muslim clergy that they owed it to the community to lead the struggle against injustice. The clergy started to play a prominent role in addressing political mass rallies, leading funerals of those killed during the riots and protest marches.

Today, nobody can claim to which political organisation the Imam would have been aligned to. Although he had political and religious differences to the MJC, Muslim Assembly and the Muslim News editorial, his differences did not prevent the Imam from continuing to work with them. The Imam felt that he could slowly implement changes into these organisations.

The fact that Imam Haron refused twice to serve on the City Council for Coloured People and the Labour Party of South Africa, could perhaps indicate that he might have taken a strong anti-Tricameral election stance if he was alive in 1984. The Imam strived selflessly to bring together all the oppressed groups (Coloured, Indians and Africans) to form a mightier weapon against state injustice.

His political role like that of many other Muslim Azanian activists, Rafiq Rohan, Achmad Cassiem, Ahimed Timol and the young Mohsin Jeenah, were solely inspired by Islamic justice to all mankind. He urged Muslims to rid themselves of the "Malay" and "Indian" identities and to assert themselves as Muslims in the community. He agreed that Azanian Muslims were a

*Remembrance of a Martyr - Imam Abdulla Haron*

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minority, but not that Muslims should operate on a minority status which would give them a minority vision. During his travels to Saudi Arabia and the Middle East, it was his sincere intention to conscientise Muslims in Azania of the plight of Muslims in Palestine.

He sought to skilfully educate the Muslim community on their social and un-Islamic practices such as gambling and activities in the coon carnivals. This he did through personal inter-action with individuals, from the pulpit of the mosque and public lectures. The mosque, a powerful medium of resource to the Muslim community whom he used not just for the performance of prayers, but as an institution of educating the community on the social and political evils in society. It was his lectures and the informal manner in which he conducted them, that drew the youth to the mosque. He made it clear to the Muslims that their duties were as a revolutionary force, to forbid, prevent and eradicate what was wrong and to propagate, implement and defend what was right.

There were many times when the Imam made attempts to unite all Muslim organisations under one banner. Now, 25 years later, that dream of a United Muslim Ummah has still not been fulfilled. Muslims in Azania made two attempts to form a united body representing all Muslim organisations, the Muslim Unity Conference in 1990 and the Islamic Unity Convention in 1994.

He was also concerned about the plight of Muslim women and

offered classes to them despite objections from the MJC. Muslim women today, are not afforded their rightful role in society by the Muslim patriarchy. The Muslim women, basically have to force their presence at meetings on the Muslim Personal Law.

Looking at the present political situation, there can be no conclusion as to whether the Imam would have been part of the new government. He was closely involved with the PAC and was in contact with people from various political persuasions. It is true that the Imam stood for justice and truth and did not alienate himself from those who thought otherwise.

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Note: No page 48

## **DEDICATION**

They placed him in a prison cell  
This man who had a dream  
That every man should father  
To his brother's son  
And love should not be tempered by  
The colour of their skin  
Was he  
Patriot or terrorist?

His concern for children not his own  
Made of him the keeper of his brother  
A widowed mother found in him courage  
And a woman wronged compassion  
Was he  
Patriot or terrorist?

In a prison cell they placed him  
His guilt his plea for justice  
That would not be a tyranny for most  
For his dream, he died  
What was he  
Patriot or terrorist?

Dedicated to Imam Abdullah Haron  
by James Matthews

Then there was that priest upon the hill  
Who fasted for freedom  
He said his prayers in a tomb  
Of a man not of his faith

The flesh fell from the face  
Of him man of God  
As he did penance for the death  
Of a man whose sermon was one of peace

An Imam who died in a prison cell  
Because freedom was what he preached  
And this priest upon the hill  
Believed in what his fellow-preacher prayed

His fasting days lengthened unto forty  
Detractors he had many  
They dubbed him fool for starving on a hill  
For a cause that should not be pursued  
Their exhortations could not make him sway  
He did his two score days and more  
The reason for his self-denial was  
Why did that Imam die that way?

Dedicated to Rev. Bernard Wrankmore  
by James Matthews

# TOP MOSLEM HELD UNDER 180-DAY LAW

CAPE TIMES  
**A PROMINENT Moslem leader, Imam Abdullah Haron, editor of the Moslem News, was detained under the 180-day detention clause in Cape Town on Wednesday.**

Imam Haron was arrested on one of the great days in the Islamic calendar, the anniversary of the birthday of the Prophet Mohammed. Because of his arrest he was not able to attend a ceremony in his mosque, where more than 1,000 people had gathered to celebrate the anniversary of the Prophet's birthday, and his place had to be taken by a deputy.

Leaders of the Moslem community yesterday said they felt bitter and "utterly disappointed" about the fact that the Imam was arrested on the anniversary of the Prophet's birthday.

**TAKEN HOME**  
 Imam Haron was summoned to Caledon Square police station at 11 a.m. on Wednesday and was later accompanied to his home in Repulse Road, Crawford, by detectives, according to a spokesman for the Al-Jamia Mosque congregation.

