

Subj: YOU BE THE JUDGE in the "Mansoor Affair" – Chapter 1
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YOU BE THE JUDGE IN THE "MANSOOR AFFAIR"

THE MANSOOR AMARNA COLLECTION

By
Edmond Robert Mansoor
God – The Truth – My Conscience

1 -- Why is the BMFA Reluctant to Re-Evaluate their Defective Report?

2 -- Is the BMFA / BMA (BOSTON MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS / BROOKLYN MUSEUM OF ART) Regime Trying to Destroy the Mansoor Amarna Collection (M.A.C.)?

3 -- Is the AAM (ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN MUSEUMS) Trying to Cover-up for the BMFA / BMA Regime?

4 -- Are there any Courageous, Open-minded True Scholars in Egyptology who would not be Afraid to Stand up and Tell Colleagues that the M.A.C. should be Studied Scholarly?

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This is the first in a series of articles to clarify the above questions. The purpose is to reveal **the truth about the Mansoor Amarna Collection (M.A.C.)** and its shameful condemnation by a couple of museums, as well as by a few authoritarian Egyptologists and museologists who misled their colleagues and the public. This chapter is just a little bit long to read as it gives an idea of the problem, but those following will be much, much shorter. I beg the reader who has no time to please print it and read it later on. My apologies if you receive it twice. **For the love of God, please read it and forward it to those in your Address Book, asking them to do the same. Thank you, and may God bless all who will.**

Chapter 1

After the September 11 tragedies people have become more conscious of being better to one another. Old-fashioned ideals of kindness, honor and respect have returned to our times. The innate goodness of the public is shown in a willingness to help family, friends and even strangers. The shock and horror of that tragic day has brought many people to their senses. Thanks to technology (the Internet), even people from around the world are getting to know and help each other. The Mansoors are indeed happy and richer to have added several new friends to their VIP list.

Much has been said, written, and published about the Mansoor Amarna Collection (M.A.C.) and, for over

50 years, the controversy over it is unresolved due to the reluctance of some highly placed individuals to admit to an error. In the next few months, I will expose to Egyptologists, museologists and the public the hardships and injustice perpetrated on the Mansoors for over half a century. Also what I think is a lack of integrity in particular in the two museums that created the absurd controversy, the BMFA and the BMA.

In Brief: Alfred Lucas, the noted British scientist who worked with Howard Carter after the find of Tut-Ankh-Amon tomb, examined in 1942 twenty seven objects of the M.A.C. and declared them ancient. In 1949 a young, inexperienced conservator at the BMFA, Mr. William J. Young, examined nine objects of the collection and declared them to be forgeries. His 'Technical Examination' – which the Mansoors paid for to the BMFA – was harshly criticized by many leading scientists. In 1950 the Mansoors asked the BMFA to re-evaluate the Young report on the grounds that, beside Lucas, two other eminent scientists of the Cairo Egyptian Museum, Drs. Zaki Iskander and Zahira Mustafa, had just thoroughly examined sixty six objects of the collection and, like Alfred Lucas, stated that they are in fact genuine. Unbelievably, the BMFA refused adding that they would not change Mr. Young's opinion. Then an Egyptologist at the BMA, Dr. John D. Cooney, perhaps out of solidarity with the BMFA, or possibly due to his weak knowledge of the enigmatic Amarna period of Akhenaten and Nefertiti, declared the collection not to be genuine and, by his own admission, he relied on Mr. Young's report and "**advice.**" From 1950 on, the Mansoors appealed to the two museums for a re-evaluation of their wrong opinion, but their appeals went unheeded – even though the Mansoors provided them with many other scientific reports attesting to the authenticity of the Amarna sculptures. And since that time, i.e. for over fifty years, gossip and rumors went rampant and the overwhelming scientific evidence favoring the authenticity of the M.A.C. was conveniently ignored by too many Egyptologists and museologists.

The condensed story: To read it, kindly go to: <http://www.lecafe.net/Edmond1.html> and you'll get a fair idea of the problem, not only facing the Mansoors, but facing also the public as well as Egyptologists and museologists. Why all these? Because all have been badly misled for over half a century by the two museums. For a **detailed story** to read or to skim through, and this is a must in particular for Egyptologists and museologists, please go to: www.amarnamansoor.com. For more on the scientific reports and other pertinent information on the M.A.C., also go to: www.amarna.com and to: www.scandalofthecentury.com. Other sites and a number of search engines have also linked the Mansoor Web sites to theirs as they find them of great interest to the public.

