

# Refresher Course 2018

## • Tabligh Workshop

Simplified answers to common questions  
asked by Tabligh Contacts

# A colleague at work asks you why you are not shaking hands with men - how do you respond?

- ❖ *Answer – Islam has a philosophy of segregation of the sexes. It is advisable to avoid idle chitchat with the opposite sex, mixed parties and shaking hands with the opposite sex (Pathway to Paradise). All such occasions should be avoided which may give rise to free mixing of the two sexes.*
- ❖ Such a loose atmosphere in society would create many short circuits of emotional channels between men and women. That should be avoided.
- ❖ No Ahmadi girl/young woman should have any complex of any sort that they cannot greet men. When a handshake with men is not allowed, then this should be followed. Similarly men should try not to shake hands with women. If God's grace is to be had, then all apparent small commandments should be followed. (Friday sermon, Khalifatul MasihV, 11 October 2013)

# A Journalist you meet asks what is your view if the burqa was banned in the UK?

- ❖ *Answer - The Quran instructs Muslim women to cover up in order to protect their modesty. This is adopted by Muslim women in different ways according to their culture and understanding of the Islamic teachings. Some interpret this as the covering of their face, while all agree that the minimum requirement is the covering of the head and bosoms. Ultimately, if a woman freely chooses to veil her face on religious grounds, then this should be respected.*
- ❖ If the UK decided to pass a law that banned the burqa, this would be disappointing as it would directly infringe on the right to religious freedom of women – a human right that Great Britain has long championed. It would be wrong to both isolate and alienate women who have done nothing wrong. Further, this could lead to a dangerous slippery slope. For example, it may open the doors to banning other religious or personal choices, justifying further infringements on rights and freedoms, where would it end?
- ❖ Integration is an important aspect of our lives which creates a harmonious, cohesive and civil society. How can banning ones right to wear a certain item of clothing create a society whereby everyone's cultures/values are respected? It goes against the very essence of mutual respect and tolerance.

# A Teacher at your child's school asks if you can help out with Halloween festivities, how do you respond?

- ❖ *Answer – I respect the right of anyone to hold and celebrate whatever festivities they choose. However, the foundations of Halloween go against the fundamental Islamic teaching of not associating any partners with God. Further, Islam prohibits following rituals rooted in paganism. Also the concept of dressing up as frightening characters and scaring people, young or old, goes against what we teach our children about respect and protection of members of our society.*
- ❖ Halloween originates from old Irish Pagan practices and is based on concepts belonging to witches, concepts which trample upon religion and sanctity of homes. No matter how much fun it may be considered its very basis is wrong and it includes shirk....it is extremely wrong to believe in things that are supernatural even if it is for fun' [Hazrat Kahlifatul Masih V, Friday Sermon, 29 October 2010]
- ❖ It is unacceptable that our children go knocking, door-to door, asking for sweets/chocolates/treats through trick or treating. Rather Islam encourages us to give to others and help them, not to unnecessarily ask our neighbours or friends, which goes against our value and dignity.

# A Journalist at Jalsa asks you why the women are segregated from the men - how do you respond?

- ❖ *Answer - Islam promotes segregation of the sexes for the betterment of a society. At the Jalsa Salana the benefit of the separate spaces allows for a comfortable and relaxed atmosphere whereby men and women are not required to cover up and where they can relax and focus on benefitting from the religious gathering.. Religious settings and gatherings such as the Jalsa Salana are not places of social hangout rather the prime focus is to reap spiritual benefits through prayers and listening to the speeches.*
- ❖ “But Allah is not shy of the truth. And when you ask [his wives] for something, ask them from behind a partition.” (Quran, 33:53)
- ❖ Segregation of the sexes exists in many sectors of our society, whether it be at hospitals, schools, gyms, swimming pools, members clubs or workplaces. However, when an Islamic event is held where men and women are segregated, questions and eyebrows are raised.
- ❖ Ahmadi Muslim women around the world have their own mosque areas, offices and at Jalsa Salana an entire ladies arena to themselves. As Ahmadi Muslim women, we have absolutely no problem with the segregation, rather it is a source of great freedom, liberation and success for us. Furthermore, segregation applies equally to men as it does to women, so any question of inferiority cannot apply for both are bound by this rule in equal measure.

A colleague at work questions why you are covering your head while the Muslim male also working in the same office doesn't have to – is modesty just for women? what should you say?

