



There is no deity but Allah, Muhammad is Allah's Messenger.

Volume 42

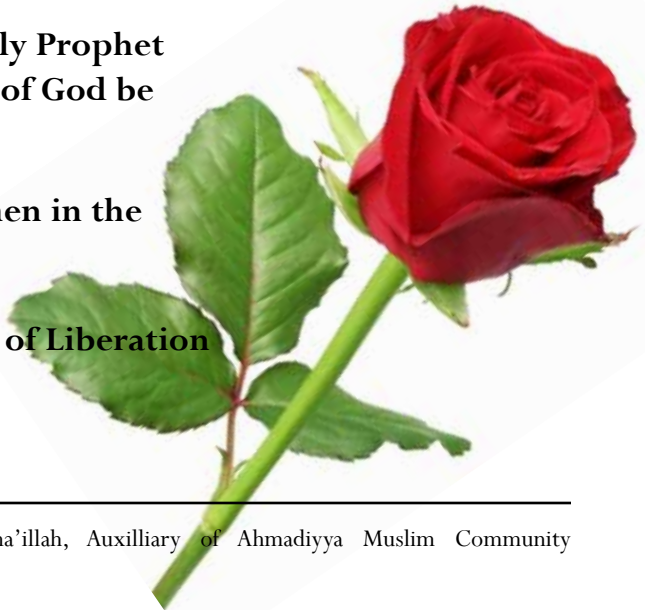
Fall 2011

Issue 1

THE AYESHA

In this issue...

- **Wives and Mothers:
The Leaders of Tomorrow**
- **Our Role Models:
The Wives of the Holy Prophet
(Peace and Blessing of God be
upon him)**
- **Liberation of Women in the
United States**
- **The Veil is a means of Liberation**



AYESHA MAGAZINE

Ayesha is the official publication of Lajna Ima'illah, USA, named in honor of Hadrat Ayesha (May God be pleased with her), wife of the Holy Prophet of Islam (Peace and Blessings of God be upon him). Hadrat Ayesha was renowned for her piety, character and learning, and is a model and guide for Muslim women of all times. It is reported that the Holy Prophet said of Ayesha, "Half of your religion (Islam) can be learned through her."

The Lajna Ima'illah (Assembly of the Maidservants of God) is an international Muslim women's organization, established by Hadrat Khalifatul Masih II (the second successor to the Promised Messiah) as a vital branch of the Ahmadiyya movement in Islam. The Lajna's objectives are to serve the spiritual and intellectual development of Muslim women, to enable them to raise their children in the practice of Islam and to serve humanity with beneficial programs.

The purpose of this publication is to educate, enlighten and inform its readers on religious, social and political issues with particular emphasis on Islam, and the role of women in Islam.

Opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful

Volume 42

Issue 1

The Ayesha Magazine



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THE GLORIOUS QUR'AN

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 إِنَّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ
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 وَالذَّاكِرِينَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا
 وَالذَّاكِرَاتِ ۗ أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةً
 وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٣٦﴾

“Surely, men who submit themselves to God and women who submit themselves to Him, and believing men and believing women, and obedient men and obedient women, and truthful men and truthful women, and men steadfast in their faith and steadfast women, and men who are humble and women who are humble, and men who give alms and women who give alms, and men who fast and women who fast, and men who guard their chastity and women who guard their chastity and men who remember Allah much and women who remember Him—Allah has prepared for all of them forgiveness and a great reward.” (Chapter Al-Ahzab, verse 36)



**SO SAID THE HOLY PROPHET
MUHAMMAD (PEACE AND
BLESSINGS OF GOD BE UPON
HIM)**

Abdullah, son of Amar son of Aa's, quoted the Holy Prophet (Peace and Blessings of God be upon him): The world is but provision, all of it. And the best provision of the world is a virtuous woman. (Muslim)

Holy Prophet of Islam (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Best of you is one who is best in his treatment of his wife and I am the best of you in this treatment." (Tirmidhi)

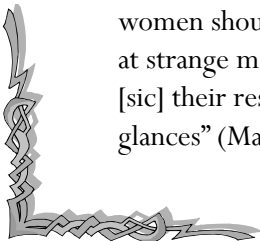
In his farewell address, the Holy Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Be ever mindful of the duty you owe to Allah in respect of your wives. You have married them with the guarantee of Allah's name, and you have made them lawful for yourselves in accordance with Allah's word. So be mindful of your covenant. They owe you fidelity; for any default on their part you may correct them gently. You owe them suitable maintenance." (Tirmidhi)

FROM THE WRITINGS OF THE PROMISED MESSIAH (PEACE BE UPON HIM)



The Promised Messiah and Mahdi
Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1835-1908)

“The Islamic system of the veil does not at all require women to be shut up in a prison. What the Holy Qur’an directs is that women should avoid displaying their beauty and should not look at strange men. Those women who have to go out in order to fulfil [sic] their responsibilities may do so, but they must guard their glances” (Malfuzat, vol. 1, p. 430).





LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Reader,

Assalaamo Alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuhu!—Peace and the blessings of God be upon you

As members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, we are the most blessed of women as the rights granted to us by God Almighty through Islam have truly given us a most honored status. More than 1,400 years ago Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) told the growing community of Muslims that “the best among you is he that treats his wife the best” and all rights of ownership, of property, inheritance, education were restored to women, while women in secular societies around us have only been able to obtain these within the last 100 years. We have embraced the concept of Purdah, which liberates us and safeguards us in a society that is focused on appearance. We are most fortunate to be living in the United States where we are freely allowed to practice our faith, fulfill our obligations to the community, pursue our dreams, obtain an education and careers.

At the same time our responsibilities are so great for the success of the Jama’at and our future generations. We must find the proper balance between the rights we enjoy and the responsibilities we have as women.

We are responsible for raising our children in the morals and values of our faith, which is indeed an enormous task, but we have the best examples in the wives of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings of God be upon him) and in the pioneers of the Lajna Ima’illah.

Insh’Allah the articles and examples you read in this issue will be an inspiration and a guide for you. May Allah enable all of us to carry out our responsibilities as Ahmadi women with firm faith and being always grateful for the all rights granted to us by God Almighty through the True Islam. Ameen.

Wassalaam,
Valerie Bhatti
Ayesha Editor

THE INITIAL APPEAL FOR THE CREATION OF LAJNA IMA'ILLAH

Written by Hadrat Khalifatul Masih II, Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmood
Ahmad, (May Allah Be Pleased With Him), 1922

Assalaamo Alaikum wa rah-
matullahi wa barkatuhu.

To fulfill the purpose of our creation, women need to make as much effort as men. In my view an awareness of what Islam wants from them is still lacking in women; how should they spend their lives in order to attain Allah's pleasure, and inherit His blessings in the hereafter as well as in this world?

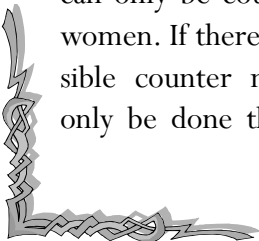
Upon careful consideration [it can be seen] that most women do not realize whether or not there is anything other than daily chores worth doing.

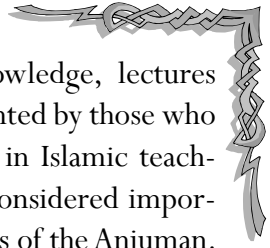
The spirit infused in the children and misgivings spread about Islam by the enemies of Islam through their women can only be countered through women. If there can be any possible counter measure, it can only be done through women.

If it is possible to create a spirit of sacrifice in children, that too, can only be done through mothers. In addition to their own [individual] spiritual and intellectual progress, the future advancement of the jama'at (community) is largely dependent on the efforts of women as well. This is because the youngsters when they grow up are not as impressionable as they are doing childhood. The reformation of women can also be done by [other] women in the same way.

Keeping these matters in view, I invite all those sisters who are supportive of my ideology and accept the need for the following points to come together and start working to fulfill this purpose. If you agree with the following ideas, please let me know, so that this work can be started as soon as possible.

1. It is necessary for women to





get together and increase their knowledge and try to impart the knowledge thus acquired to others.

2. It is necessary that an Anjuman (association) be established so that this work can be continued with regularity. It is necessary that there should be rules [in place] to govern this Anjuman, which should be binding on every member.

3. It is necessary that the rules and regulations are in accordance with Islam as presented by Jama'at Ahmadiyya and that they should help in [maintaining] its stability and progress.

4. It is necessary that articles be read out in the meetings dealing with different questions of Islam, especially those relating to contemporary issues.

5. The articles must be written by the members of the Anjuman themselves so that they gain expertise in using their knowledge in this way.

6. It is necessary that in order

to increase knowledge, lectures should be presented by those who are well-versed in Islamic teachings on topics considered important by members of the Anjuman.

7. It is necessary that in order to maintain the spirit of unity within the jama'at (community), and keeping its progress in mind, all activities should be carried out according to whatever scheme is prepared by the Khalifa of the time.

8. It is necessary that in order to enhance the unity of the jama'at and as is the duty of every Muslim, you [women] should keep striving in the way that the Holy Qur'an, the Holy Prophet (Peace and blessings of God be upon him) and the Promised Messiah (Peace be upon him) have established. And be prepared [to offer] every kind of sacrifice for this task.

9. It is necessary to remain focused on your moral and spiritual reformation. Do not limit your attention to food, drink and what you wear. You must help each other fully for this and the meth-

(Cont. on p. 10)

(Cont. from p. 9)

ods to achieve this should be thought out and adopted.

10. It is necessary to fully understand the extent of your responsibility in the upbringing of children. Instead of making them unkind, disheartened and inactive about religion, make them active, watchful and enduring. Teach them whatever religious knowledge you have, and inculcate the spirit of love and obedience of Allah, the Holy Prophet (Peace and blessing of God be upon him), the Promised Messiah (Peace be upon him) and his Khulafa (successors). Infuse in them the enthusiasm to spend their lives for the sake of Islam and in accordance with its principles. Think of ways to implement this task and put into practice.

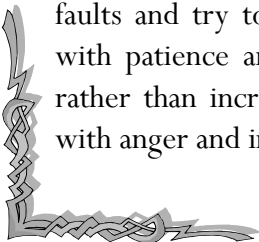
11. It is necessary that when you get together to work, you should overlook each other's faults and try to bring reform with patience and forbearance rather than increase dissension with anger and indignation.

