



The Aims and Objectives of Lajna Ima'illah



LAJNA IMA'ILLAH PUBLICATIONS

The Aims and Objectives of Lajna Ima'illah

Isha'at Department - Lajna Ima'illah
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Message from Hazrat Khalifatul- Masih V(aba)

On 25th December 2022, His Holiness, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (aba) concluded the Annual Convention (Jalsa Salana) of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in Qadian with an inspirational address. Lajna Ima'illah were incredibly fortunate that this was also the very day 100 years ago when Lajna Ima'illah was established. Lajna were blessed with a special message from his Holiness as a reminder of the responsibilities we have as members of this organisation.

“Today Lajna Ima'illah has reached the hundred-year mark since the inception of their organisation. Lajna must remember that they ought to evaluate how they have spiritually reformed themselves in the past hundred years and whether they have made themselves worthy of being able to fulfil the obligations of taking the Bait. To what extent have they endeavoured to do so and to what extent have they attached their progenies with the oath of allegiance to the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him)? If we have brought up our children in line with this objective, then certainly the Lajna Ima'illah are grateful servants of Allah the Almighty. We must assess ourselves with this objective in mind today. Wherever there is any weakness that has occurred, then Lajna Ima'illah members must try to pledge with sincere fortitude that they shall enter their new century with the pledge to make their future progeny into such people who fulfil the obligations of taking the Bai'at.”¹

¹ <https://www.alislam.org/press-release/jalsa-salana-qadian-2022-concludes-with-faith-inspiring-address/>

Foreword

لَقَدْ كَانَ فِي قَصَصِهِمْ عِبْرَةٌ لِأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ ط مَا كَانَ حَدِيثًا
يُفْتَرَىٰ وَلَكِن تَصَدِيقَ الَّذِي بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَتَفْصِيلَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ
وَ هُدًى وَ رَحْمَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ

“Assuredly, in their narrative is a lesson for men of understanding. It is not a thing that has been forged, but a fulfilment of that which is before it and a detailed exposition of all things, and a guidance and a mercy to a people who believe.” (12:112)²

Across the world, milestones and triumphs commemorating achievements are celebrated in a variety of ways. Lajna Ima'illah, the women's auxiliary branch of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat, approaching its first Centenary, had a lot to celebrate. Elected Ahmadi ladies from all over the UK gathered in London on Shura of Lajna Ima'illah UK in 2012 (a unique female only assembly meeting for the purposes of deliberations and voting on various proposals). One of the Shura proposals for the House was to discuss how to celebrate the centenary of Lajna Ima'illah.

The significance of the occasion was highly poignant as ladies sitting in the UK would be devising a plan for an organisation which took its initiation 100 years ago in Qadian, a little-known town in the Northern Punjab of India. Each member in the deliberation

² <https://www.alislam.org/quran/app/12:112>

committee understood that this was an auspicious milestone and accordingly, the festivities to mark the occasion needed to mirror this, whilst also reflecting the values and principles of the Jamaat. Thus, publication on the Aims and objectives of Lajna was selected as an area that needed to be expanded upon and fully understood by all Lajna Members.

In 1922, when this auxiliary was named Lajna Ima'illah- servants of Allah, seventeen objectives were presented to the first members which formed a key part of the Lajna constitution. These objectives were a guide for Lajna Ima'illah to strive for self-reformation.

The aim of this publication is for Lajna members to fully understand the vision Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II (may Allah be pleased with him) had for the women of his community. It is a reminder for Lajna members of their responsibilities and an insight into the great examples of righteousness, sacrifice and courage shown by our Lajna throughout the last hundred years since its establishment.

It is hoped that by revisiting these aims and objectives Lajna members are inspired to self-reflect, ponder over their roles and to make changes in themselves to achieve these goals. May the reader make use of the wisdom and knowledge contained within this book.

Ameen

Message from Sadr Lajna Ima'illah UK

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Dear Readers,

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

Alhamdulillah, Allah the Almighty has enabled Lajna Ima'illah UK Ishaat department to produce a book in English on the aims and objectives of the foundation of Lajna Ima'illah. Although one book cannot cover even a fraction of the objectives, it still gives a brief overview very well.