The spokesman told the Cape Times that they wished to voice the strongest protest over the man's detention. They said that they would approach other Moslem bodies in Cape Town for support.

In his religious teachings at the Mosque, Imam Haron often

propounded Koran texts which called for equality and brotherhood among men.

In his position of editor of the Moslem News he expressed anti-racialist ideas and condemned certain injustices in South Africa which are contrary to Islamic teachings.

He drew no salary in these posts. For a living he worked as one of two non-White sales representatives for a chocolate firm.

The police telephoned the firm on Wednesday morning and left a message for the Imam to come to Caledon Square police station.

Imam Haron, who is in his early 40's, is married with three children. The eldest, Shamila, 19, is studying radiography in England.

Mrs. Haron said yesterday that she had not been allowed to see her husband, but the Security Police had given her permission to bring him food and clean clothes.

A spokesman for the Security Police yesterday confirmed that Imam Haron had been arrested and was being held, but he declined to make any further comment.

## Moslem leader dies in detention in City

Cape Times Reporters 29 SEPT

# INQUEST UNCERTAIN

The Argus Crime Reporter 29 SEPT 1969

**IF** laboratory tests show that Imam Abdullah Haron, the Cape Town Moslem leader who died at the week-end while being detained under the Terrorism Act, died of natural causes, no inquest will be held, Lt.-Col. C. F. J. Pienaar, head of the Security Police in Cape Town, said today.

"So far all indications are that he died of natural causes, but at this stage the exact cause of his death is not known," Lt.-Col. Pienaar said.

## DEATH BY APPARENT NATURAL CAUSES

Cape Times Police Reporter  
**IMAM ABDULLAH HARON**, the Cape Town Moslem leader, who died in detention under the Terrorism Act at the Maitland police cells on Saturday, appeared to have died from natural causes, but could not be autopsied till after an inquest, Lt.-Col. C. F. Pienaar, head of the Security Police in Cape Town, revealed last night.

"All indications are that he died due to natural causes. But because he died in police detention an inquest will be held by a magistrate and reviewed by the Attorney-General. This makes the matter a bit judicial and precludes a prior disclosure of the actual cause of death," Colonel Pienaar said.

### CHEST PAIN

The Imam had complained about pain in his chest and stomach a fortnight ago. A doctor had examined him and prescribed pills which were to be given to him whenever he asked for them. At 11 a.m. on September 28, the Imam complained of pains in the chest and was given pills. At 8.30 a.m. on September 27 he again took pills.

When the police made their normal hourly rounds of the cells at 8.15 a.m. nothing irregular was noted. An hour later, the Imam was found apparently dead.

A district surgeon was immediately called, and he was certified dead, Colonel Pienaar said.

He said the Imam complained about pain in the chest and stomach two weeks ago. He was examined by a doctor who prescribed pills to be given to him whenever he asked for them, he added.

### PAINS

At 11 a.m. on September 28 the Imam complained of pains in the chest and was given pills. The following morning he again took the pills.

When the police made their rounds of the police cells at Maitland, where he was being detained, at 8.15 a.m. on Saturday, he appeared in good health.

An hour later he was found dead. A district surgeon was called in immediately and certified him dead, Colonel Pienaar said.

Mr. Haron was detained under the Terrorism Act on May 28. Mrs. Haron and her three children, Shamila (18), Mogamel (13) and Fatima (5) had not seen him since his arrest.

# Fast not in vain, says priest

**THE REV. BERNIE WYRANKMORE**, who has fasted in a letter that the Prime Minister (Mr. J. Vorster) is prepared to appear a judicial inquiry into the death of Louis Place during detention, said today that he believed his fast was in vain.

Mr. Wyrankmore said he had fasted for 10 days and had lost 15 lbs. He said he had written a letter to Mr. Vorster asking for a judicial inquiry into the death of Louis Place during detention. He said he believed his fast was in vain because Mr. Vorster had not responded to his letter.

# Imam's death: R22,125 Bio-f is claimed

**DAMAGES** totaling R22,125 are being claimed by the Ministry of Justice for the cost of the funeral of the late Imam Ahmed Raza Khan, who died at the age of 70 on September 27.

The funeral was held in the morning at the National Stadium. The Imam was buried in the cemetery at the same place. The funeral was attended by a large number of people.

# Affair of Imam is 'closed'

**THE ARGENT Correspondent** — VORSTER  
**PRETORIA, Friday.**  
The Prime Minister, Mr. B. J. Vorster, said today that as far as he was concerned, the Imam affair was 'closed.'

Mr. Vorster was asked to comment on the fact that the Imam's death had been investigated by a judicial inquiry. He said that the inquiry had been held and that the results had been made known to the public.