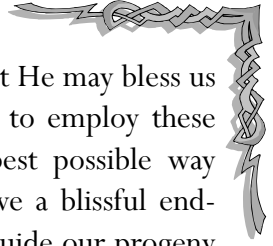
12. It is necessary not to care for the ridicule of the people who usually laugh at any project. The sisters [involved in the project] should acquire the courage and resolve needed to tolerate the taunts or ridicule they are subjected to individually or in the meetings so as to set an example for other sisters and draw their attention to this work.

13. It is necessary that in order to make this idea strong and to ensure that it continues forever, like-minded women should be recruited. This can only proceed if every woman who is a part of the organization considers it her duty to make the other sisters think just like her.

14. It is necessary that in order to save this project from destruction only those sisters should be made members of the Anjuman who agree wholly with these ideas. At any time, if anyone should be in disagreement, God forbid, she should withdraw herself willingly or be removed this Anjuman.¹

15. It is necessary that since the word 'jama'at' is not applicable





to [only] a select group of people, and is inclusive of young and old, poor and rich, so it is fundamental that this Anjuman be free of the distinction of rich and poor. In fact an effort should be made to create love and equality between the rich and the poor. The notion of having contempt for another and regarding oneself superior should be eradicated from their hearts. Because, in spite of differences in status, in reality, all men are brothers and all women are sisters.

16. It is necessary that some methods should be devised for the service of Islam and to help needy brothers and sisters in practical terms. These ideas should be implemented accordingly.

17. It is necessary that since help, and all blessings and all successes come from Allah Almighty, so supplications should be made, and requested for the true purpose which is the basis of our creation may be revealed to us and we may be informed of the best way to achieve that

purpose and that He may bless us with the ability to employ these means in the best possible way and we may have a blissful ending. May Allah guide our progeny through His grace and may He cause this work to continue forever till the end of time according to His Will [Ameen].

If all of you concur with these ideas and are prepared to implement the corresponding rules and regulations which are being presented to and approved by the Anjuman, or will be presented in the future, please sign this sheet of paper. Later on, a signature will be taken from every sister individually, as an affirmation and a pledge to abide by these rules and regulations.

¹ Later Hadrat Musleh Maud (may God be pleased with him) made Lajna Membership compulsory upon every Ahmadi woman.



LAJNA IMA'ILLAH-USA



MOTHERS AND WIVES

By Andleeb Shams Ahmed of
Chicago, Illinois

For centuries, women have been trying to break free from the reigns of men. Whether it is the right to vote, equal opportunity or equal pay, women have always struggled for their place on this earth. Despite all the success gained by women outside of the home, what role of a woman can be undisputed by all religions as being the most important? All faiths can agree that a woman's role as a wife and mother is vital to today's society, but unfortunately, this role has slowly started to dissipate and is a part of the collapse of morality in current times. In order to preserve generations to come, Islam has stressed how absolutely essential it is for a woman to be the best mother and wife.

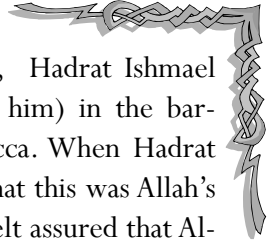
Contrary to society's opinion, Islam has always honored women and given them the highest status, that of being mothers. In fact, it raises mothers to a status greater

than that found in any other religion or ideology. Islam commands kindness, respect and obedience to parents, but specifically emphasizes the respect given to the mother. This shows the importance of a mother's role in Islam.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of God be upon him) said, "Paradise lies at the feet of your mothers," emphasizing that each of us should cherish and respect our mothers and that pleasing them will serve us well not only now, but in the Hereafter also. This Hadith testifies to the high regard a mother has been given in Islam. But why a mother? Whether one is male or female, a person's behavior has been molded by his or her mother. She is the founder of societies! This is why it is crucial for a woman to exhibit a behavior that is morally and spiritually mindful and why she needs to exemplify what it means to be a good person, and more importantly, a good Muslim.

What exactly are a mother's duties? The children of today are the futures of our world. Their





characters, successes and future actions are all reflective of how they are brought up. This is where a woman comes in. If she cannot be a morally and spiritually good person and a good role model for her children, then she will surely fail as a mother. Hillary Clinton sums this up nicely when she says, “If you bungle raising your children, I don’t think whatever else you do matters very much” (It Takes a Village, 1996).

Allah has given women special talents and the psychological makeup needed to take care of children; her strength, patience, kindness, willingness to sacrifice her own comforts and her natural affinity for her children. These traits are key in the successful upbringing of them. Mothers are the silent workers who are indispensable in building character for the next generation. A believing mother, who understands the crucial nature of her responsibility, will imbue her children with faith and moral values and care for her children at all costs.

Hadrat Abraham (Peace be upon him) was called upon by Allah to leave his wife, Hadrat Hagar

and infant child, Hadrat Ishmael (Peace be upon him) in the barren land of Mecca. When Hadrat Hagar learned that this was Allah’s command, she felt assured that Allah would not destroy them. After several days in the scorching desert, Hadrat Hagar was left with a depleted supply of water and a thirsty child. In desperation, she frantically searched all around for a source of shade and water, making several trips between two hills, crying and praying to Allah. When she returned to the child, Hadrat Hagar was astonished to see the ground wet where the child was striking his feet. She began digging until a fountain of water flowed freely and took stones to build a well around it, finally shouting, “zam, zam!” (stop, stop!) when the water was too great. By the grace of Allah, Hadrat Hagar and Hadrat Ishmael (Peace be upon him) were saved. Soon a tribe passed through the area and discovered Hadrat Hagar and her son, surprised to see them there with water. Through immense faith and blessings from Allah, love for her child, and great strength, this mother was able to keep her son alive.

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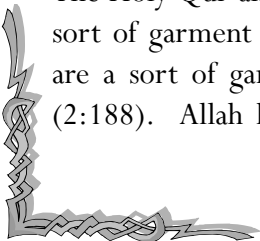
There is no real substitute for a mother's love. It is this love and comfort that is essential to the upbringing of children. A woman must strive her utmost to be chaste, pious, righteous, and religious. It is this behavior she must instill in her children. By doing so, a mother will be the ultimate helping-hand in raising a society that is respectable and highly moral. It is quite evident that Islam has placed women on the highest pedestal in regards to being a mother, but how vital is a wife's role in building our future society?

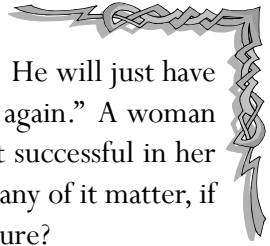
Islam has made it apparent that women are as responsible as men in helping people and children to find their way to God and to guide society on the right path. Marriage is a sacred institution and tradition that needs special attention, therefore, a woman in Islam needs to understand her vital role as a wife.

The Holy Qur'an says, "they are a sort of garment for you and you are a sort of garment for them" (2:188). Allah has made a wife

and husband equal, however, their responsibilities differ. When Allah has stated that a woman is a garment for a man, the word 'garment' gives us the understanding that she provides her husband with protection, comfort, covering, embellishment and support all in the way of a garment. A woman should provide this "garment" to her husband for their entire journey throughout life. A wife should always cover up her husband's weaknesses and shortcomings from others. The same is enjoined upon husbands too since they are also garments for their wives.

Throughout life, a wife will share in the joys, successes, sorrows, failures, dreams and fears of her husband. Therefore, it is vital that a woman stands by her husband's side; loyalty is very important for a successful marriage. One of her most important roles as a wife is to safeguard the honor of her husband. The Holy Qur'an says, "So virtuous women *are those who are obedient, and guard the secrets of their husbands with Allah's protection*" (4:35). She must respect and provide comfort to him. Again, Allah has given a woman the abil-





ity to manage these circumstances in the best possible way. As long as a woman remains on the right path with righteousness and piety, she will be able to provide peace and tranquility within her marriage and her family. And this is what Allah has asked of women.

In recent years, we have started to see a downward spiral of society's moral and spiritual standards. Perhaps one of the reasons that this is happening is that mothers are focusing more on careers and less on child rearing. A woman certainly can work and have a career of her own, however, there must be an equal balance between all of her different roles. I taught high school many years ago and one story will stay with me forever. A student of mine refused to write his term paper for his sophomore English class. By not doing it, he would fail the entire year of English. I called his mother (in hopes she would help me persuade her son not to fail English) and explained the predicament. This was her answer: "I work all day and am tired when I return home. I don't have the energy to argue with him. If he doesn't want to write it, then I

can't make him. He will just have to take the class again." A woman may be the most successful in her career, but does any of it matter, if her child is a failure?

Centuries ago, Islam was at the forefront of women's rights. Today the media erroneously attributes mistreatment of Muslim women, as a tenet of the faith. Many believe that Islam permits the degrading and demoralizing of women, but in truth, Islam has given women the highest honor, that of being a mother and wife. Allah has made women strong, compassionate and loving, capable of succeeding in all the difficult tasks that have been laid in their paths. The future of the world relies upon mothers and wives to take up and flourish in their roles. By taking on this task, women essentially help build a healthy and moral society, necessary for the future. May Allah help all women strive their utmost to fulfill this beautiful goal and in doing so uplift their own lives and the lives of those all around them. Ameen.



THE SUFFRAGIST MOVEMENT: GAIN OR LOSS

By Fauzia Mansoor of Detroit,
Michigan

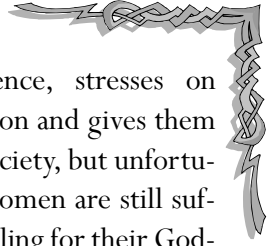
“Throughout the winter of 1917, Alice Paul and her followers in the National Women's Party picketed the White House. They stood silently at the gates, holding signs that said ‘Mr. President, how long must women wait for liberty?’ The picketers were suffragists. They wanted President Woodrow Wilson to support a Constitutional amendment giving all American women suffrage, or the right to vote”(pbs.org).

The Suffrage Movement started in 1848 in Seneca Falls, NY. In 1869, it was split into two organizations and in 1890 they merged again to form one strong movement. Suffragists organized parades and marches to demand women’s right to vote. Alice Paul was one of the Suffragists’ leaders. In 1917, after Alice Paul’s protest in front of the White house, she was arrested and was sentenced to seven months prison, where

she went on a hunger strike and was released. Five hundred women were arrested because of this protest (teachingamericanhistory.com). Finally, on Jan. 9, 1918, Wilson announced his support for suffrage and after a struggle of 70 some years on August 26, 1920, the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution was ratified. On that day, for the first time in history, it was declared that all American women have all the rights, like men, of citizenship. For the first time in America, women were given the rights of equal opportunities of education, the right to vote and the right to own the property. Alice Paul and her party did not stop here; in 1923 they proposed an Equal Rights Amendment to prohibit all types of discrimination on the basis of gender. This Amendment has never been ratified (history.com).

