

HISTORY OF MUSLIMS IN SOUTH AFRICA: A CHRONOLOGY

Ebrahim Mahomed Mahida

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ - وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ
عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ وَاتِّبَاعِهِ -
اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْنَا نَبْتَغِي بِذَلِكَ وَجْهَكَ وَالِدَارَ
الْآخِرَةَ - اللَّهُمَّ لَا سَهْلَ إِلَّا مَا جَعَلْتَهُ
سَهْلًا وَ أَنْتَ تَجْعَلُ الْحَزْنَ إِذَا شِئْتَ
سَهْلًا -

*This book is dedicated to my parents,
Amina and Mahomed Cassim Mahida,
who reared me in the fold of Islam.*

*It is also dedicated to my dear and sincere friend,
Goolam Hoosen E Vanker,
former Secretary of the Islamic Propagation Centre
International [1958-1980].*

*Finally, it is dedicated to all South African Muslims who have struggled
to keep Islām and the Ummah alive in this country.*

FOREWORD

The arrival of Muslims in South Africa and their consolidation as a close-knit religious community was a milestone in the socio-economic and political development of the country. Ever since the first Muslim arrived as an exile from colonial Dutch-ruled Batavia [Indonesia], a steady stream of adherents of Islam followed - enslaved, though eventually emancipated in order to become a worthy factor in the life of the nation.

The arrival in Durban of Muslim indigenous labourers from 1860 onwards followed by free and enterprising settlers who spread out to the Transvaal province and beyond, also proved of major importance. Though hamstrung from the beginning by unfair state legislation, they too, like their Cape predecessors, played no mean part in the life of the nation - as their progress in the economic, religious and political spheres clearly manifests.

What one notes in Ebrahim Mahida's work is the vibrancy of a religious current moving through the community, the presence of which has rendered less profound the dangers of assimilation and loss of identity and cultural values in a rapidly changing milieu. Events depicted in these pages reveal the mundane concerns of the South African Muslims flowing parallel with what one may call the 'eternal sense of the sacred'; hence the vivid portrayal of religious institutions and charitable foundations throughout this work.

In the end - it need be said - in this comprehensive chronology of events regarding the Muslim community, the writer has succeeded in realizing a pioneering and commendable task.

Ahmed Farouk Vanker

Lecturer: Department of Islamic Studies

University of Durban-Westville

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The advent of Muslims in South Africa and their growth and consolidation as a close-knit religious community marks a significant period in the socio-economic and political development of this country.

Though hamstrung at the outset through discriminatory state legislation, the community of Islam served to play no mean role in the life of South Africa - as their progress in the economic, religious and political spheres undoubtedly manifests.

Throughout this book the author is concerned not with the Islamic community in itself, but more so with the institutions, personalities and events that served to render the foundations of Islam firmly on South African soil.

Ebrahim Mahomed Mahida hails from Stanger, Natal and completed his education at the Punjab University, Lahore (MA, Islamic Studies). Since 1975 he has been employed in the Department of Islamic Studies, University of Durban-Westville.



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