At this time, I'd like to repeat what I wrote once before, that I don't like the tone of my writing in particular when I am not respecting the two museums responsible of the controversy. I just can't help it as I find no kind words to tell them since they are simply ignoring the Mansoors. Please tell, how can I do it after years of deceptions, of being humiliated and insulted – not to mention the deals we lost thanks to them, nor the pain, headaches, energy, time and money we sustained trying to vindicate the Collection that was so shamefully, and so unjustly besmirched and vandalized because of the faulty Boston report. The two institutions seem to me not to be decent enough for not answering the Mansoors, and for not correcting the errors they made half a century ago. The Mansoors have requested and appealed for so many years to the two institutions so they re-evaluate their positions, but it was to no avail. It would indeed be stupid from my part to keep doing it as, being almost 79 years of age and with deteriorating health, I have neither time to be patient, nor for any game. I have to fight back, and I want to make it clear to all that I am fighting mostly prejudice and injustice, as well as scientific illiteracy and intellectual dishonesty that appear to me to be taking roots in some American museums. Kind People, no one should ever go through the ordeal the Mansoors went through for over fifty years, and the public – including Egyptologists and museologists – must show their concern by preventing any similar injustice from happening to others.

An Appeal in the Name of God. This paper is really a humble and fervent appeal addressed to **all**

people of integrity around the world and, in the Name of God, I pray all the kind readers, scholars as well as the VIP/acquaintances who would be receiving it, to donate some of their time in reading it entirely, and then decide if their conscience would allow them to condone such an injustice and ignore my prayer – which is: 1) to forward it to all colleagues, relatives, friends and acquaintances in their Address Book, who in turn would do the same, and so on; 2) to write a short polite e-mail to the proper museum authorities, forwarding to me its copy, and requesting an investigation or a re-evaluation of the wrong opinion pronounced half a century ago against the M.A.C. Why a copy to me? Because I'd like to make sure that the public wants the truth and justice to prevail in this matter, and does not want to be misled any more by any educational institution. Truly, I think museums such as the BMFA and the MFA are neglecting the public for their own fame and gain. The addresses of the Museums authorities to write to are:

1) Mr. Malcolm Rogers, Director, Museum of Fine Arts, 465 Huntington Avenue, Boston, MA 02115.
mrogers@mfa.org

2) Mr. Arnold L. Lehman, Director, Brooklyn Museum of Art, 200 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, NY 11238. alehman@interport.net

3) Mr. Edward H. Able, Jr., President and CEO, The American Association of Museums, 1575 Eye Street, N.W., Suite 400, Washington, DC 20005. aaminfo@aam-us.org

Concerning the AAM, I'd like to quote what this Association claims to be doing for the museums and for the public. In their 1971 Directory, Mr. Kyran M. McGrath, its Director at the time, stated the following: "But Museums exist to serve the public and they will continue to provide these services to the utmost of their ability and their resources." And on September 26, 2000 in answer to a letter in which I requested assistance of the AAM, its President & CEO, Mr. Edward H. Able, Jr., answered saying: "The assistance that you seek is beyond the purview of the mission of American Association of Museums (AAM). For nearly a century, the AAM has dedicated its efforts towards promoting excellence within the museum community. Through advocacy, professional education, information exchange, accreditation, and guidance on current professional standards of performance, AAM assists museum staff, boards, and volunteers across the country to better serve the public." (To read all his answer, kindly click on the "Exhibits" in www.amarnamansoor.com and it is the last one, No. 37).