The life of a woman before the Suffrage Movement was extremely difficult. Although the main purpose of this movement was to have the right to vote, which benefitted every woman regardless of race and religion, it opened many other doors for women, helping them to contribute towards society. The





concept of women being inferior in western societies could have religious roots. According to the Old Testament, women were to remain confined in their houses, not allowed to own property, not allowed to ask for a divorce and their rights of inheritance were limited at best.

Since Biblical teachings were unable to provide guidance for the ever-changing world, society had to create and adapt new ideas outside of their religious teachings. The Suffrage Movement was a necessity of that time. If Biblical teachings were solely relied upon, success for women would not have been achieved. It was a social movement, which cannot be compared with any religion except Islam, as their demands were in line with the Islamic teachings about women. Islam gave these rights to women 1,300 years prior to this movement.

Despite the fact that the Bible and the Torah did not give women as many rights as The Holy Qur'an does, the women of those faiths appear to be more independent, more educated and have a much better status in the society. Islam

gives independence, stresses on women's education and gives them equal status in society, but unfortunately Muslim women are still suffering and struggling for their God-given rights. Thus, regardless of the religion, most do not seem to rely or trust their religious teachings. In the name of liberty, Western women have been misusing their rights. Their struggle for the basic rights has led them on a very dangerous path. First, they violated the concept of modesty, then disgraced the sanctity of marriage and now they have commercialized their own image. In the name of freedom of choice and speech, they are breaking the boundaries of human dignity.

Islam teaches moderation. Islam gives women their due rights, however, it does establish some limits and boundaries. For instance, Muslim women are allowed to go out and work with men as long as they cover their heads, dress modestly and safeguard their dignity. Unfortunately today, Islam is being misinterpreted. Muslims are not reflecting the true picture of Islam. Muslim men have distorted

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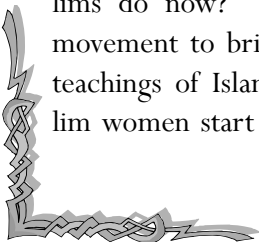
Muslim women's image by misinterpreting the Qur'anic teachings. Islam is being attacked from every side. Whether the issue is a terrorist attack or women under veil, Islam and Muslims are being scrutinized. The Islam that is being ridiculed is far from the religion presented by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings of God be on him). This fate was prophesized by The Holy Prophet (Peace and Blessings of God be on him) himself.

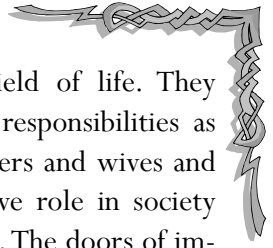
“A time will come when nothing will remain of Islam except its name and nothing will remain of the Qur'an except its script. Mosques will be full of worshippers, but as far as righteousness is concerned they will be empty and deserted. Their “ulema” will be the worst of creatures under the canopy of heavens. Evil plots will generate from them and to them they will return”. (Mishkat)

The question is what should Muslims do now? Do they need a movement to bring back the true teachings of Islam? Should Muslim women start fighting for their

rights? Unlike followers of other religions, Muslims already have a complete code of life; The Holy Qur'an. According to its teachings, the Islamic revival was dependant on a divine reformer. “He it is Who has raised among the Unlettered people a Messenger from among themselves who recites unto them His Signs, and purifies them, and teaches them the Book and wisdom, although they had been, before, in manifest misguidance; And among others from among them who have not yet joined them. He is the Mighty, the Wise”. (62:3-4)

Fortunately, such a reformer has appeared in the person of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian (Peace be on him). The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, under his divine guidance, has presented the true picture of Islam. Ahmadi Women are fortunate that the Second Khalifah, successor, Hadrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmood Ahmad (May God be pleased with him) established for women their own organization within the Jama'at, Lajna Ima'illah. Ahmadi women do not have to demand their rights like Alice Paul did in 1922. Hadrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmood Ahmad (May God be pleased with him) felt that Ahmadi





women's participation in society had equal or greater importance as that of men's. At the time of an annual gathering in 1923, while addressing the ladies he said:

“Religion cannot thrive without your advancement. You can make this success everlasting by recognizing your responsibilities. You are responsible for training the future generations. Your impression on them is everlasting as opposed to our (men) influence. The onus is thus on your shoulders. It is you who can establish the religion Islam, crush the satanic forces, and establish the progress of religion with such force as will astonish other nations. In the end I pray that may Allah the Almighty make the men and women of our Jama'at understand their responsibilities and we be steadfast in fulfilling these obligations. And may we become such an unyielding force that none can resist our path. Ameen” (Al-fazl 23 Jan. 1923 pages 5-7).

Now it is the Ahmadi women's responsibility to show the world the true picture of Islam. Lajna Ima'illah has been showing this world that women can, without crossing moral limits, achieve suc-

cess in every field of life. They can fulfill their responsibilities as mothers, daughters and wives and can play an active role in society at the same time. The doors of immorality opened by the Suffragist's Movement in the western world could have been avoided if the freedom of choice was not expressed through the uncovering of or misusing of a women's body. Today's western female society is again in the need of a movement to reverse the untoward advances made as a result of this so-called freedom of choice. They need movements to give them back their purity, dignity and modesty, which were once a feminine hallmark. Unfortunately, they have shut all doors of revival. Ahmadiyyat, the true Islam, is the only solution, which gives both religious and social freedom, along with maintaining the sanctity and dignity of a woman. One day Lajna Ima'illah will be recognized as the most successful women's organization and Ahmadi Muslim women will change the image of women around the world (Insh'Allah).



A MOTHER'S LOVE



By Andleeb Shams Ahmed
of Chicago, Illinois

A Mother's love is something
that no one can explain,
It is made of deep devotion
and of sacrifice and pain,
It is endless and unselfish
and enduring come what may
For nothing can destroy it
or take that love away . . .
It is patient and forgiving
when all others are forsaking,
And it never fails or falters
even though the heart is breaking . . .
It believes beyond believing
when the world around condemns,
And it glows with all the beauty
of the rarest, brightest gems . . .
It is far beyond defining,
it defies all explanation,
And it still remains a secret
like the mysteries of creation . . .
A many splendor miracle
man cannot understand
And another wondrous evidence
of God's tender guiding hand.





SIMPLICITY OF THE WIVES OF THE HOLY PROPHET (PEACE AND BLESSINGS OF GOD BE UPON HIM)

By Ayesha Rashid, Richmond, VA

The Holy Prophet (Peace and Blessings of God be upon him) experienced both adversity and prosperity in his blessed life. Even after he became the de facto ruler of Mecca, he lived modestly and with humility. One would think that as the King of Arabia, he must have saved at least some wealth for his wives and children. On the contrary, when he passed on, his house had but a few dates and some water. Rather than keeping money for himself or his family, the Holy Prophet continually spent it all in the way of Allah. His wives adopted this exact mindset. As Mothers of the Believers, they set extraordinary examples of how to lead simple lives.

Several of the Holy Prophet's (Peace and Blessings of God be upon him) wives belonged to affluent families. Yet, upon the wish of their beloved husband they preferred modesty in place of luxury. Hadrat Khadijah, the Holy Prophet's first wife, was a business tycoon in Mecca. She inherited her father's trade business and, with her excellent management skills, de-

veloped it into a thriving company.

At the time of her marriage to the Holy Prophet, her caravan routes stretched as far as Syria and Yemen. It is said that whenever Meccan caravans embarked upon a journey to the above-mentioned countries, Khadijah (May God be pleased with her)'s cargo would be equal to the caravans of all other merchants of Mecca combined. Upon hearing of the integrity and uprightness of the Holy Prophet, she hired him to manage one of her caravans to Syria. This trip happened to be such a great success that afterwards, Hadrat Khadijah sent a marriage proposal to the Holy Prophet. Though she was 15 years his senior, the Holy Prophet accepted Hadrat Khadijah's offer. Once married to the Holy Prophet, Hadrat Khadijah presented all her wealth to him. This act demonstrated her wisdom and her high level of trust in her husband. In Tafsir-e-Kabir, Hadrat Khalifatul Masih 2nd elucidated Hadrat Khadijah's wisdom behind this decision. He explains that Hadrat Khadijah realized the disparity in the financial status of her and her husband. She recog-

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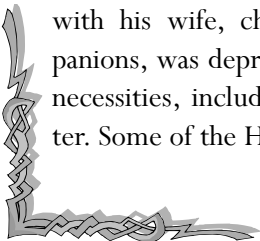
nized the fact that the Holy Prophet would not ask for money from his wife due to his high level of humility and self-sufficiency. Therefore, a few days after their marriage, Hadrat Khadijah gave all her wealth to the Holy Prophet and told him to spend however he wishes .

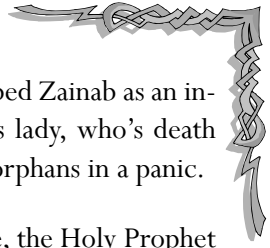
The Holy Prophet (Peace and Blessings of God be upon him) recalled this sacrifice all his life. He commended Khadijah in the following words: Allah never gave me a better wife than Khadijah. She believed in me when the other people denied me. She put all her wealth in my service when other people withheld theirs from me. And Allah gave me children through Khadijah.

Hadrat Khadijah, a woman who spent most of her life in comfort and luxuries, gladly spent the last few years of her life, in suffering and distress, all for the sake of Allah and the Holy Prophet (Peace and Blessings of God be upon him). In the seventh year of the advent of Islam, the Meccans enforced a social boycott upon Muslims. The Holy Prophet along with his wife, children and companions, was deprived of life's basic necessities, including food and water. Some of the Holy Prophet com-

panions slipped out at night to bring some food but most of the time they survived on leaves and grass. This inhumane state of affairs persisted for 3 years and was devastating to Hadrat Khadijah's health. She passed away as a result, just a few days after the blockade was lifted. Even in such appalling a condition, she did not complain to her husband and did not remind him of her pre-marriage affluent lifestyle. Instead, she was at his side throughout this time of hardship and patiently bore every adversity unreservedly.

