

QURAN FOR THE BLIND

By Mrs. Habeeb

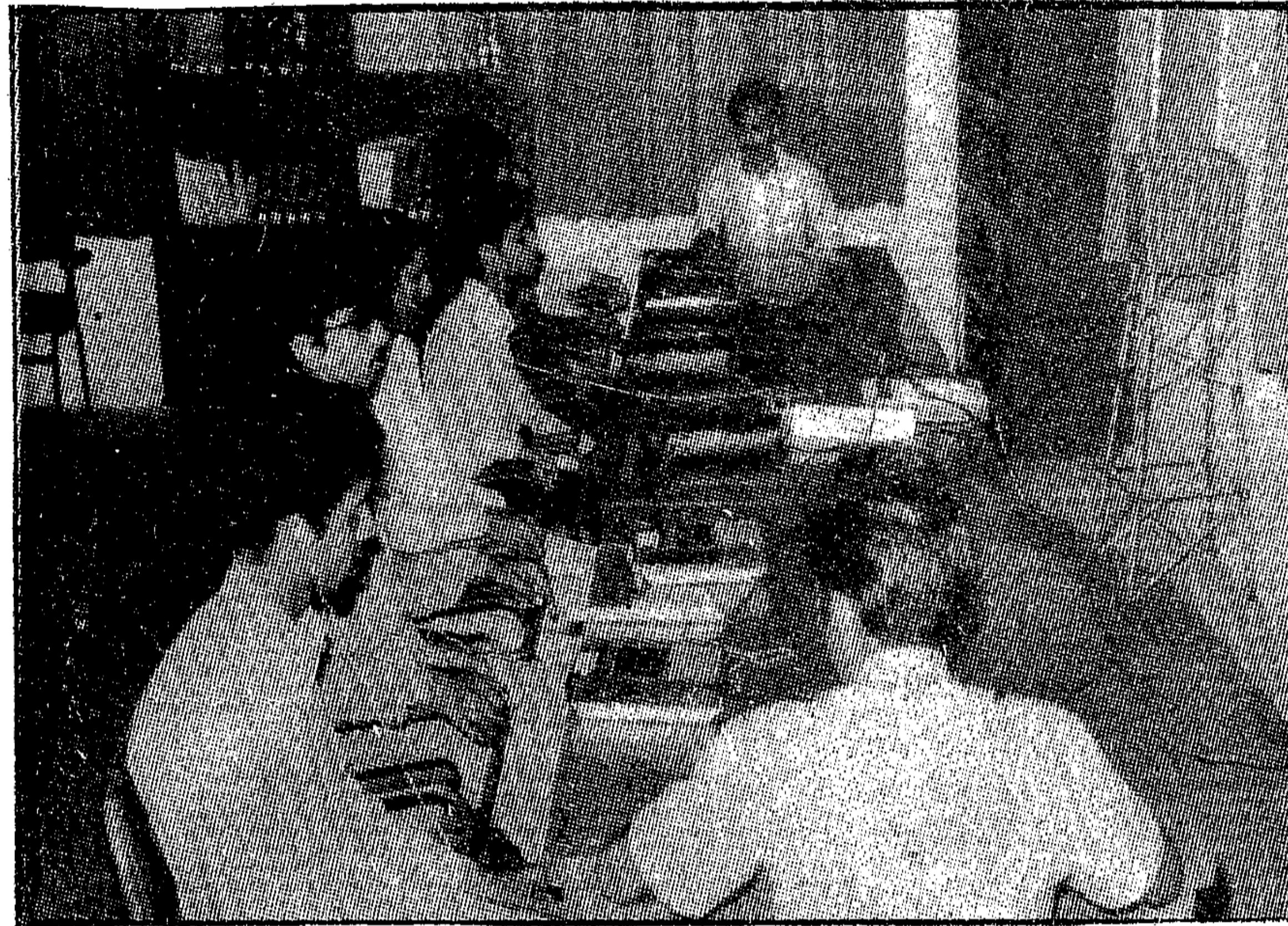
The Hatim Alavi Memorial Braille Library has transcribed into braille the Quran in English and Urdu. Copies have been sent to all Muslim countries in the world. Orders for more copies along with advanced payment by some countries and individuals are pouring in. Twelve hundred copies of the Arabic Quran in 600 volumes have been sent to the blind around the globe to read God's Message to mankind.

A few weeks back when I visited this Library 96 copies of the Quran in Urdu and 216 in English had been transcribed.

The Hatim Alavi Memorial Braille Library is Pakistan's first, biggest and most modern braille library. It was opened in Karachi in January 1977. Mr. Hatim Alavi had been associated with this institution for as many as 53 years. He was its first honorary president. This library was opened on Mr. Hatim Alavi's first death anniversary.

The Secretary General of the National Federation for the Blind, Mrs. Nargis Jivanjee is the moving spirit behind this successful venture. Daughter of Mr. Hatim Alavi, she runs the library along efficient and practical principles.

The payment to the braille transcribers is done the moment they hand in their transcribed number of pages at the rate of one rupee



The blind listening to 'talking books' at the Hatim Alavi Memorial Braille Library.

per page for all books and two rupees a page for the Holy Quran. Mrs. Jivanjee believes in the Islamic principle of payment before the sweat of the labourer is dry...