- ❖ *Answer: Both Muslim men and women are instructed observe modesty, in fact men are instructed first to observe purdah by lowering their gaze and guarding their private parts.*
- ❖ In the Holy Quran, it is Men who have first been commanded to observe purdah and to be modest.
- ❖ *'Say to the believing men that they restrain their eyes and guard their private parts. That is purer for them. Surely, Allah is aware of what they do' [24:31]*
- ❖ Islam declares that women and men are equal partners and protectors of one another. Islam grants equal rights and opportunities to all people, irrespective of gender: In the sight of Allah women are equal to men. Therefore the **veil is not meant to differentiate between men and women**, rather it liberates women and enables them to excel within all dimensions of society.
- ❖ Both men and women play their role in safeguarding the moral values and safeguarding the society from evils which the western society is facing now. If both men and women practice what is prescribed for them in the Holy Quran, their individual actions would complement each other and thus promote a harmonious society.

# Your Sunni Muslim friends ask you to join them in congregational prayers at the university prayer room - what should you do?

- ❖ *Answer: You may agree to lead them in prayer, however if they ask you to be led by another, you should politely decline and say that I can only pray behind someone that holds the same belief as me. It cannot be, that someone that does not have faith in the Promised Messiah (as) will lead me in prayer*
- ❖ If someone was to curse my parents and denounce their truthfulness, would I wish to have any association with such an individual? Of course not. Same is the case here, if someone rejects the Promised Messiah (as) then they are rejecting a Prophet of God, which is a blemish to their faith as Allah says that a true believer is one that believes in all Prophets of Allah.

A friend who has just visited Saudi questions why women there cover their face in public, she wants to know why there are so many discrepancies in the veil?

- ❖ *Answer: The Holy Quran instructs women to observe the veil, but does not prescribe a style or colour. Hence the different styles of the veil are linked to different cultures, traditions and individual preference.*
- ❖ “And say to the believing women that they restrain their eyes and guard their private parts, and that they disclose not their *natural and artificial* beauty except that which is apparent thereof, and that they draw their head-coverings over their bosoms, and that they disclose not their beauty [...]”.  
[24:32]
- ❖ As long as the woman wears a modest loose garment that covers her properly and does not display the contours of her body and covers her hair completely, she will be within the boundaries of the Islamic veil in her appearance.

# A Tabligh contact asks you why it's always Muslims that she sees on the news causing terror and bloodshed?

- ❖ *Answer: In this day and age news about Islam linked with terrorism is a major selling point for all media outlets. Over the years our society has been cleverly manipulated by such newsmakers who have managed to associate terrorism solely with Islam, so much so it has become synonymous to Islam alone.*
- ❖ “Whosoever killed a person – unless it be for killing a person or for creating disorder in the land – it shall be as if he had killed all mankind.” [5:33]
- ❖ “The media, which gladly focuses on the tiny minority involved in brutality, are feeding the propaganda machines of evil groups such as Daesh, yet they fail in their duty to highlight all that is good in the world.”  
[Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmed, Peace Symposium Address 19<sup>th</sup> March 2016]

- ❖ Islam means **peace** and does not condone terrorism in any shape or form. According to Islam. No religion can sanction violence and bloodshed of innocent men, women and children in the name of God since all religions came from God Who sent his prophets to establish peace in the world.
- ❖ It goes against the teachings of Islam to forcefully convert others to Islam:  
*‘There should be no compulsion in religion...’* [2:257]
- ❖ We live in a climate in which Islam’s teachings are being targeted, all cruelties or wars carried out by Muslims are immediately linked to the teachings of Islam.
- ❖ The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community conducts national campaigns to spread the true message of Islam including features in National papers and adverts on buses.

You are having a discussion with an Atheist contact. They ask you, if there is a God why is there still so much suffering in this world?

How do you explain?