Hazrat Khalifatul Masih Sani^{ra}, The Promised Son, was indeed a great visionary and could see that for the progress of Jamaat, it is important and imperative that Ahmadi women are also included in the journey. By establishing Lajna Ima'illah he reminded Ahmadi women of the great responsibility they have been given to shape the next generation of Ahmadis as mothers. He empowered them to achieve this by gaining religious education and not just leaving it to men to be well versed in matters of faith. He also reminded them of their responsibilities to each other in doing so and to the wider society. He told them that if we were to fulfil the mission of Promised Messiah as and bring humanity under the flag of One God Almighty, Ahmadi ladies have to be side by side with men in conveying this message.

The aims and objectives of the foundation of Lajna Ima'illah give a remarkable code for Ahmadi women to follow. Our first

centenary has enabled us to open our history books and revise these, but in fact we should always bear these golden principles in mind and follow them. Only then would we be able to achieve the true purpose of its foundation.

Lajna Ima'illah is very blessed indeed that, from its inception to the current day, it has received valuable guidance and attention from Khulafa- e Ahmadiyyat. We should never take that for granted and always try our best to fulfil our pledge towards Khilafat. Remember, we pledge to make every sacrifice for its perpetuation and that should never be forgotten. We work towards it by showing absolute obedience to Khalifatul Masih and inculcate the same love and obedience within our progenies. May Allah enable us to do so, Ameen.

Lajna Ima'illah is a beautiful organisation that is close to our hearts and it has given us lifetime of sisterhood and friendships. We should always keep that spirit of sisterhood alive as it is clearly laid out in its objectives.

I sincerely hope and pray that you will find this book informative, inspiring and enjoyable like I did. I would like to thank Qanita Qureshi sahiba for all her hard work in preparing this book. I sincerely hope and pray that it will lead to a positive change among us all Insha'Allah.

Ameen.

Fariha Khan

Serving as Sadr Lajna Ima'illah UK

Acknowledgments

The compilation team and I are truly indebted to Allah the Almighty for enabling us to complete this project which has been a long-awaited goal. Lajna Ima'illah UK is privileged to receive the nurturing support and direct advice of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V ^{aba}. This inspires our women always and we earnestly pray that we continue to enjoy this Grace of Allah for a very long time. Ameen

I am grateful to Sadr Lajna Ima'illah UK, Dr Fariha Khan Sahiba for her numerous prayers and steady guidance on this project. It is only due to her wise and prudent efforts that we are able to announce this compilation today.

I would like to thank Qanita Qureshi and Seema Khalil for coordinating this project and also, Ayesha Khan and Naila Tahir for helping with summarising and translating excerpts from 'Mohsinaat' and also to Sadiqa Khalid Sahiba for meticulously highlighting key points from this book. I would also like to thank Sophia Ahmed for writing and researching the chapter on "Love and Obedience to Khilafat" and Aliya Waseem for writing an introduction to one of the chapters. Great effort was also put in by Maryam Khalil, Kunval Qureshi and Saiha Maaz for proofreading and giving advice on content.

May Allah Almighty bless them all and enable them to continue to work successfully in the service of jamaat.

Mrs. Lubna Sohail

Serving as National Secretary Isha'at

Lajna Ima'illah UK

Publisher's Note

Please note that, in the translation that follows, words given in parentheses () are the words of the original debaters who penned the papers. If any explanatory words or phrases are added by the translators for the purpose of clarification, they are put in square brackets []. Footnotes given by the publisher are marked '[Publisher]' casual conversational paraphrasing was distinguished using italics.

The following abbreviations have been used:

sas sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam, meaning 'may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him', is written after the name of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sas}.

as 'alaihissalam, meaning 'may peace be on him', is written after the names of Prophets other than the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sas}.

aba ayyadahullahu Ta'ala binasrihil-'Aziz, meaning 'may Allah the Almighty help him with His powerful support', is written after the name of the present head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Hadrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad^{aba}, Khalifatul Masih V.