Hadrat Ayesha (May God be pleased with her) also came from a wealthy background. She had the honor of being the youngest wife of the Holy Prophet (Peace and Blessings of God be upon him). She too saw times when life's basic necessities became luxury items. For example, the standardized interiors of the Holy Prophet's houses were simple. Each house comprised of one room and a small courtyard. A temporary partition would be erected in those rooms if the Holy Prophet's companions came to see him. Ayesha placed bedding on the floor at night to sleep upon. Hadrat Ayesha relates, "Our bed was so small that I would stretch my legs when the Holy Prophet would stand up in





prayers and fold them when Huzur prostrated in Sajdah.”

Hadrat Ayesha has also related, “Sometimes a month would go by upon the family of Muhammad and smoke would not rise from any house among his houses.” Abu Salma inquired, “What did they eat then?” Ayesha replied, “Dates and water. However, we had neighbors who had pet goats. They would send milk for the Prophet.” It should be noted that this was also the Holy Prophet (Peace and Blessings of God be upon him)’s Sunnah after migration from Mecca to Medina, when the Muslim’s financial status was comparatively improved from Mecca.

Even in such an adverse state, the Holy Prophet’s (Peace and Blessings of God be upon him) wives continually spent in the way of Allah. Two of his wives are specifically known for their generosity. Hadrat Zainab bint Khazeema was known as Mother of the Poor due to her compassion and support for the less fortunate. Hadrat Zainab Bint Jahsh was highly skilled in making leather products. Instead of using that money on herself, she too worked to help the poor, spending whatever she earned in the cause of Islam, widows, orphans and the deprived. Upon her death, Had-

rat Ayesha described Zainab as an incomparably pious lady, who’s death left widows and orphans in a panic.

Before his demise, the Holy Prophet (Peace and Blessings of God be upon him) foretold that whichever of his wives has the longest hands will be the first to meet him in paradise. At this all his wives began to measure their hands. The Holy Prophet then explained that his prophecy did not refer to physical hand length, but reflects the generosity of his wives. At the time of Hadrat Zainab bint Jahsh’s demise, everyone realized that due to her high standards of generosity, she was the recipient of this glad tidings.

The Holy Prophet (Peace and Blessings of God be upon him) did not approve of his wives indulging in extravagances. The Mothers of the Believers were not expected to use even those things that were considered lawful for the believing women. It is related in Musnad through Hadrat Ayesha that, “The Holy Prophet forbade us to use five things: Silk clothes, gold ornaments, utensils made of gold and silver, red plush mattresses and clothes made of a combination of silk and crepe.” Once, Hadrat Ayesha wore gold

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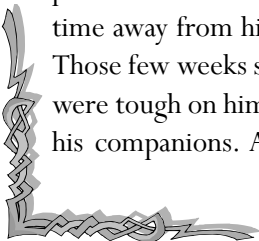
bracelets. The Holy Prophet (Peace and Blessings of God be upon him) suggested to her to instead use silver bracelets dyed with saffron, to which Ayesha readily agreed. Such was the high standard of simplicity and obedience among the wives of the Holy Prophet.

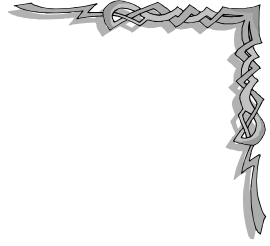
To ensure that his wives were provided for, the Holy Prophet (Peace and Blessings of God be upon him) allocated a certain amount of money every month for each of them. However, the hypocrites of Medina were known to cause trouble for the Holy Prophet. The hypocrites attempted to convince some of the wives to request for an increase in their allowance, encouraging them to leave their simple lifestyles. After the Battle of Ditch and the banishment of Banu Quraizah, Muslims became the recipients of a large amount of war booty. These provisions were distributed among the companions. Some of the Holy Prophet's wives attempted to convince him to increase their monthly allowances as well. The Holy Prophet disapproved and decided to spend some time away from his wives to reflect. Those few weeks spent in separation were tough on him, his wives and on his companions. At the end of that

period, Allah revealed the verse of Takhbeer, which advised all the Holy Prophet's wives to choose between the companionship of their husband or worldly benefits. All the wives unanimously chose the former.

According to the interpretation by the Second Khalifah Hadrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmood Ahmad, "I will provide for you and send you away in a handsome manner" implies that the wives of the Holy Prophet (Peace and Blessings of God be upon him) enjoyed free will, and if any of them would have elected to part company with him, it would have entailed no displeasure from God. On the contrary, she would have been handsomely provided for. This shows that his wives' love for the Holy Prophet surpassed their desire for all worldly objectives. It is reported that during the time of the 2nd and 3rd Guided Khalifah's of Islam, high allowances were provided to the Mothers of the Believers, yet they kept their personal expenses very low and spent the rest of the money in alms and charities.

The wives of the Holy Prophet (Peace and Blessings of God be upon him) were excellent exemplars of simplicity for the women of all times. Their simplicity and generos-





ity in the way of Allah served Islam in its infancy. In the latter days, it is the responsibility of the Ahmadi Muslim ladies to adopt examples of Holy Prophet's wives so that they too can effectively serve Islam and can become the recipients of Allah's love. May Allah raise the status of the wives of the Holy Prophet in paradise and may He assist us in following in their footsteps. Ameen

i Tafseer e Kabeer Volume 10, Page 334

ii Istiab Volume 6 Page 741

iii Zafrullah Khan, Muhammad, The Excellent Exemplar, Muhammad

iv Amtul Rafiq Zafr, Mutaher Ayeli Zindgi

v Amtul Rafiq Zafr, Mutaher Ayeli Zindgi Page 107

vi Tabqat Vol 8 Pg 78

vii Amtul Rafiq Zafr, Mutaher Ayeli Zindgi

viii O Prophet! say to thy wives, 'If you desire the life of this world and its adornment, come then, I will provide for you and send you away in a handsome manner. (33:29)

ix Five Volume Commentary Pg 2117



THE WIVES OF THE HOLY PROPHET (PEACE AND BLESSINGS OF GOD BE UPON HIM) AS AN EXAMPLE FOR US

By Nazayat Parvez of Austin, Texas

As women in a progressive world, it is becoming more and more necessary to remind ourselves of our values and duties as we strive to become better role models for our society. We can only better ourselves and spread positive influence by following the guidelines set down by Allah.

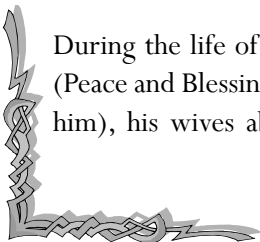
Along with the Qur'an, Allah has graciously provided us with the righteous characters of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of God be upon him) and his wives for the sake of guidance. Behind the one true, perfect man, were extraordinary women who purposely served as emblems of piety, truthfulness, generosity, compassion and strength, especially for other women, orphans and the poor. They were the source of guidance during and after the Prophet's time and still are exemplary figures for future generations to come.

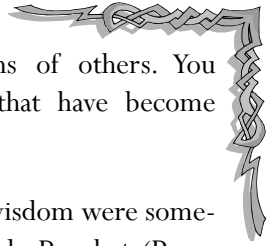
During the life of the Holy Prophet (Peace and Blessings of God be upon him), his wives abided by him and

the word of Allah, even in the most tumultuous of times. Allah advised the women of the time and said in the Holy Qur'an: "Wives of the Prophet, if you safeguard your dignity, you are not like other women. So speak in a simple, straightforward manner... and always say the good word... do not show off in the manner of the women of the days of ignorance; and observe Prayer and pay the Zakat, and obey Allah and His Messenger. Allah desires to remove from you all uncleanness, O Members of the Household, and to purify you completely..." (33:33-34).

As firm believers of Islam, the Prophet's wives listened to him and safeguarded his teachings in a way that became extremely useful for future generations. They committed the Holy Prophet's (Peace and Blessings of God be upon him) words to memory and followed his example so completely that after his demise, people came to his wives for advice in all aspects of life.

"No one can claim a higher status than the wives of Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of God be





upon him). They performed all domestic chores and they were diligent in worship. They strove to sacrifice even the most basic necessities, such as sleep, for the pleasure of Allah. They were considered to be the “Mothers of the Believers” whose noble examples of diligent worship and selflessness should be passed down to all believers, like mothers passing valuable lessons to their children.

Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of God be upon him) treated all his wives fairly but could not help loving Hadrat Khadijah (May God be pleased with her) the most, for she was a source of comfort for him from the very beginning. Being his first wife, she stood by her husband and provided stability in his life even when he himself was unsure of it. At the time when the Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of God be upon him) received his first revelation in cave Hira, he came home with cold sweats, worried that he would not be able to fulfill the immense task bestowed upon him by Allah the Almighty. It was Hadrat Khadijah’s unwavering belief in Allah and in the truth of her husband’s words that allowed her to say, "Fear not, be happy, God will not cause you any harm. For you are kind to relations. You speak the truth; you

bear the burdens of others. You possess virtues that have become lost..."¹¹

These words of wisdom were something that the Holy Prophet (Peace and Blessings of God be upon him) could not forget. He spoke of her and treated her friends well even after she passed away. His love and respect for his first wife was so strong that Hadrat Ayesha became envious of her. The Holy Prophet (Peace and Blessings of God be upon him) explained to Hadrat Ayesha “that she had become his companion when he was all alone and helpless. She gave him all her wealth and bore him children. When the world rejected him, she validated him.”

It can be safely said that Hadrat Khadijah was a great role model, not only for the women of her time, but also for those of today. Allah says in the Holy Qur’an that “...They are a garment for you and you are a garment for them...” (2:188). This simple and beautiful verse represents the duty that two married people have towards each other: to hide one another’s faults and spiritually strive in the way of Allah together in order to improve themselves. This is exactly the way adopted by the Holy Prophet (Peace and Blessings of God

(Cont. on p. 28)



(Cont. from p. 27)

be upon him) of Islam and his wives. When Hadrat Khadijah (May God be pleased with her) stood by the Holy Prophet (Peace and Blessings of God be upon him) of Islam in the most difficult of times, she was following the commandments of Allah. And by doing so, she was setting a great example for all of us.

May Allah grant us the strength to follow the beautiful examples set by some of the most spiritually beautiful women the world has ever seen. Let us remember them and adopt their ways so that we may do justice to their memory and exalted status in the sight of Allah. May Allah help us become like the righteous gems of Islam. Amen.

1 <http://www.alislam.org/library/history/chap3.htm>

THE MOSQUE BUILDERS

Friday Sermon: Inauguration of Khadija Mosque, Berlin, Germany

Sermon Delivered by Hadrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (May God strengthen his hand) Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community.