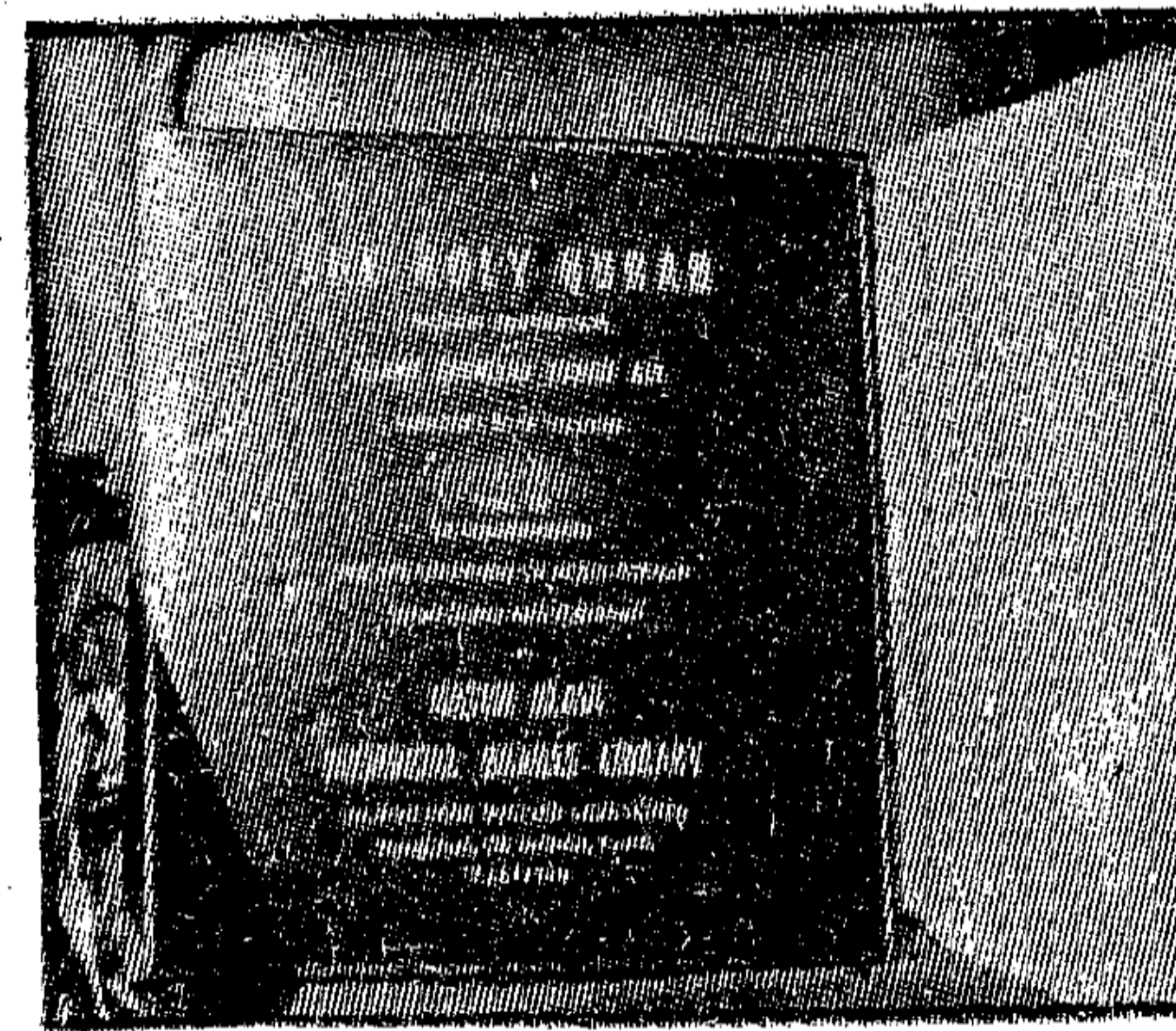
Helpers

Mrs. Jivanjee has two very able helpers in Mr. Tajjamul Hussain and Mr. Yahya who patiently and persistently record books, catalogue them and keep a record of the number of students visiting the library each day. Examination time finds the library full to capacity.

"Are all the students able to earn their livelihood at the completion of their studies"? I inquired of Mrs. Jivanjee. "Yes", she said. They were helped to find suitable jobs. Out of the recent University

Graduates one was accommodated on the braille press and another as a proof reader.

I met Mr. Iqbal at the library. He was preparing his lecture on the Perkin's Brailier, he is a lecturer on General History at S.M. College, Karachi. Mr. Iqbal told me he was blind since childhood and learnt



The Holy Quran in braille.

to read braille at the age of fifteen and enjoyed his academic career. After graduation he went ahead and did his C.T. and then B.Ed. passing both in the first division. He said he had a good attendance in class and all the students gave him due respect and attention.

I met another B.A. Final student who was studying Political Science, Sociology, and Islamic History. Then there was Shuja who was absorbed in Mathematics with charts and notations.

Mr. Sarfaraz Abbasi was at the braille library too. He teaches at Islamia College. I was also introduced to Noor Mohammad, who, I was told, spends hours at the library reading or listening to books on general knowledge.

He is a keen debater and is the proud holder of a prize in a Quiz program in which he represented S.M. College. Another prize winner was Mr. Fazil who won a prize in 'Bazme-Talba' on Radio Pakistan in 1977.

The Talking Book Library has around fifteen hundred C*90 cassettes and over a hundred selected books of Urdu literature and textbooks of different classes.

The braille books and the talking books are on History, Geography, Civics, Economics, Political Science, Islamic Studies, Sociology, advanced Urdu, Biographies of religious personalities and leaders of Islam. There are books of fiction and novels too. All that is required now is to start work on transcribing the dictionary. Twelve students can switch on to a talking book simultaneously.