Readers are urged to recite the full salutations when reading the book. In general, we have adopted the following system established by the Royal Asiatic Society for our transliteration.

- ا at the beginning of a word, pronounced as a, i, u preceded by a very slight aspiration, like h in the English word honour.
- ث th – pronounced like th in the English word thing.
- ح h – a guttural aspirate, stronger than h.
- خ kh – pronounced like the Scottish ch in loch.
- ذ dh – pronounced like the English th in that.
- ص s – strongly articulated s.
- ض d – similar to the English th in this.
- ط t – strongly articulated palatal t.
- ظ z – strongly articulated z.
- ع ‘ – a strong guttural, the pronunciation of which must be learnt by the ear.
- غ gh – a sound similar to the French r in grasseye, and to the German r. It requires the muscles of the throat to be in the ‘gargling’ position to pronounce it.
- ق q – a deep guttural k sound.
- ء ‘ – a sort of catch in the voice.

Short vowels are represented by:

a for _____ (like u in bud).

i for _____ like *i* in bid).

u for _____ (like *oo* in wood).

Long vowels by:

ā for _____ or *ā*) like *a* in father).

ī for _____ or _____ (like *ee* in deep).

ū for _____ (like *oo* in root).

Other vowels by:

ai for _____ (like *i* in site).

au for _____ (resembling *ou* in sound).

The consonants not included in the above list have the same phonetic value as in the principal languages of Europe. While the Arabic *ḥ* is represented by *h*, we have indicated the Urdu *و* as *w*. As noted above, the single quotation mark ' is used for transliterating *ع* which is distinct from the apostrophe ' used for *ء*.

We have not transliterated some Arabic words which have become part of the English language, e.g. Islam, Quran, Hadith, Mahdi, jihad, Ramadan, and ummah. The Royal Asiatic Society's rules of transliteration for names of persons, places, and other terms, are not followed throughout the book as many of the names contain non-Arabic characters and carry a local transliteration and pronunciation style.

Introduction

“Allah sets forth for those who disbelieve the example *of the wife of Noah and the wife of Lot*. They were under two righteous servants of Ours, but they acted unfaithfully towards them. So they availed them naught against Allah, and it was said to *them*, ‘Enter the Fire, ye twain, along with those who enter’. And Allah sets forth for those who believe the example *of the wife of Pharaoh* when she said, ‘My Lord! build for me a house with Thee in the Garden; and deliver me from Pharaoh and his work, and deliver me from the wrongdoing people;’ And *the example of Mary*, the daughter of ‘Imran, who guarded her chastity— so We breathed therein of Our Spirit — and she fulfilled *in her person* the words of her Lord and His Books and was one of the obedient.”³(66:11-13)

In order to truly understand ‘The Aims and Objectives of Lajna Ima’illah’, we must reflect upon the status given to women in the Holy Quran. In this verse, Allah the Exalted firstly sets forth examples of women who, despite being

³ <https://www.alislam.org/quran/app/66:11>

blessed with the company of noble and righteous husbands, rejected the truth and turned their backs on the path that would lead to Allah. They were cursed with the punishment of the fire.

Then, two women who attained the highest status in the sight of Allah are mentioned: the wife of Pharaoh and Hazrat Maryam (May Allah be pleased with her). They were chaste, pious and truthful and serve as exemplars of what a truly righteous woman is. Hazrat Maryam (May Allah be pleased with her) in particular, is revered by millions all over the world, not for any worldly accolade, but simply for her piety, her spirituality and for being the mother and ardent follower of a truly righteous servant of Allah – Hazrat Isa (May Allah be pleased with him).

Thus, the aims and objectives of a righteous woman in the sight of Allah, were those that Hazrat Maryam (may Allah be pleased with her) and Hazrat Aasiya bint Muzahim, the wife of pharaoh, (May Allah be pleased with her) aspired for and achieved. They understood that worship of Allah is the purpose of existence and if we truly understand how to worship Allah and have a true connection with him, we will be successful in achieving those aims.