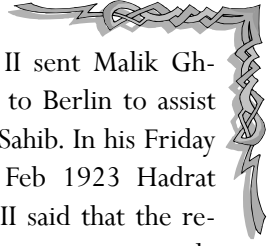
Huzur delivered today's historic Friday Sermon from Berlin, Germany at the inauguration of Khadija Mosque. Huzur cited verse 18 and verse 71 of Surah Taubah (Holy Qur'an).

“He alone can maintain the Mosques of Allah who believes in Allah, and the Last Day and observes Prayer, and pays the Zakat and fears none but Allah; so these it is who may be rightly guided” (9:18).

“And the believers, men and women are friends one of another. They enjoin good and forbid evil and observe Prayer and pay the Zakat and obey Allah and His Messenger. It is these on whom Allah will have mercy. Surely, Allah is Mighty and Wise” (9:71).

Huzur said all praise belongs to Allah that one drop of His shower of blessings has materialized in the form of Khadija Mosque, the first mosque in the eastern part of the country.





Berlin has its own significance. The history of the Community in the country and in particular this city is eighty-six years old. Ahmadi missionaries had come here in the era of Hadrat Khalifatul Masih II (May God be pleased with him). Their reports viewed the German nation as having a sense of compliance that paid

Khalifatul Masih II sent Malik Ghulam Farid Sahib to Berlin to assist Maulvi Mubarak Sahib. In his Friday Sermon of 2nd Feb 1923 Hadrat Khalifatul Masih II said that the reports from Berlin were extremely hopeful with suggestions that arrangements should be made to have a mosque and a house constructed.



Khadija Mosque, Berlin

attention to understand true Islam. Huzur said the endeavors of the early missionaries are associated with the construction of this mosque that the young and the newcomers should be told about so that they may pray for them and also for the early missionaries who went to different parts of the world. The early missionaries to Germany were most optimistic about this country and this city. In 1922, Hadrat Khalifatul Masih II had Maulvi Mubarak Ali Bangali Sahib transferred from the London mission to Berlin. In 1923 Hadrat

In fact he even suggested that Hadrat Khalifatul Masih II should go to Berlin himself. While the Khalifah of the time was not certain about the latter he did not overlook the former request. He promptly advised to purchase a plot of land. A plot of two acres was bought. In the same sermon Hadrat Khalifatul Masih II called on the Ahmadi ladies to collect a sum of 50,000 rupees in three months for the purpose of building a mosque in Berlin. At the time of a united India, this was the first such program entrusted to Lajna Ima'illah

(Cont. on p. 30)



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since their inception. The fervor, passion and devotion with which they responded to this call was exceptional and unique. They created a revolutionary situation of the sort that one notes in the early Muslims. There are indeed examples of such sense of sacrifice to be seen even today. Donating cash and jewelry Ahmadi women amassed 8,000 ru-

dignitaries and was covered by the press as well. The guests numbered in four hundred while the Ahmadis were only four; such were the endeavors of the missionaries of those times. The economic situation of the time became very bleak and recession ensued. The estimated cost to construct the mosque grew beyond the Community's budget and Hadrat Khalifatul Masih II decided that it would be most difficult to run two



Fazl Mosque, London

pees in cash and pledges in the first day and in two months pledges of up to 45,000 rupees were received. When it appeared that the expenditure would be more than initially envisaged the target was increased to 70,000 rupees and the duration increased. In the end the total amount collected was approximately 72,000 rupees. On 5th August 1923, the foundation stone of the mosque was laid and the ceremony was attended by the Interior Minister and many other high-ranking

centers (Berlin and London). Due to the worsening situation in Germany the mission in Berlin was closed and the funds were sent to London. Through the grace of Allah it is with these funds that the Fazl Mosque was constructed in 1924.

It was in 1948 that Sheikh Nasir Sahib came to Berlin and the mission was revived. In those days people traveled by sea. It took Malik Ghulam Farid Sahib twenty two days to reach Berlin. Indeed, he is the schol-



ar who translated the Holy Qur'an in English with a short commentary. The set of Five Volume Commentary of the Qur'an is also done by him although there was a committee set up for the task but most of the work was undertaken by him. He was a scholar with expertise in the English language. He had also compiled a dictionary of the words of the Qur'an, which was published for the first time last year. He was a companion of the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace). Maulwi Mubarak Ali Sahib did his bai'at on the hand of Hadrat Khalifatul Masih I (May God be pleased with him). When Hadrat Khalifatul Masih II made the Tehrik for 'Waqfe Zindagi' (life devotion) in 1917, Maulwi Sahib was one of the 63 young people who offered their names for it. He passed away in 1969 in Bangladesh. Huzur said the Murrabis and missionaries of today should exercise self-examination and read about the early missionaries. These elders made diligent endeavors.



Baitul Ahad
Cleveland, Ohio

Huzur said it was due to the circumstances that a mosque could not be built in Berlin at the time but the sacrifice made by the Lajna of India did not go to waste and Fazl Mosque was constructed. Indeed the historical significance that Fazl Mosque has attained now is known to all. Huzur said he considers the sacrifice and the prayers of the Lajna of the time to be so true and sincere that a mosque was constructed with their efforts and today maybe their progeny has participated in donating to the construction of this mosque. The fervor and zeal they had can still be seen to some extent in Lajna. Lajna collected 1.7 million Euros for the Berlin Mosque of which 400,000 Euros were donated by Lajna UK. If this amount was to be converted in Pakistani currency it comes up to approximately 19 crores (190 million). Huzur said the mosque is built on a plot of just over an acre of land. Despite restrictions etc. permission was given for a 13 meter high



Rizwan Mosque
Portland, Oregon

(Cont. on p. 32)



(Cont. from p. 31)

minaret. The mosque has two halls, a flat, a guesthouse, a library and a conference room. There are plans to make a park as well. Opposition to the mosque is gradually cooling off and Insha'Allah will come to an end when the message of peace will start reaching people from here. Huzur said it is an amazing coincidence that today again the world is facing an economic crisis. The construction of a mosque in Berlin could not be carried out due to the 1923 recession. However, Allah had willed to bestow this blessing on the Community of the Promised Messiah (Peace be upon him) and today its construction was completed before onset of the current economic crisis. Huzur said despite the recent 'credit crunch' the Ahmadis continue to make financial sacrifices with great fervor. It is hoped that Allah will bless the money of the Ahmadis. Huzur said someone told him that tax authorities could not fathom that some Ahmadi's household expenses were less than their 'chanda' contribution. Such is the spirit, Huzur



Baitul Nasr
Willingboro, New Jersey

said, that attracts Allah's grace. It is the obligation of each Ahmadi to maintain this spirit and be grateful for it. Certainly a true believer does not allow this spirit to falter and does not feel any pride over it. We should try and honor the construction of this mosque with this spirit ourselves and also inculcate it in our next generation.

Huzur said Ahmadi ladies should be mindful in particular that the sacrifice they have made will truly be of benefit when they will continue to try and derive beneficence from it and they will only be successful in their efforts when they will bring up their children in accordance with it. Huzur drew attention of men to the favor of ladies on them of building a mosque. Men would only be able to repay this favor if they honored the dues of the mosque. By having this mosque built, ladies have given a message to their men folk that they wish them to worship Allah. If they could, Huzur said, women would build a mosque everywhere. He said he has received a similar request in Canada. Huzur said it is



Yousaf Mosque
Tuscan, Arizona



men who are enjoined to come to the mosque. A woman can, if she so chooses come for Jummah (Friday Prayers) or not come. The sacrifice for the construction of mosque by women is a testimony that they have built it purely and most sincerely for the pleasure of Allah. Huzur said he hoped this was not just his wishful thinking and that the sacrifices made by the women were based on these thoughts alone.

Referring to the verse cited at the start (9:17) Huzur said after the building of the mosque a most important obligation for both men and women was to inculcate a connection with the mosque in their children. This alone connotes believing in Allah and the Last Day (as the verse cites). It is awe-inspiring when we seriously reflect on the state of our belief. Is our belief worthy of being a true belief and do we come in the category of true believers? Indeed, we are most fortunate to have come into the bai'at of the Promised Messiah (Peace be upon him) who



Baitul Jaamay
Chicago, Illinois

has provided guidance for us every step of the way. Huzur read out an extract from the writings of the Promised Messiah (Peace be upon him) elucidating the definition of a true believer and then added that even if there is a tiny deficiency in our morals the Promised Messiah (Peace be upon him) wants us to pay attention to it for it can lead to weakening in belief. If our word and deed is for the pleasure of Allah then we may hope that with His grace He will remove our weaknesses. Huzur said at times one is simply negligent and indolent and does not knowingly slacken in worship and negligently adopts disagreeable matters. If one continues to be careless and does not fulfill the requirements of faith it leads to weakening to belief and to shirk (associating partners with Allah).



Bait ur Rehman
Silver Spring, Maryland

Huzur explained an exquisite point made by the Promised Messiah (Peace be upon him). Referring to the Holy Qur'an 2:5, the translation

(Cont. on p. 34)



(Cont. from p. 33)

of which reads: ‘And who believe in that which has been revealed to thee, and that which was revealed before thee and they have firm faith in what is yet to come.’ The Promised Messiah (Peace be upon him) said that he wondered if the revelation of the Qur’an have been cited then why are the revelations that he received not cited. Allah inspired him to the aforementioned verse and revealed to him that the reference in it of ‘which has been revealed to thee’ signifies the Qur’anic revelations and the reference of ‘which was revealed before thee’ signifies the revelations of the earlier scriptures where as the reference to ‘what is yet to come’ signifies the revelations of the Messiah. This refers to the Divine revelations, which were to be made after the revelations of the Holy Qur’an. Indeed the Arabic word ‘Aakhirah’ mentioned in the verse also means the Day of retribution; however, the elucidation of the Promised Messiah

(Peace be upon him) has proven to be truthful.