Could anyone please tell me if there has ever been an iota of service that any American Museum extended to the Mansoors in reference to their Amarna Collection? Have museums used the "utmost of their ability and their resources" to "better serve the public" in the matter of the M.A.C.? Aren't the Mansoors from the public? And did the museums ever answer some of the public who wrote to them about the M.A.C.? Furthermore, the BMFA sold the Mansoors a defective 'technical' report and for over fifty years, refuse to re-evaluate it even though they knew, as of 1950, that it is wrong and unscientific. As I wrote, they were given the report of the three Egyptian Museum scientists (Lucas, Iskander/Mustafa) and, through the years, also several other reports contradicting Mr. Young's. Clearly some of the letters by the BMA contain errors that could have been deliberately made. Can anyone say, after the disdainful treatment of the Mansoors as well as that of the public by the two Museums, that the AAM is "promoting excellence within the museum community?" Is the museums' silence in reference to the Mansoors and to the collection commendable? Can any museum be proud of it? Are the responsible taking the Fifth Amendment and pleading "*nolo contendere*?" Does the AAM encourage museums to keep silent when there's a complaint by a paying customer, or by the public? Is this a decent way for the AAM to assist museums to "better serve the public?" Sadly, in reading the letter of Mr. Able, I got the impression that the AAM is covering-up for the two museums. Am I wrong?

Before I proceed and with the reader's kind permission, I'd like to say a little about some Mansoors. First of all, I've put myself under oath to say or write nothing but the truth concerning the M.A.C. , and my personal opinion throughout is honest, sincere, and much considered since I am writing it to be read by thousands of educated people around the world. About the experience I have in Egyptology: 1) one year, Liverpool University, indeed not much as I went there to only have a general knowledge about ancient Egypt, and to be able to decipher some hieroglyphics that would be of help in our business; 2) and not much either, being privately tutored for four months in Cairo – for same reason – by Prof. Alexander Badawy, Egyptologist, (who taught for years at the Universities of Alexandria and Cairo, and then in the USA, at the University of Kansas and at UCLA); 3) but indeed what's important is, the fifteen years experience I was blessed with working and studying in Egypt under my father, M.A.Mansoor, in his place of business, **handling**, buying and selling Egyptian antiquities. For almost half a century, my father, who was "By Royal Appointment to H.M. King Farouk," had his main store dealing in Egyptian antiquities at the world-famous old Shepherd's Hotel in Cairo. It has been called "**Shepherd's museum**" by an English historian, George Bilainkin, in his book "Cairo to Riyadh Diary." And another British author, Nina Nelson, wrote also about my father in her book "Shepherd's Hotel," and both authors mentioned the Mansoor Amarna sculptures in their books. Indeed my father was a man of integrity second to none, and beside being kind and generous, he was really knowledgeable in his profession – which was also his hobby – as he taught himself Egyptology by reading extensively books on ancient Egypt, and by visiting regularly the Egyptian Museum and other European Museums displaying Egyptian antiquities. Not to mention his innumerable visits to ancient Egyptian sites. Isn't this mostly the way professional Egyptologists learn from? The knowledge he acquired from too many of the Egyptologists who visited him in his Cairo business was tremendous. Both his experience in **handling** a variety of Egyptian antiquities, and whatever I just mentioned, and I say this with all humility and respect to Egyptologists, give him – to recognize authentic Egyptian antiquities – an edge on a few scholars seated most of the time behind a desk researching Egyptology in books, who would handle occasionally one Egyptian artefact, and would give an opinion on others from just looking at photographs.

If I said all the above, it's to tell the reader that, without being conceited in any way, and even though I am only an amateur Egyptologist, I am, in a most humble way, qualified to give a **verifiable opinion** on the matter of the M.A.C. since M. A. Mansoor – a highly respected dealer with almost half a century experience in handling Egyptian antiquities – was an excellent teacher and my mentor, tutoring me for some fifteen years.

My humble opinion is not solely based on my father's – whose conviction of the authenticity of his collection was unshakable – but it is also based on the overwhelming scientific evidence obtained as well as on the opinion of the most eminent Egyptologists who handled, studied and examined the Collection. As opposed to all those who have neither examined nor even seen one single object of the M.A.C. but still declared them forgeries, common sense would tell anyone that the opinion of scholars who examined the objects should definitely prevail. This is why I rely on the opinion of all scholars – including my father – who have examined the sculptures. Not to mention that my opinion is also based on common sense as well as on all the Exhibits the Mansoors possess. Many of these are in view in www.amarnamansoor.com. Should you view this Web site and click on "Common Sense," you'll be appalled!