In 1922, Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II (may Allah be pleased with him) set up the first auxiliary organisation in the Ahmadiyya community. This auxiliary was for women and it was named 'Lajna Ima'illah'- servants of Allah.

In 2022, Lajna Ima'illah will be celebrating 100 years of its establishment and in doing so, it is imperative that a true understanding of its aims and objectives is acquired. One of the main purposes of the founding of this organisation, was the promotion of religious and secular education of Ahmadi women. For Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II (may Allah be pleased with him), it was crucial that he empowered women who played a huge role in his community. Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II (May Allah be pleased with him) said: "If you reform fifty percent of the women, Islam will have the victory."⁴

Seventeen objectives were presented to the first members of Lajna Ima'illah which formed a key part of the constitution of this auxiliary organisation. These objectives were a guide for Lajna Ima'illah to strive for self-reformation and thus fulfil their full potential. In a speech to the ladies in 1924, Huzoor (may Allah be pleased with him) reiterated the importance of this organisation

"No nation in the World can ever succeed without a clear direction and objective, which is not pursued by all the women and children as well. Hence, it is the ultimate duty of every Jamaat, that they improve the moral and social state of every man, woman and child. *Particularly to*

⁴<https://www.alislam.org/articles/significance-sacrifice-your-pledge>

empower and guide women, the establishment of Lajna is of crucial importance.”⁵

The purpose of this book is to look in depth at the aims and objectives that were set out one hundred years ago by Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II (may Allah be pleased with him) for the women in his community. It will explore the actions and sacrifices of Lajna Ima’illah members over the years, and chart the efforts from the original fourteen members to the present day. During this time, Lajna Ima’illah has spread to hundreds of countries throughout the world. It is hoped that by reading this, Lajna members will be reminded of their responsibilities and will be inspired by the great examples of righteousness, sacrifice and courage shown by our Lajna throughout this time. Lajna members should ponder and self-reflect as they look deeper into the vision Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II (may Allah be pleased with him) had for them, and question whether they have achieved this. They are still on that journey and need to continue to aspire to reach the expectations that Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II (may Allah be pleased with him) laid out for them. In these most memorable words, Huzoor (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

“Women’s progress leads to the progress of a religion, remember that no religion can progress until and unless its women progress. For Islam to progress it is important

⁵ (Extract from Hazrat Musleh Maud’s address to Ladies 1924)
<https://www.alislam.org/video/documentary-introduction-to-lajna-ima'illah-uk/>

that you progress. Women are like two walls in the four walls of a room. If two walls of a room were to fall, would the ceiling of that room remain intact? No absolutely not.”⁶

The seeds are sown for Lajna Ima’illah

One cannot fully understand the root factors that led to the establishment of Lajna Ima’illah without looking back at the history of women in Islam and comprehending how Islam itself empowered women. However, Lajna members also need to understand what true empowerment means. Modern day women would perhaps interpret some of these rights to equality and freedom in a very different way. However, we will see that our aims and objectives are truly unique and encompass the true meaning of women’s empowerment.

Imagine living in a world where being born a girl was considered a curse, shame and humiliation. Women were considered a liability and regarded as pieces of property. Their status was lower than that of slaves and at times, even animals. Burying an infant girl alive was considered better than having to bear the humiliation of not giving birth to a boy.

⁶ (Extract from address to Ladies at Jalsa Salana Qadian 1922)
<https://www.alislam.org/video/documentary-introduction-to-lajna-Ima'illah-uk/>

This is a world where, instead of being in a loving and loyal relationship with their spouse, a woman could be traded as a commodity if her husband lost a bet. She had no right to property, no voice in the home and had no rights over her children. She could be discarded by her husband at a whim or forced into marriage to anyone that her father or brothers decided upon. Women had no right to education and no spiritual status. Day to day life was filled with uncertainty, abuse, harassment and fear for these women. This was Arabia, before the advent of the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

Fourteen hundred years ago, with the advent of the Holy Prophet (May peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), the seeds were sown and grown for the empowerment of women and rights were granted to women that even in the modern age, have still not been fully realised.