- ❖ *Answer: That would mean if God is taken out of the equation, suffering would not exist! But that is not the case. In fact, suffering in the world is because of the Law of nature and an essential part of evolution.*
  
- ❖ “Blessed is He in whose hand is the kingdom, and He has power over all things; *It is He* Who has created death and life that **He might try you**—which of you is best in deeds; and He is the Mighty, the Most Forgiving.” [67:2-3]
  
- ❖ “The struggle between life and death, which produces suffering, is also the means of creating pleasure. It is the **primary motivating force** which fuels the carriage of evolution to move forward eternally.”  
[Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmed, ‘Revelation, Rationality, Knowledge and Truth’]

- ❖ Suffering has been a great teacher, **cultivating and culturing our conduct.**
- ❖ It **develops and refines sensibilities, teaches humility** and in more than one way, **prepares humans to be able to turn to God.**
- ❖ **Remove suffering** as a causative factor in developing man's potential and **the wheel of progress would turn back a hundred thousand times.**
- ❖ If suffering is removed, we will reach an equilibrium, subsequently human race would not be able to move forward, hence it is an integral part of evolution.
- ❖ Much suffering in the world today is as a result of the **actions of Man** not looking after their environment or being motivated by political or materialistic gains.

Some of your colleagues at work can't comprehend that during Ramadan you won't be eating or drinking from dawn till dusk. They allege this seems unfair.

How do you explain this principle of your faith?

❖ *Answer: Fasting is not unfair but is in fact a blessing, an annual 'refresher course' which revitalises our focus on our relationship with God and His creation*

❖ **Commandment of Allah in Holy Quran:**

*O ye who believe! fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may become righteous [2:184]*

❖ **Exemptions for the vulnerable:**

*But whoso is sick or is on a journey, shall fast the same number of other days. Allah desires to give you facility and He **desires not hardship for you**, and that you may complete the number, and that you may exalt Allah for His having guided you and that you may be grateful [2:186]*

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ  
كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ  
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٨٤﴾

شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ  
هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْهُدَى  
وَالْفُرْقَانِ ۗ فَمَن شَهِدَ مِنْكُمُ الشَّهْرَ  
فَلْيَصُمْهُ ۗ وَمَن كَانَ مَرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ  
فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ ۗ يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ  
الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ  
وَلِتُكْمِلُوا الْعِدَّةَ وَلِتُكَبِّرُوا اللَّهَ عَلَى مَا  
هَدَىٰكُمْ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿١٨٥﴾

- ❖ **Common to all Religions:** Fasting is practised in all religions in different forms eg Jewish: Yom Kippur, Christian: Lent, Hindu: Purnima etc
- ❖ **Period of Reflection:** breaking away from being immersed in worldly pursuits and instead seeking a higher goal.
- ❖ **Benefits of Fasting:**
  - **Sacrifice:** being able to sacrifice the essentials to please our Creator.
  - **Self Discipline:** controlling urges and thus mastering 'mind over matter'.
  - **Devotion:** spend more time concentrating on our relationship with Allah, through increased worship, and trying to improve it.
  - **Charity:** spending more on those less fortunate in society and doing good works.
  - **Sympathy:** by experiencing hunger and thirst we empathise with less fortunate who experience this every day.
  - **Strengthening Bonds:** going to the mosque more frequently increases community bond.
  - **Good Habits:** waking early, praying regularly, less wastage of food
  - **Healthy:** promotes detox, rests digestive system, reduces blood sugar, regulates blood pressure, promotes weight loss – even the NHS recognises the health benefits of fasting!

## 12. Your child's school teacher asks you why you are celebrating Eid on a different day to the majority of the Muslim children in the school? Explain.

❖ *Answer: Eid is celebrated according to the sighting of the moon by all Muslims. Ahmadi Muslim's use scientific calculations to determine the sighting*

- ❖ "Whenever you sight the new moon (of Ramadan) observe fast, and when you sight it (new moon of Shawwal) break it, and if the sky is cloudy for you, then observe fast for thirty days" [Muslim]
- ❖ "A month has twenty-nine days in it. Do not start the fast or break it until you see the new moon. If the new moon is obscured from you, then work out (when it should be)." [Al Muwatta: Ibn Umar]
- ❖ Different methods used by Muslims to determine the sighting of the moon:
  - **Option 1:** By actual sighting of the new moon with eyes
  - **Option 2:** By following Makkah
  - **Option 3:** By calculation of birth of the new moon, even though it may not be visible to naked eye, even in perfect conditions
  - **Option 4:** By calculation of actual sighting of the new moon in perfect conditions
- ❖ Ahmadi Muslims follow **Option 4** in which we determine when the moon may be visible if the conditions for viewing are perfect.

### 13. Your daughter has just started using social media as a means of online tabligh. How do you explain to her the etiquettes of using this platform and the concept of cyber purdah?