It goes without saying that some of my six brothers are as experienced as I am, perhaps even more. In addition, some Mansoor brothers have also a good experience in handling a wide variety of ancient Egyptian objects. Of course they read books on Egyptology, and beside reading several times the overwhelming scientific reports on the collection, they met and learned from many illustrious Egyptologists and scientists of our time, and none of the brothers has ever had an iota of doubt concerning the authenticity of the M.A.C. This explains the unflinching determination of all Mansoors to vindicate it.

As I could leave this world at any time with no notice whatsoever, I'd like to make sure, or at least know that some courageous and open-minded true scholars would take charge of the matter to "restore confidence." In fighting for the authenticity of the collection, money is definitely not my objective as, financially speaking, my retirement is assured. But the collection cannot, should not, and must not be sacrificed to save face for a few in high positions. Also, scientific evidence should be respected and be given credence in museums. Furthermore, what is also very important, and I mean very, very important is that the public must never, ever be misled, and definitely not by any educational institution. What's more, truth and justice should always prevail in any matter, and certainly in this controversy.

I'd like to add that at my retirement from business, and as I had specialized in supplying museum stores around the USA with art objects, jewelry, antiques, and gifts mostly from Egypt and the Orient, I "was recognized for my years of involvement with the Museum Store Association" (cf. the MSA Magazine, Fall 1988). And just like my father and together with my brothers, I have donated to a few American museums important ancient Egyptian antiquities (cf. "The Truth ..."). And on two different occasions after I retired from business in 1988, I took along a few museum store managers/buyers on a trip to Hong Kong and Beijing, and introduced them to my suppliers. They purchased merchandise for their stores and mail order business at the same wholesale/export price I was getting, saving thus a substantial amount of money for their museums. As God is my witness, I never gained one cent commission – which I was entitled to – neither from the buyers, nor from the sellers. But I did this favor out of gratitude and friendship to the museums' store managers/buyers who gave me good business for years, and also because the Mansoors are, by nature, generous just like too many people in this world are.

Many museologists know that the Mansoors – beside donating to Museums – have also participated in some of their Exhibits, giving them on loan a number of their ancient Egyptian "treasures." In a humble way, they have somewhat assisted or helped quite a few museums. And sadly, it seems to me that the AAM is now kicking them in their rear ends! [Will the kind reader please excuse me for this last sentence]?

The life of all Mansoor brothers and sisters has been disrupted for over half a century, and to most, it has been an everlasting, devastating period. All, because of a human error that progressed through prejudice, gossip and rumors, scientific illiteracy, and intellectual dishonesty by a few authoritarians. Because of Mr. Young's faulty report, too many scholars have been misled, and are under the impression that the M.A.C. is not ancient. Through fifty years, that notion progressed enormously around the world. By being silent for so many years, many Egyptologists and museologists seem to me to be somewhat scared to speak up openly about the M.A.C. Since neither Mr. Young nor Dr. Cooney apologized for their errors, I think that the BMFA/BMA regime does not allow any devotee, official or representative to admit to an error. I believe that the BMFA/BMA regime wants to destroy the Mansoor Amama monuments. But they'll never succeed as God will not allow such a calamity, and will see to it that truth and justice prevail. Furthermore, as there's a mountain of compelling evidence attesting to the authenticity of the M.A.C., the public won't allow it either and hopefully, will soon show its concern and indignation.

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Concerning the overwhelming scientific evidence obtained on the Mansoor Amama sculptures, it has never been contested, and the reader may read the scientific reports in two Mansoor sites. Particular attention should be given to Exhibit # 28, A, and B, a letter by Dr. Fred H. Stross, a most eminent scientist who studied, researched and examined the M.A.C. for well over forty years. The letter was addressed to Dr. Christiane Desroches Noblecourt (who is convinced of the authenticity of the M.A.C.). She is "an Egyptologist of the first rank" as written in 1963 by Dr. Sarwat Okasha, Minister of Culture and National Guidance of Egypt. I'd like to quote only two short sentences of that letter. Dr. Stross wrote:

"But this does not change the fact that the evidence, in one case as in the other, is strongly on the side of science. And it should be very convincing to any intelligent, open-minded individual who takes the trouble to read the reports."