It is most heartening that it is the Community of the Promised Messiah (Peace be upon him) that truly honors the responsibility of building and populating mosques. The beauty of a mosque is with it being populated and it is populated when prayers are offered in it five times a day. The locals had complained



Baitul Zafar
Queens, New York

that there were not a great number of Ahmadis living in the area, why build a mosque then? Huzur said this complaint can be removed if people came to offer Salat regularly to the mosque and populate it. Allah also refers to paying of Zakat in the verse. Huzur said these people are astonished that we build our mosques by making financial sacrifices. In making these sacrifices a believer’s complete trust is in Allah, unlike the prevalent financial system based on interest etc. A believer does everything out of love, fear and awe of Allah and is content that in



Baitul Hadi Mosque
New Jersey



accordance with His promise He endows any sacrifice that is made for His sake and indeed He does. Huzur said in many countries of the world when Ahmadis make such sacrifices they are truly in the spirit of their pledge of ‘sacrificing life, property and honor’. They are so enabled because they are guided after accepting the Promised Messiah (Peace be upon him).



Baitul Samee
Houston, Texas

In the other verse cited by Huzur (9:71) Allah mentions friendship between believing men and women. Huzur said this does not entail friendship sans Purdah and mutual modesty, rather this is a friendship that establishes relationships based on sanctity to make sacrifices for each other. These ties of affection grow when mutual grievances are shunned and each person decides to make an effort to do every small act of piety and to set a great example of the relationship of one Ahmadi with another. Each one of us should



Baitul Hameed Mosque
Chino, California

wage a Jihad against thinking ill of others and making negative suppositions about others. Much evil is based on negative suppositions. We should raise the standards of saying the truth and make it our distinction to always speak the truth. Our sense of gratefulness should be such that each moment should bring us tidings of Allah’s mercy and blessing. Forgiveness and forbearance should be our way. Our standards of justice should be so high that they traverse the benchmark of kindness and reach the touchstone of ‘like giving to kindred’. Honoring promises should be our characteristic and our identity so much so that the world would trust us with its eyes shut. Safeguarding others’ honor and sanctity should be our way, men and women both should observe restraining of eyes and make it their characteristic. Ahmadi women should observe Purdah and be conscious of their clothing and be modest. Rights of the neighbors should be paid attention

(Cont. on p. 36)



(Cont. from p. 35)



Masjid Baitul Nasir
Columbus, Ohio

to. Neighbor does not simply mean one who lives next door to one, but people one travels with, works with and indeed the members of the Community.

Huzur said if these social ills and weaknesses are removed we will be justified to call ourselves believers in the practical sense of the word. The verse then cites observance of Salat and paying of Zakat, which Huzur already referred to. This verse speaks of strengthening a Community by honoring each others' dues of friendship. It enjoins good and forbids evil and cites obeying Allah and His Messenger. Huzur said the benefit of coming into bai'at of the Imam of the age and building mosques will only be availed when all this is observed. For those who have been Ahmadis for generations it is through the sense of obedience



Baitul Naseer Mosque
Miami, Florida

of our forefathers that today we are so blessed. Each blessing of Allah should draw our attention to the piety of our ancestors that enables us to enjoy its fruits, may Allah elevate their status in Paradise. At the end of the verse it is cited that those who comply are the ones on whom Allah bestows His mercy. Indeed when Allah is Merciful He also endows. May Allah make all of us continue to have a share of His mercy. May we be able to honor the dues of this mosque.



Baitul Hafeez

St Louis, Missouri

We should take maximum advantage of the media coverage that the mosque will receive. The advantage being that we are able to fulfill the expectations people will have of us. Always try to attain the blessings of this beneficence. It will only come to pass when we worship Allah, set pious examples and inculcate the true spirit of Islam and Ahmadiyyat and love of God and His Messenger in our children. May Allah enable us all to do so.

Pictures for various mosques courtesy of AllIslam.org



Ahmadiyya Mosques Around the World.

Syllabus of Tehrik e Jadid National Quiz Competition
By Anwer Khan, National Secretary Tehrik e Jadid

Q: Who was the first Ahmadi woman who donated funds for the expansion of Masjid Mubarak?

A: Hadrat Syeda Nusrat Jehan Begum, wife of the Promised Messiah had her jewelry sold for Rs 1000 for Mosque expansion

Q: How many mosques were there at the end of First Khilafat?

A: 12, spread over Qadian, Lahore, Dera Ghazi Khan, Jammu and Patiala District

Q: What is the total number of Mosques at the end of the first century of Khilafat?

A: Total number of Mosques as of May 26, 2008 was 15055.

Q: Which Mosques have been built by ladies' contributions only?

A: Fazal Mosque, London; Holland Mosque, Khadija Mosque, Germany; Nusrat Jehan Mosque, Copenhagen, Denmark.

Q: Which Dome has been built by Ahmadi women?

A: Dome of Baitul Huda Mosque was built under Lajna Ima'illah Australia led by Mrs. Naima Shakeel.

Q: Name the Ahmadi woman architect who designed three mosques and the Jamia building in Germany?

A: A German Ahmadi, Mrs. Mubashira Majoka of Frankfort Germany.

Q: What was the name the mosques designed by her?

A: Nasir Mosque in Bremen, Jamae Mosque in Offenbach and Khadija Mosque in Berlin and Jamey Ahmadiyya Germany.

RAKH PESHE NAZAR

By Hadrat Nawab Mubarika Begum Sahiba (Daughter of the Promised
Messiah (Peace be upon him))

Translated by Fowzia Shah, Farina Qureshi and Sabiha Lone

Keep in mind that time, O sister when you used to be
buried alive
The walls of your home wailed, whenever you came into
the world
When the blood of your father's false pride used to boil
'Twas as if your mother had given birth to a snake, so
panic-stricken was she
Those who nourished you with their blood and sweat were
the very ones who shed your blood
Consideration for your benign existence was overpowered
by the hatred for your kith and kin
'Twas as if you were a mere stone or pebble, without any
feelings-without emotions
Remember your disgrace, when you were distributed as a
part of inheritance
The 'Mercy for the whole world' arrives and he becomes
your champion
You too, are considered human; he grants to you all your
rights
He releases you from these atrocities
So send blessings upon that benefactor, a hundred upon a
hundred times a day
Holy Muhammad Mustafa (Peace and Blessings of God be
upon him), the chief of all the prophets



ISLAMIC VEIL AS A LIBERATOR

By Mansura Bashir Minhas

The Veil is perceived as a symbol of backwardness and repression in modern times. However, a study of anthropology reveals that it had been a customary garb for women world-wide till the end of the last century. It was customarily and still is considered a sign of respect and dignity for women from the higher socio-economic echelons in certain parts of the world. It remains an integral component of a nun's attire and is a societal norm and expected adornment in many other religions when women visit places of worship.



Over time, women have chosen to shed it in public in pursuit of liberation, as feminists increasingly scorned it as regressive and regarded it as a hindrance to their emancipation as they constantly strived for equality with their male counterparts. Millions of women all over the world still choose to cover up and in many settings, it is more of a cultural phenomenon and is not necessarily a religious one. Here in the West, however, it is reflexively judged to be a compulsion thrust upon Muslim women.

The French government has taken extreme measures to ban the veil, and starting April of 2011, any woman who steps out wearing a veil covering her face will be breaking the law. An act in the guise of protecting France's secular traditions actually strikes at the core of the basics of freedom of religion and expression. Such a move is inconceivable here in the United States and Muslim women residing here must be appreciative of the freedoms that are guaranteed by the Constitution.

Critics of the veil brandish the mantra of 'gender equality' and their arguments against the veil are focused on how it undermines the individual freedoms of a woman and is an obstacle in the realization of her po-

(Cont. on p. 40)

(Cont. from p. 39)
 tential to the fullest; it is claimed to be an unwarranted hindrance to her performance in various roles and inhibits her from participating in so many activities.

Women worldwide are still struggling for equal rights and fighting hard for justice, and merely shedding the veil has not furthered their cause whatsoever. While they continue to make 75 cents to a dollar when compared with men, it should be apparent that the veil is not a deterrent to their struggle for emancipation.

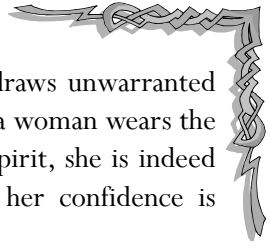
Islam is a universal religion that transcends the barriers of race, nation and creed. It is inconceivable to accuse its commandments of being irrational and impractical and defy the rules of nature if it truly is a universal faith. The Holy Prophet of Islam, Hadrat Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of God be upon him) enjoined upon EVERY Muslim to seek knowledge, even if it requires going to China. This does not imply the exclusion of women.

Hadrat Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of God be upon him) married Hadrat Khadijah (May God be pleased with her), a prosperous businesswoman and later on Hadrat Aye-

sha (May God be pleased with her) his other wife, went on to become one of the greatest scholars of Islam, to whom so many Ahadith are attributed. She also took an active part in the battlefields. With the example of these outstanding women, Muslim women have clear role models.

Opponents of the veil frequently cite the case of Saudi women who are denied some basic rights and are not even allowed to drive a car. Associating such parochial restrictions with Islamic principles is akin to a lack of perspective. These restrictions are reflective of the tribal values and a harsh interpretation of Islamic dogma – Wahabism, which is the prevalent school of thought in Saudi Arabia. These are also a manifestation of the cultural and social norms, which are entrenched in tribal traditions.

When the Taliban disallowed girls from attending schools and burned them in Afghanistan, they were not acting in line with Islamic principles. Despite the advent of Islam, many nations never really implemented its true and pure essence. Rather they continue to oscillate between the extremes of liberalism and radicalism. Turkey and Iran are a case in point. Turkey, in an attempt to model itself as a ‘secular’ state, has taken harsh measures that go as far as banning



headscarves. Iran was liberal before the reigning Shah was ousted in the 1979 revolution.

If the rationale for the veil is explored, it becomes apparent that it is not a symbol of repression. In fact, the ramifications are plentiful and to the contrary. The veil assists in the spiritual progression of women and fosters in them a closer bond with Allah. Women are enjoined to protect their chastity in the Holy Qur'an. Following Allah's commandment is a fulfillment of the core purpose of their creation- to lead lives in a manner that is geared towards Taqwa at all times.

There are many practical, beneficial implications of the veil. Women who adorn it do not have to worry about their outer embellishments incessantly. Things like a 'bad hair day' are never a problem! In the process, abundant time is freed up, and their focus and energy is directed to other fruitful and constructive activities. However, it does not undermine the natural instincts of women to look and feel beautiful. It just allows them to channel that natural desire only in appropriate settings.

The veil enhances a woman's sense of security and offers her protection. Undue exposure can be a source of

discomfort and draws unwarranted attention. When a woman wears the veil in the true spirit, she is indeed empowered and her confidence is boosted.