❖ *Answer: The same standard of behavior is required as if you are sitting face to face. Daughters should not be conversing with boys and sons should not with girls.*

“And say to the believing women that they restrain their eyes and guard their private parts, and that they disclose not their natural and artificial beauty except that which is apparent thereof, and that they draw their head-coverings over their bosoms..” [24:32]

أَوَابَاءَ بُعُوَّتِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَائِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَاءَ  
بُعُوَّتِهِنَّ أَوْ إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنِي إِخْوَانِهِنَّ  
أَوْ بَنِي أَخُوْتِهِنَّ أَوْ نِسَائِهِنَّ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ  
أَيْمَانُهُنَّ أَوْ الشَّيْخِينَ غَيْرِ أَوْلِي الْأَرْبَةِ  
مِنَ الرِّجَالِ أَوْ الطِّفْلِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ  
يَظْهَرُوا عَلَى عَوْرَتِ النِّسَاءِ وَلَا  
يَضْرِبْنَ بِأَرْجُلِهِنَّ لِيُعْلَمَ مَا يُخْفِينَ  
مِنَ زِينَتِهِنَّ ۗ وَتُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا  
إِنَّهُ أَلِيمٌ مُّؤْتِمِنٌ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾

- ❖ Purdah has been prescribed to protect us and honour us
- ❖ No pictures should be placed online or on Twitter, of any part of the body (hands/eyes) as this goes against the concept of *hayyah*
- ❖ Webcams/mic should not be used.
- ❖ If a boy is interested in Ahmadiyyat, daughter should give him the details of male tabligh secretary in the Jamaat who he can contact.
- ❖ Comments should not be posted as official Ahmadiyyah viewpoint but rather personal opinions.

Your friend asks you if there is equality in Islam, why can't women be imams?

*Answer: Islam is the only religion which has emphatically declared equality between the sexes. However, it has prescribed different roles for men and women, complimenting their physical and gender-specific capacities.*

“Whoso acts righteously, whether male or female, and is a believer, We will surely grant him a pure life”(16:98)

مَنْ عَمِلْ صَالِحًا مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ  
مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيٰوةً طَيِّبَةًۢ وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ  
أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٨﴾

- ❖ Men and women are equal spiritually and have equal rights
- ❖ Allah has designed man and women with different capacities, women are capable of having children so they should give priority to raising children whilst men are responsible for providing financial support
- ❖ The roles for men and women are not inferior or superior to one another but simply based on natural functioning: men cannot even aspire to motherhood!
- ❖ Women cannot be imams not due to any spiritual deficiency but due to the different roles

❖ Women **cannot** be imams of men as:

- An imam is required to lead salat prayer 5 times a day, all year. Menstruation will prevent a woman from doing this, as will pregnancy and child birth.
- Our intention should be to pray with sincere concentration and devotion; the physical nature of Islamic prayer makes a woman vulnerable to undesirable glances of the congregation which go against the Quranic teachings of *hayya* and modesty and will be a distraction.
- If the imam is female then the congregation will have to also be mixed – standing shoulder to shoulder with the opposite sex goes against teaching of segregation in Islam.

❖ Women can lead salat among other women but even here they should stand amongst the congregation rather than at the front to preserve modesty.

**15. A Journalist tells you she's heard there is a lot of persecution of Ahmadi Muslims around the world particularly by other Muslim communities. She asks why this is so, and what makes the Ahmadiyya Community different to other Muslim communities?**

❖ *Answer: Ahmadis have been persecuted since their inception in 1889. We consider Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>as</sup> to be the Messiah and Mahdi, which is rejected by mainstream Muslims.*

- ❖ Crux is difference in interpretation of finality of prophethood: *khatamannabiyeen*.
- ❖ Difference between law-bearing and non-law bearing Prophet; No new message will be sent as the Quran is the final scripture/law.
- ❖ Ahmadi Muslims believe that Allah may continue to send non-law bearing messengers to His people, however they will all be subservient to the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> who was the seal of Prophets.
- ❖ Non-Ahmadi Muslims believe that Allah will **not** send any messengers to mankind since the demise of Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup>.
- ❖ As a result Ahmadis are subject to state sanctioned oppression in many mainstream Muslim countries e.g. Pakistan, Algeria, Bangladesh, Egypt, Malaysia etc
- ❖ The Second Amendment to the Constitution of Pakistan 1974 and Ordinance XX 1984 declare Ahmadis to be non-Muslims and further deprive them of religious rights.