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Concerning the harsh criticisms on Mr. Young's report, they are also in www.amarnamansoor.com. But to give an idea to the reader, I'd like to quote what a leading scientist, Prof. Norman Hertz, Director of Programs, Center for Archaeological Sciences at the University of Georgia in Athens, Georgia wrote to me in a letter (1987) about Mr. Young's knowledge in evaluating antiquities. He said:

"First of all, about Mr. Young of the Boston Museum. I agree with Professor Turner [UC Berkeley, a most eminent internationally famous geologist], that he is not competent in fields that are essential to evaluate antiquities. I volunteered to analyze the Boston Museum relief, allegedly part of the Ludovici relief in Rome, by isotopic methods. The Italians say the Boston piece is a forgery, but Young did a variety of meaningless tests to demonstrate that it was authentic. Needless to say, Mr. Young refused to send me any material to analyze, adding that he had proven authenticity beyond any doubt.

"Young's statement on dendrites is pure nonsense (as are many of his other statements). His ideas on UV examination as an indication of age falls in the same category."

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I think it's about time to give the reader an idea about the art/style and the beauty of many Mansoor Amarna sculptures. For this, I prefer to quote what a few scholars stated about them.

Kathleen Jenks, Ph.D., writing in her outstanding Web site (www.mythinglinks.org/afr~egy~amarna.html) concerning Amarna and "The Scandal of the Century" – the published informative book on the M.A.C. by my niece Christine Mansoor – wrote the following:

"The early chapters [of "The Scandal of the Century]" were utterly engrossing. I was convinced by the details, descriptions, and reactions of Egyptologists and artists who originally saw the private collection in Egypt and who were profoundly moved by this art. I was dismayed by the shabby and negative 'scientific' report issued by a non-Egyptologist at the Boston Museum in April 1949 and accepted by a non-Amarna expert at the Brooklyn Museum. I was angered when these two institutions combined to 'jinx' negotiations between the Mansoors and other major interested museums. Against a tide of mounting evidence in favor of the authenticity of the collection, the soured 'good old boys' network held firm and few Egyptologists were willing to contradict their colleagues in public.

"21 February 1999: the site has now been nicely revised by George Mansoor and has a much cleaner, brighter look. The overly dark photos I saw last spring have vanished and the 'Exhibit' section now consists of 9 pieces, each one splendid. The website also includes data on recent problems with the Vatican [Museum] – as well as a long series (shot from every possible angle) of gorgeously photographed images of the Mansoors' pink limestone head of Nefertiti (formerly at the Vatican). Be patient – there are many of them and they load slowly – but this Nefertiti head is breathtaking – don't miss these beautiful photos!

"8 July 1999: many months ago the Mansoor family graciously invited me to view their private collection [at the bank where it is kept for safety]. I was finally able to do this yesterday with two of my colleagues. We were blown away by the utterly compelling beauty. We delicately touched the long, carefully sculpted fingers and toes of the little princesses, traced their gently curved arms, marveled at Nefertiti's enigmatic 'Mona Lisa' smile captured in an extraordinary work of genius, brushed across Akhenaton's almond-eyes and lips, and felt a strange sense of loss when it was time to leave. We knew in our bones that what we'd been privileged to see and touch could only have been created by the finest of Akhenaton's artists."

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After viewing the First Exhibit of the M.A.C. at San Francisco State University, and there were a total of five such Exhibits sponsored by that Universty, Alfred Frankenstein, Ph.D., Lecturer at Stanford University

and leading West Coast Art Critic at the time, wrote on July 6, 1975 a two-page article about the Mansoor Amarna sculptures in the Sunday San Francisco Chronicle/Examiner. He said in it:

"The delicacy and finesse of the techniques whereby they were wrought are incredible. This is perhaps most impressively apparent in the reliefs, but the sculptures in the full round are magnificent too."