Social status

The social status of women was transformed with the advent of Islam. Significant changes took place in the lives of women. Society was given clear guidance by the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet (May peace and blessings of Allah be on him) for the treatment of women in their roles as daughters, wives and mothers.

First and foremost, the cruel practice of killing infant girls at birth for fear of humiliation or poverty was totally prohibited by Islam. In the Holy Quran, Allah says:

“and that you Kill not your children for *fear of poverty* — it is We Who provide for you and for them — and that you approach not foul deeds, whether open or secret;”⁷ (6:152)

“... He creates what He pleases. He bestows daughters upon whom He pleases, and He bestows sons upon whom He pleases.”⁸ (42:50)

Women and girls were finally given the right to simply exist, and with that, Islam ensured the establishment of their right to life.

Spiritual status

The most crucial of all these rights was the equality granted to women in their spiritual status. If man and woman’s purpose in this world is to worship Allah, then without this right, a woman’s very existence has no meaning.

“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

⁷ <https://www.alislam.org/quran/app/6:152>

⁸ <https://www.alislam.org/quran/app/42:50>

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.”⁹(33:36)

In this verse and many others, The Holy Quran openly declares and stresses the spiritual equality of men and women leaving no doubt that their spiritual capacities are equal.

“But whoso does good works, whether male or female, and is a believer, such shall enter Heaven, and shall not be wronged even *as much as* the little hollow in the back of a date-stone.” ¹⁰(4:125)

This means that if a woman strives and makes every effort, she can achieve the highest spiritual status just as a man can. She can ultimately attain paradise just as a man can also attain paradise through his own efforts.

⁹ <https://www.alislam.org/quran/app/33:36>

¹⁰ <https://www.alislam.org/quran/app/4:125>

Educational status

The Holy Quran says:

“He grants wisdom to whom He pleases, and whoever is granted wisdom has indeed been granted abundant good; and none would be reminded except those endowed with understanding.”¹¹ (2:270)

This means that only those will be closest to Allah, who ponder over and understand the signs of God.

Furthermore, the Quran teaches us a short prayer which simply says:

“O my Lord, increase me in knowledge.” ¹²(20:115)

No distinction is made between men and women; Allah grants wisdom to all who strive for wisdom and true understanding, whether male or female.

Economic status

The economic freedom granted to women by Islam was unparalleled in any other age or society. Islam ensures a woman’s entitlement to possess wealth and property of her own, whether it is inherited or earned, and gives her full control over it. The Holy Quran states:

¹¹ <https://www.alislam.org/quran/app/2:270>

¹² <https://www.alislam.org/quran/app/20:115>

“Men shall have a share of that which they have earned, and women a share of that which they have earned. And ask Allah of His bounty. Surely, Allah has perfect knowledge of all things.”¹³(4:33)

This verse clearly shows that a woman has the right to manage her own wealth, just as a man does. A married woman is not even required to spend out of her own wealth towards the household, as it is the duty of her husband to provide for her.

Dowries, which in many traditions and cultures are still a huge burden on the parents of girls, are granted to women in Islam by their husbands. This dowry from her husband becomes part of her exclusive wealth, and her husband has no right to it unless she wishes to share it with him.

In the Holy Quran, we read:

“And give the women their dowries willingly. But if they, of their own pleasure, remit to you a part thereof, then enjoy it as something pleasant and wholesome.”¹⁴ (4:5)

Islam also gave women the right to inherit. She is entitled to inheritance from the deceased in her capacity as a mother, wife, daughter or sister. The Holy Quran makes clear that:

¹³ <https://www.alislam.org/quran/app/4:33>

¹⁴ <https://www.alislam.org/quran/app/4:5>

“For men is a share of that which parents and near relations leave, and for women is a share of that which parents and near relations leave, whether it be little or much — a determined share.”¹⁵(4:8)

The practice of the Holy Prophet (May peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)

It is the blessed practice of the Holy Prophet (May peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) that sowed the first seeds to realise this vision for the women in our community.