When young girls observe their mothers adopt the veil in compliance with Islamic injunctions, it becomes a learning process for them. It lets them appreciate that the veil is a perfectly practical thing and not a barrier in any endeavor; rather it is a tool for protecting chastity. Ultimately, when they grow up and it is time for them to confront the issue of wearing the veil, they are able to adopt it with ease and confidence. Shedding the veil in an attempt to assimilate is a sign of weakness and sends a wrong signal to the younger generation. It can shatter their confidence in their faith and foster an inferiority complex. The Veil offers a strong sense of identity for Muslim women; it gives them assurance, is instrumental in character building and ultimately leads them on a path of personal advancement that is in complete harmony with the core purpose of their existence- to submit to the will of Allah.

When Muslim women adorn the veil, it should not be a compromise, one that hinders their per-

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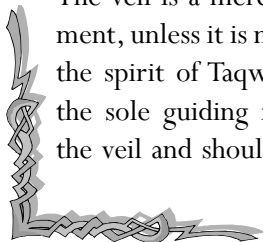
sonal advancement and dissuades them from pursuing careers of their choice. They must deem the veil to be a source of protection, one that guarantees their liberation and frees them from the unnecessary desires of this world. The purpose of their life transcends being a mere object of physical admiration and adulation.

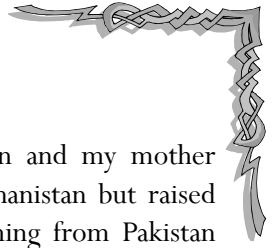
If we are to pave the way for our daughters and wish for them to incorporate the veil as they grow up, it has to be a natural decision and not one that comes with a sense of compulsion and obligation. It should be a completely acceptable and innate choice. Unless young girls are able to comprehend the inherent spirit of the veil, they can have a problem withstanding the societal pressures which expect girls to look and act in a certain way to be socially acceptable. However, Muslim girls have a greater role beyond these mundane expectations; they have the ability to grapple these frivolous concerns if they are imbued with a deep understanding of the issue and are committed to their faith.

The veil is a mere outer embellishment, unless it is not embodied with the spirit of Taqwa. That has to be the sole guiding force for wearing the veil and should be inculcated in

all settings. No matter what the situation is—interaction with people online in interviews or presentations, while shopping at the mall, at the work place, attending college, vacationing or socializing with people in various settings, unless this spirit is upheld, the outer garment will be a mere piece of cloth. It will be a self-defeating undertaking if not coupled with Taqwa. The key lies in a demeanor exhibiting restraint, devoid of a provocative attitude.

The Islamic veil does not only liberate; for women who are able to instill its true spirit in their life, it guarantees them peace. Imbued with a spirit of Taqwa, they become productive citizens of the world. They are able to pursue their intellectual pursuits without any distractions. Being steadfast in their faith and following its injunctions, they can be the agents of change in this tumultuous world. They can shatter the myths about Islam and dilute the perceptions of being ‘confined’. Through their actions, they can demonstrate that they are indeed abundantly talented and liberated. Yet they adorn the veil with utter ease and comfort. They do not consider it an impediment, rather a perfect tool that ultimately paves the way for their liberation.





JOURNEY TO ISLAM

I was born a Sunni Muslim but little did I know that at the tender age of 19 I would become part of the fastest growing Muslim community in the world. I didn't know much about the different sects that were in Islam, all I was raised to know was the "Sunni way." Growing up we would regularly attend the mosque for Jummah, me, my brothers and sister would attend Qur'an classes on the weekends. When I was 17 I had gotten admission into college where I was introduced to a diverse group of religious faiths. I was amazed at how open minded the people were. The way I was raised was that I should only associate myself with other Muslims, but experiencing the unity that was conveyed my first day sparked an interest in my young, curious mind. As the semester went on I had joined a group for all Muslim students. There I was introduced to an eclectic group of Muslims of different sects. I had already known about Shi'ites but that day I was introduced to Ahmadiyyat. When I got home that night, I had posed questions to my parents asking them about Ahmadiyyat, who are they? What are their beliefs? And why hadn't I heard of this specific sect before? My father was born and

raised in Pakistan and my mother was born in Afghanistan but raised in Pakistan. Coming from Pakistan they had already had a major misconception about Ahmadiyyat. My mother responded and told me that there are many sects and that this was just one of them. My father on the other hand was very strict and quick to respond negatively. He forbade me to ask questions about Ahmadiyyat and told me that Ahmadis are not Muslim. He told me never to mention the name again and to disassociate myself from anyone who was an Ahmadi. Being 17 and hearing the hatred and prejudice coming from my father made me wonder why everyone was so against Ahmadiyyat, what was so wrong with calling an Ahmadi a Muslim? It really bothered me that I didn't get a proper response about Ahmadiyyat from my parents but it inspired me to do some research on my own. Every day and every chance I had I would read about Ahmadiyyat online. I would read both the positive and negative things people had to say. The more I read the more I was noticing the similar struggles that the Muslims of the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings

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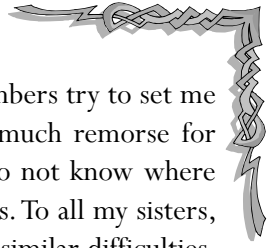
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of God be upon him) and Ahmadis had to face. Both were persecuted mercilessly and were shunned from their communities only because they were following the word of Allah. The more I read about Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (Peace be upon him) the more I fell in love with the love he had for the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of God be upon him) How can anyone claim that this noble and pious man does not follow the teachings of the Holy Prophet (Peace and Blessings of God be upon him) when in fact he is the perfect example of how a Muslim should be. After studying Ahmadiyyat, the life and writings of Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian (Peace be upon him) and praying for Divine guidance, it became evident to me that Ahmadiyyat is indeed the true Islam and that Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian (Peace be upon him) is that same Messiah and Imam Mahdi prophesied by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of God be upon him). By the grace of Almighty Allah, I have seen many powerful and faith-increasing dreams, which I believe were shown to me by Allah the Almighty. I have met the Holy Prophet (Peace and Blessings of God be upon him) twice in my

dreams, once as a young man who received my embrace and another time appearing middle aged at the end of a long corridor. I have also met the Promised Messiah (Peace be upon him) in another dream. He was inside a tent in the middle of a desert at night and gifted me with a gorgeous green head scarf from under his bed of straw. I also met



our elegant Huzur in another one of my dreams where Huzur gifted me with a white head scarf and received me with a daughter-like embrace. These inspiring dreams are direct proof that Ahmadiyyat is the true Islam. I had so longed to see the Holy Prophet (Peace and Blessings of God be upon him) in my dreams and the



fact that I had seen him in my dream after accepting Ahmadiyyat just increased my faith and confirmed my decision. By the grace of Allah, I became inspired to join the holy Community of the Promised Messiah and Mahdi and signed my Bai'at forms in 2009 at the age of 19, at Baitul Aman Mosque in Connecticut, Alhamdulillah! Even though my parents do not support me and want nothing to do with me, the Connecticut Jama'at has shown me love, respect and welcomed me with open arms. Every time I attend the mosque I feel the sense of wholeness that I was searching for. I was not afraid or sad to leave my family because EVERY member from my Jama'at made me feel like I was not alone. I love and respect my parents and do not want to disobey them, but I will not turn my back on Ahmadiyyat which I know is the true Islam and no one can convince me otherwise. Finally my life is moving forward and in the right direction. Ever since I have accepted Ahmadiyyat, I feel I am receiving direct blessings from Allah both religiously and secularly. Being an Ahmadi convert, I encounter opposition for my beliefs from my very own family and friends. It is very difficult for me to live in a home surrounded by people whom I love but do not accept the message.

Some family members try to set me back, but I feel much remorse for them, for they do not know where their salvation lies. To all my sisters, if you encounter similar difficulties, try and resist their efforts to entice you back to your former habits. Suffering and trials strengthen spiritual progress. Even if you make mistakes, keep praying for guidance because Allah is most Forgiving, Ever Merciful and Acceptor of Repentance. I would like to end with a verse from the Holy Qur'an which states:

“Surely thou (O Muhammad) wilt not be able to guide *all* whom thou lovest; but Allah guides whomsoever He pleases; and He knows best those who would accept guidance.” (28:57).

And Allah had guided this Sunni Muslim woman to the true Islam, My name is Syeda Sana K. Shah, I am 22, and I am proud to say I am a Ahmadi Muslim.



OPINIONS

Balancing Rights and Responsibilities

By Dr. Shanaz Butt

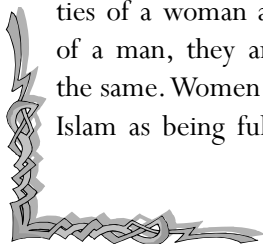
Dr. Shanaz Butt was recently the national president of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Women's Auxillary for a period of ten years. She is a professor and administrator, active in her community, and a wife and mother.

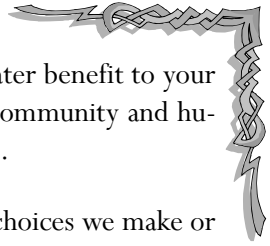
Based on the Qur'anic verses 25-26 from Surah Ibrahim, the foundation of Islam can be compared to a tree whose roots are firmly planted in the earth and the branches spread into heaven. The reference to branches spreading to the heavens also signifies the wide sphere of influence (positive or negative) that we can provide in the home, community and ultimately, the world based on understanding our roles, rights and responsibilities.

The Holy Qur'an and examples of Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings of God be upon him) provide many examples to show that while the rights and responsibilities of a woman are equal to those of a man, they are not necessarily the same. Women are recognized by Islam as being full and equal part-

ners of men in the procreation of life. Both are garments for one another and through this partnership, a woman fulfills her responsibilities as a wife and mother. However, her rights and responsibilities as a mother are greater because she enjoys more recognition and a higher honor through this role. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings of God be upon him) acknowledged this honor when he declared that "Paradise lies under the feet of the mothers." Islam also enjoins the seeking of knowledge upon all Muslims, thus making no distinction between man and woman in the pursuit of education. Islam grants woman equal rights to contract, to enterprise, to earn and possess independently. It also safeguards and protects a woman's character and honor, such that a Muslim woman is distinguished by her veil of honor, dignity, chastity and modesty.