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In "L'Osservatore Romano" of February 1980, there's an article about two Amarna sculptures donated by the Mansoors to the Vatican Museum, and which were exhibited in it as ancient for over fifteen years. (The two objects were returned to the Mansoors at their request as an Egyptologist, I think ill-informed and prejudiced, and whose knowledge on Amarna art was possibly nil, basing his opinion on that of a scholar who was not an Amarna expert, advised the Vatican Museum not to exhibit the pieces. I'll mention this episode in another chapter. Please see his letter, Exhibit 33A). I quote from the article:

"One is a medallion, of calcareous stone, representing the head of Amenophis IV Akhenaton (XVIII dynasty, XIV century B.C.): a work of exquisite workmanship, which in addition to its intrinsic worth, takes on exceptional value owing to its rarity. In fact, it is probably a model which, in the workshop of the capital Akhetaton (today Tell El Amarna), was to serve as a model and sample for the exercises of apprentices in drawing and in bas-relief. The exceptionally delicate quality of the work, and the expressiveness of Akhenaton's face, confirm that it is the work of a great artist. The other item is even more remarkable. It is, in fact, a head (a little broken, but otherwise very well preserved) of Akhenaton's wife, the no less famous Nefertiti. Everyone will remember the splendid bust of this queen which is in Berlin: but this representation excels that famous masterpiece, not for the colours (they are completely lacking here), but because of the intensity of the expression of sentiments conveyed by this head bare of all ornaments, but pulsating with exceptional vitality."

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In its April 1994 issue, *Archeo* Magazine published an article about the M.A.C. by Egyptologist Sergio Pernigotti, Professor at the University of Bologna. Referring to it, Pernigotti wrote: "A great collection of Egyptian sculptures from the Amarna period." He talks in the article about Amarna and the style of the Mansoor's sculptures which he definitely sees as from Amarna, and one short sentence I'd like to mention is: "Of this unprejudiced revolutionary art, the Mansoor collection contains most beautiful examples."

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Although there are other excellent quotes to mention (Noblecourt, du Bourget, Gabra, Colonna, and others), one more will just do for lack of space and time. It is by Prof. Etienne Drioton, a giant in Egyptology who, for sixteen years, was Director General of the Egyptian Antiquities Service. Drioton wrote on January 3, 1959 the following about the Mansoor Amarna sculptures:

"I may add that concerning the artistic point of view, these sculptures come from a workshop related to, but not identical with, the one in which the colossuses of Karnak were executed. Their stylistic pattern, advanced in the same fashion as the Karnak sculptures, is of such a full faultless execution that it cannot be, in my opinion, the work of a forger."

It should be noted that Drioton, during his sixteen-year tenure as Director General of the Egyptian Antiquities Service, examined "in the flesh" about eighty objects of the M.A.C.

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It is extremely important that the reader should understand that I am asking no one to say that the M.A.C. is ancient, but I am asking for an appeal to study the matter scholarly as there's been miscarriage of justice. Whatever happened to due process? At the very least, the Mansoors have been denied the right to "due process which is part of our American heritage." Whatever happened to "justice for all?" Isn't this the conclusion of our Pledge of Allegiance? Are those Americans denying justice to the Mansoors

good Americans? Please tell, are they?

I find no right words to express my profound thanks and gratitude to all who took time to read my paper, and who will also give a hand to the Mansoors in this sad affair. I'd like to add, with utmost respect, to each and every Egyptologist and museologist who would be reading this paper : if you are a true scholar, you should support a re-evaluation of the M. A. C. – the sooner the better and this, for the benefit of Egyptology and museology. Clearly in the long run, if the controversy is not solved, the public will lose faith and confidence in Egyptology and museology. Therefore, you and your conscience!

I'll be writing again, but I hope and pray to hear from each recipient/reader that he/she has graciously complied with my prayer to forward this paper, and to send an e-mail to the museum authorities as I asked. "The public should know," not only so justice should be served to the Mansoors, or the M.A.C to be no more besmirched, or so the public should not be misled, but mostly so this injustice never happens to anyone else. I forgive those – including officials of the BMFA and BMA –who, in the past, have hurt the Mansoor families or the M.A.C., and pray God to do the same. I am confident God will, unless some hard-hearted people do not come to their senses and do not stop "counterfeiting" the truth.

PEACE ON EARTH, GOOD WILL TO MEN !

In praying God to bless you, I wish all my readers a HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON (Ramadan, Chanukah, and Christmas), and may the NEW YEAR 2002 brings to all HEALTH, JOY, and PEACE!

Submitted to the Public around the world with humility and respect to all.

Edmond Robert Mansoor
God – The Truth - My Conscience
December 7, 2001