The first person to accept Islam and believe in the Holy Prophet (May peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was a woman. Hazrat Khadijah (may Allah be pleased with her) was the wife of the Holy Prophet (May peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). His love and regard for her are testimony to the respect that the Holy Prophet (May peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had, not only for her, but for all pious women.

He is reported to have said about her:

“She believed in me when the whole world refuted me and she attested to my veracity when the whole world accused me of falsehood. She offered me compassion and loyalty with her wealth when everyone else had forsaken me.”¹⁶

¹⁵ <https://www.alislam.org/quran/app/4:8>

¹⁶ Musnad Ahmad, Vol.6, p.117, Qasira

Referring to the status of daughters, the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has said:

“He who is blessed with three daughters, educates them, looks after them properly and brings them up to be righteous women, God will reward him by admitting him into Paradise.”¹⁷

Referring to wives, the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) says:

“The best among you is he who is best to his wife.”¹⁸

Referring to mothers, again, the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has said:

“ ‘Paradise is found under the feet of mothers’, meaning that one can be admitted to Paradise by virtue of being a good guardian with respect of his mother.”¹⁹

The Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also laid great stress on the education of women, saying:

“It is the duty of every Muslim man and every Muslim woman to acquire knowledge.”²⁰

¹⁷<https://www.reviewofreligions.org/3210/the-role-and-the-status-of-women-in-islam/>

¹⁸ <https://www.alislam.org/articles/true-love-perfect-life-partner/>

¹⁹<https://www.reviewofreligions.org/3210/the-role-and-the-status-of-women-in-islam/>

²⁰<https://www.alislam.org/question/are-women-inferior-to-men-in-islam/>

In this way, not only would they become good mothers and educate their children in the best possible manner, but they would also be able to make a positive contribution to society.

When the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) told his followers that half the religion of Islam could be learned from Hazrat Ayesha (may Allah be pleased with her).²¹ He was already highlighting the vital role that women played and would continue to play in the progress of Islam.²² Hazrat Ayesha (may Allah be pleased with her) lived many years after the demise of the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Her insight into his blessed life was and remains invaluable to our understanding of it and to the propagation of Islam. Without her ability to retain and relay all that she saw and heard, there is so much knowledge of the Holy Prophet's (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) life that we would not have been aware of. A very large and significant portion of the *Ahadith* of the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) are based on the narrations of Hazrat Ayesha (may Allah be pleased with her). As a matter of fact, the number of her narrations alone reach a grand total of 2210.²³

²¹ <https://www.alislam.org/library/book/pathway-to-paradise/womens-issues/>

²² <https://www.alhakam.org/hazrat-aisha-bint-abi-bakr-r-a/>

²³ <https://www.reviewofreligions.org/8284/the-issue-of-the-age-of-hazrat-aishah/>

The Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was always concerned about women's education and upbringing and ensured that, according to the instructions of the Holy Quran, they participated in all religious, social and educational activities. They performed Hajj, paid Zakat, attended Prayers in the Mosque, and were given the opportunity to give contributions whenever they were called upon to do so. They were also encouraged to learn the Holy Quran and teach it to others.

The Holy Prophet's (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) blessed wives and the devout ladies that accepted him, were to become role models for all Muslim women. Many sought their advice and learned about the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) through them.

These female companions are indeed exemplary role models for Lajna Ima'illah today. They fulfilled their roles in conditions of war, gave advice to the Muslims of that time, and attained academic excellence. They set high standards of worship and shouldered the responsibility of training their children with passion and zeal so that their progeny would, in turn, also become the future servants of Islam.

The very first martyr in Islam was Hazrat Sumayyah bint Khabbaat (may Allah be pleased with her). She was the wife of Hazrat Yaasir (may Allah be pleased with him). The family were subject to great persecution by the Meccans.