# Questions on death of Imam

**By the Parliamentary Staff**  
QUESTIONS have been placed on the following order of the day: Mr. Vorster, Minister of Justice, and Mr. D. F. Malan, Minister of Defence, were asked to answer the following questions:

1. What was the cause of the Imam's death? 2. How was the Imam's health during his detention? 3. What was the state of the Imam's mind at the time of his death? 4. How was the Imam's death investigated? 5. What were the results of the investigation?



## DEATHS IN DETENTION 1963-1990

### 1963

- \* Solwandle Ngudle: Suicide by hanging
- \* Bellington Mampe: undisclosed

### 1964

- \* James Tyita: Suicide by hanging
- \* Suliman Salojee: Suicide - jumped from the 7th floor

### 1965

- \* Ngeni Gaga: Natural causes
- \* Pongolosa Hoye: Natural causes

### 1966

- \* James Hamakwayo: Suicide by hanging
- \* Hangula Shonyeka: Suicide
- \* Leon Pin: Suicide by hanging

### 1967

- \* Ah Yan: Suicide by hanging
- \* Alpheus Madiba: Suicide by hanging

### 1968

- \* Jundea Tubakwa: Suicide by hanging
- \* Unknown Person: Unknown date, place and cause (stated in Parliament on 28 January 1969)

### 1969

- \* Nicodemus Kgoathe: Natural causes
- \* Solomon Modipane: Natural causes

- \* James Lenkoe: Suicide by hanging
- \* Caleb Mayekiso: Natural causes
- \* Michael Shivute: Suicide
- \* Jacob Monakgotla: Natural causes
- \* Imam Abdullah Haron: Natural causes

### 1971

- \* Matayeni Cuthsela: Natural causes
- \* Ahmed Timol: Suicide - jumped from the 10th floor

### 1976

- \* Joseph Mdluli: Injury to neck falling against a chair
- \* William Tshwane: Shot while trying to escape. Justifiable homicide
- \* Mapetla Mohapi: Suffocation as a result of hanging
- \* Like Mazwembe: Suicide by hanging
- \* Dumisani Mbatha: Natural causes
- \* Fenuel Mogatusi: Natural causes
- \* Jacob Mshabane: Suicide by hanging
- \* Unknown Person: Undisclosed
- \* Edward Mzolo: Undisclosed
- \* Ernest Mamashila: Suicide by hanging
- \* Thalo Mosala: Natural causes
- \* Wellington Tshazibane: Suicide - jumped 6 floors down the stairs

### 1977

- \* Lawrence Ndzanga: Natural causes
- \* Dr Nanoath Ntshuntsha: Natural causes

- Probably suicide
  - \* Elmon Malele: Natural causes
  - \* Mathews Mabelane: Accidental fall from 10th floor
  - \* Twasteni Joyi: Post-mortem result not revealed
  - \* Samuel Malinga: Natural causes
  - \* Aeron Khoza: Suicide by hanging from the 6th floor
  - \* Phakamile Mabija: Suicide - jumped from the 6th floor
  - \* Elijah Loza: Natural causes
  - \* Dr Hoosen Haftejee: Suicide by hanging
  - \* Bayempin Mizizi: Suicide by hanging with police
  - \* Steve Biko: Brain injury during scuffle
  - \* Sipho Malaza: Suicide by hanging
- 1978
- \* Lungile Tabalaza: Suicide - jumped from the 5th floor
- 1980
- \* Saul Ndzumo: Natural causes
- 1981
- \* Manana Mgqweto: Unknown
  - \* Tshithwa Mjuofhe: Assault by police
- 1982
- \* Dr Neil Aggett: Suicide by hanging
  - \* Ernest Dipale: Suicide by hanging
- 1983
- \* Simon Mndaw: Suicide by hanging
  - \* Paris Malatji: Culpable homicide shot in forehead at point-blank range
- 1984
- \* Samuel Tshikudo: Natural causes
  - \* Mxolisi Sipale: Unknown
- \* Ephraim Mthewrwa: Suicide by hanging
- 1985
- \* Andries Raditsela: Fatal injury - fell from Casspir
  - \* Barandwa Ndondo: Shot by police
- 1986
- \* Makompe Kurumela: Police assault
  - \* Peter Nchabalang: Police assault
  - \* Xolisa Jacobs: Suicide by hanging
  - \* Simon Marutiu: Kidney failure
- 1987
- \* Sithambela Zokwe: Police shooting fluid on brain
  - \* Alfred Makalang: Natural causes
- 1990
- \* Clayton Sizya Sithole: Suicide by hanging
  - \* Lucas Thothomising: Police report meningitis
  - \* Donald Thabela Madisha: Suicide by hanging
- From January 1991 to August 1993
- \* 92 people died in police custody

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"AND RECKON NOT THOSE WHO ARE KILLED  
IN ALLAH'S WAY AS DEAD; NAY, THEY ARE  
ALIVE (AND) ARE PROVIDED SUSTENANCE  
FROM THEIR LORD. "

(HOLY QUR'AN 3 : 169)