Living in the USA, we have an opportunity to not only receive the best of higher education but also the opportunity to contribute to the society through this education and training. God has given us talents, abilities, opportunities and the time to do whatever we desire - we can mold a future generation whichever





we want, we can make our homes a peaceful haven and we can contribute to the community by giving of ourselves in ways that can benefit others less fortunate than us. Over the past 2-3 decades, as Muslims have immigrated to the West in large numbers, both boys and girls were encouraged to excel academically and professionally. As a result, an increasing number of Muslim women hold successful careers as lawyers, doctors, professors, educators and journalists. While there is nothing wrong with becoming educated and developing a career, a Muslim woman should not neglect her marriage or her motherhood because of her career since motherhood is just as important a career that carries with it immense and long-lasting rewards!

The same holds true for Ahmadi women. As more of us begin to shoulder the responsibilities of motherhood as well as a career, how do we try to balance our responsibilities at home and outside? Based on the Hadith, "actions are according to our intentions" (Bukhari), our intentions should be pure and for the right reasons - whether we are choosing a life partner or a field of study or a career path. Selections should not be based just on financial and material reasons. The choice should be based

on providing greater benefit to your family unit, the community and humanity in general.

No matter what choices we make or what priorities we think are important, we ultimately owe responsibility to our Creator, self, family and the society that we live in. And in order to fulfill these responsibilities, our faith system should be strong. Belief and trust in one God is the basic tenet for all Muslims. For example, when God gave me the opportunity to proclaim, "There is no God, but Allah, the one without any Partners," then I have a huge responsibility to conduct my thoughts, words and deeds in accordance to this proclamation. Thus, my everyday activities should be defined and recognized by this proclamation. And as I reflect on the roles I play in the home (as wife and mother), University (as a researcher, educator and administrator), in the community (service to professional and social organizations), I realize that while my rights in each sphere may not be the same, my responsibility to all are the same. The reason being that no matter what the work is at hand or what role we are presently playing, we fulfill our responsibilities to them through a deep rooted value system that defines our moral and spiritual foundation. One can-



(Cont. from p. 47)

not be honest in one set of duties, while dishonest in another. If our thoughts, words and deeds reflect who we are, then no matter what kind of duty we perform, our moral character will be reflected in the fulfillment of that responsibility. Thus, my value system will not waver whether at home, or work or doing community based service; my roles may change; however, my practice should not.

It is important to note that what makes us valued and respected in the eyes of God and His creation (family and community) is not our prosperity, position, intelligence, physical strength or beauty; but only our moral and spiritual consciousness and awareness (righteousness). As our relationship with God improves, we find that our relationship with people also improves. When we are fulfilling our responsibilities to the family or community for the sake of God, we are less inclined to be affected by peer pressure and politics and more inclined to stay true to our values and principles.

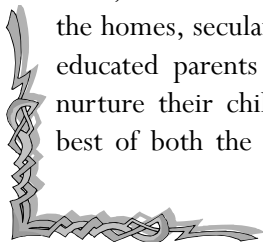
Thus, I believe that beginning from the homes, secularly and religiously educated parents should train and nurture their children to have the best of both the worlds; i.e., they

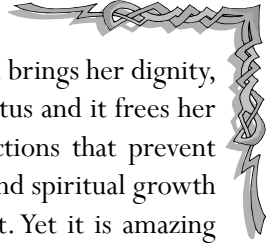
can be successful in their marriage, careers and community if the family unit so chooses. As women, we have a huge impact on the future generations because we are the first group of role models for our children. It should be our prayers that when our daughters grow up, they will aspire to become women of excellence in the dynamically changing roles they will play. Similarly, when our sons become men, their expectations and views of a suitable wife should include a partnership with well-balanced Muslim woman. With continued education and communication, both men and women should better understand and respect each other's roles and responsibilities in the home and society, ultimately benefiting future generations to come.

Islamic veil as a Liberator

By Khoshnoor Paracha

In the western world there has always been a misunderstanding about the Islamic veil. For many westerners, the Islamic veil represents the oppression, which Islam imposes on women when in fact, Islam teaches women to be modest. Women in Islam are taught to safeguard themselves from obscene and immodest acts. The Islamic veil or hijab helps





us to keep ourselves protected from depraved and sinful acts and it does not in any manner suppress women's rights.

The Islamic veil has many benefits for Muslim women; it is a natural protection for them. The veil protects women from the evils of the world, also from the wrong intentions of foul men. When a women walks on the street with the veil on, she feels peace and security underneath. With this comes confidence, respect and honor, which no other garment can give her. The Holy Qur'an has beautifully summed up its teachings for all regarding the veil in the verse:

“O Prophet! tell thy wives and thy daughters and the women of the believers, that they should draw close to them portions of their *loose* outer coverings. That is nearer that they may *thus* be distinguished and not molested. And Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful.” (33:60)

In this verse, God has given a command to all Muslim women and He has clarified that His orders must be obeyed.

The Islamic veil is not a drawback or a disgrace for Muslim women in any way or manner. In reality, it is the

opposite. The veil brings her dignity, it elevates her status and it frees her from the obstructions that prevent her from moral and spiritual growth and improvement. Yet it is amazing to see how she handles the discouragement and the negative thinking of modern society. The reality for her is that the Mercy and blessings of God are with her and she realizes that the veil is for her own advantage.

Today, if women start to understand the true teachings of Islam about the veil, they will come to know that it is a great blessing. It is for their own betterment from which they will gain benefits and a high status, not in the eyes of the worldly people, but in the sight of God Almighty. If they realize the freedom that this veil provides to them from evil, dishonorable and immoral acts, they will find a different type of peace, satisfaction and confidence within themselves, which will help them face the world and stand up for their rights. The veil will provide them with a feeling of bliss and the divine protection of God Almighty. Insh'Allah.



CURRENT EVENTS

The Veil in the world today

The following article was printed in the Opinion section of the New York Daily News on April 13, 2011.

(http://www.nydailynews.com/opinions/2011/04/13/2011-04-13_french_burka_ban_is_a_mistake_its_politicians_against_womens_rights.html)

French burka ban is a mistake: It's politicians against women's rights

By Nusrat Qadir
Daily News Staff Writer

As I was leaving work the other day, a co-worker complimented my Muslim head covering. It was a lovely sentiment to hear and I walked away smiling, thankful for the religious tolerance that marks American society.

Sadly, however, the approximately 2,000 women who choose to wear the burka - as the covering worn by female adherents of Islam is known - in France will now be fined and possibly arrested. As of this writing, two women have been detained and one fined, under France's onerous new "burka ban," which results

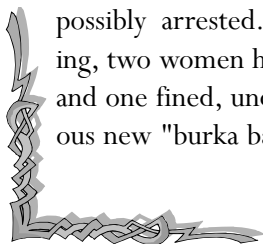
from longstanding tensions between Muslim immigrants and French authorities.

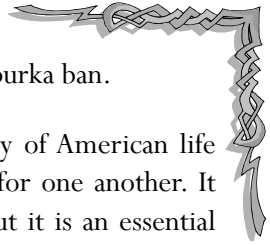
Indeed, such a concept seems foreign to those of us who value the freedom we ostensibly have in Western nations to wear just about anything we choose.

As a member of the moderate Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, I appreciate the freedom to express my faith through clothing, a right shared by every American woman.

At the same time, I am upset and disappointed over the sudden sweep of intolerance toward the burka in France. As French President Nicolas Sarkozy said, "It's a sign of enslavement. . . . It will not be welcome in the French Republic."

There is profound irony in this misguided statement. France's infringement on a woman's right to practice her faith as she sees fit is precisely the type of intolerance displayed in Muslim countries where extremists force women to wear the burka. Ultimately, the choice should always be given to the woman, whether she is a resident of Riyadh or Paris - or, for that matter, New York City.





After all, the Prophet Muhammed taught tolerance. As far as clothing is concerned, the Koran simply guides women to dress modestly: "And tell the believing women to lower their gazes and be modest and to display of their adornments only that which is apparent and to draw their veils over their bosoms."

There is no mandate for all women to dress in a certain way. Individual cultures created the traditional garments Muslim women may choose to wear.

French politicians boast that the burka ban protects women's rights, when in actuality it is doing quite the opposite. Hiding behind the pretense of liberalism, France is basically telling its Muslim women that they cannot be trusted with their own faith. This is an odd way to protect someone.

As one of the women detained this week in France defiantly said, "This whole law makes France look ridiculous. I never thought to see the day when . . . the country I was born in and I love, the country of liberty, equality, fraternity, would do something that so obviously violates people's freedom." She certainly does not sound like the "enslaved" woman Sarkozy claimed he was pro-

tecting with the burka ban.

A defining quality of American life is our tolerance for one another. It may be messy, but it is an essential element of who we are. We may not always understand each other, but we respect difference for the sake of our richly diverse culture. It is this very richness that France lost with its burka ban.

To complement this article, Saliha Malik , the National President of Lajna Ima'illah offers some words of wisdom:

"A very well written piece. However, I am slightly concerned by the references we constantly hear that the covering for a Muslim woman is a choice. Whereas Islam is a choice, the covering is an obligation clearly explained in the Qur'an, - though it would not be forced upon women as they freely made their choice to be Muslim. Our long commentary by Hadrat Musleh Maud (May God be please with him) explains the Arabic words used for covering and this explanation is reiterated by our Khulafa.

'O Prophet! tell thy wives and thy
(Cont. on p. 52)



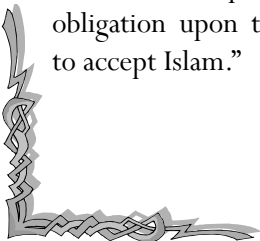
(Cont. from p. 51)

daughters and the women of the believers that they should draw close to them portions of their loose outer coverings. That is nearer that they may thus be distinguished and not molested. And Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful.' (33:60)

The meaning of the Arabic words used in this verse to describe coverings includes the covering of the head and partial covering of the face. (Long Qur'anic commentary on 33:60)


However, for work the face can be uncovered (refer to long commentary of the Holy Qur'an 33:60 and also see khutba January 30, 2004).

Members of our community feel that the total covering observed by these women that provoked the ban is too extreme - hence the extreme reaction. Nevertheless we support them, as we do not wish to see the interference of governments in such matters. The Promised Messiah (Peace be upon him) has given us a beautiful understanding of the observance of purdah, which is an obligation upon those who choose to accept Islam."






AYESHA READERS



The Ayesha is not the same without your voice. We'd love to hear from you on any of the Ayesha's recent themes or any other topic relevant to "Women in the Holy Books." Please note that this is not limited to women in the Holy Qur'an. If you would like to contribute, please forward your articles and poems to the Ayesha Editor. Please forward all material to:



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