In the end, Abu Jahl struck a spear in her and martyred her most cruelly. Even though she was faced with such brutal persecution, she stood firm and was prepared to die rather than be disloyal to her faith and God.²⁴

Hazrat Umme Ummaarah (may Allah be pleased with her) was fearless and steadfast as she fought as a female warrior for the cause of Islam. The Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself said to her after the Battle of Uhud:

“By God! Today Umme Ummaarah (may Allah be pleased with her) has preceded all those men in courage!”²⁵

Hazrat Umme Salmah Asmaa (may Allah be pleased with her) was amongst the first to have accepted Islam and the very first among the ladies to have migrated to Medina. She was an embodiment of knowledge and wisdom and became known as “Khatibatun-Nisaa” among women, meaning ‘The best of female speakers’.²⁶ Thus, we can see that the calibre of the female companions of the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was exemplary for the future generations of women who were to continue in their footsteps.

²⁴ *Responsibilities of Ahmadi Muslim women*- Address delivered by Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V 3rd October 2010 at the National Lajna Ijtema UK, p. 44

²⁵ Nafisa Bashir, *Umme Umaarah*, p. 11
(<https://www.alislam.org/library/books/Umme-Ummaarah.pdf>)

²⁶ *Responsibilities of Ahmadi Muslim women*- Address delivered by Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V 3rd October 2010 at the National Lajna Ijtema UK, p. 52

Unfortunately, over the next few centuries, the rights of women were being increasingly overlooked and the perception of their true status began to be diluted and infiltrated with cultural thought and dogma. Very few Muslim girls were being given the opportunity to pursue secular or religious knowledge. The gap between men and women began to widen and women gradually became far less educated than men.

Where did things go wrong? Why were the teachings of the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) regarding women becoming diluted when their rights were so firmly established in the Holy Quran?

A major cause of this downward spiral was the ignorance of the so-called religious Muslim scholars of the time. They wanted to monopolise religious knowledge in order to maintain their grip on the public at large, and women in particular. They felt that the education of women would be a threat for them and would empower women. They were content for women to stay within the four walls of their homes. This proved a huge detriment to society at large, for women had a major role in bringing up the future generations, and without a basic education and an understanding of religious education, it was not possible for these women to nurture their children and bring them up with true Islamic morals and principles.

A reformer of the true teachings of Islam- The Promised Messiah (peace be upon him)

Allah the Almighty sent a reformer in the person of the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) who came to revive the true teachings of Islam and reform the Muslims in their unislamic practices.

Upon his advent, religious education and the training of women was again encouraged, and their status, according to the teachings of the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), was revived and restored. A great many women were the recipients of blessed guidance from Allah the Exalted and in turn, took Bai'at at his hands. Their rights as wives and daughters were re-established and it was made clear to men that, without the reformation and training of women, they would not be successful in reforming themselves. Women were among the first of those to pledge their allegiance to the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) and flocked to his threshold from far and wide to hear his words.

At the time in Qadian, there were no formal separate arrangements for the religious training of women. A primary school for girls had been established, but it was not run efficiently. However, women did have the opportunity to stay at the Promised Messiah's (peace be upon him) residence with their husbands in order to hear his blessed words, increase in their faith and knowledge.

The Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) would admonish men to give women their lawful rights and treat them with respect and tenderness.

In his book, 'Noah's Ark', the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) dedicated a few pages of advice particularly for women, entitled: "An admonition for women".²⁷ He forbade women the practice of *shirk* (associating partners with Allah) and innovations within faith. He reminded them of their rights and made them aware of our responsibilities.

The Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) was unequivocal in his belief that women have a monumental role in the reformation of the future generations of Muslims and that they are key in achieving the goal of the establishment of the true Islam. He said:

"If you wish to reform yourself, you must also reform your women."²⁸

Thus, the seeds for the establishment of Lajna Ima'illah were again being sown. Early Ahmadi women were raising the banner of the true Islam, reaping the benefits of religious education and training, and were taking part in the *Jihad* (striving for faith) of the pen. They wrote articles in newspapers such as "Al Badar" and "Al Hakam". Referring to these papers, the Promised Messiah (peace be

²⁷ Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Noah's Ark*, p. 129

²⁸ History of Lajna Ima'illah (translated from urdu) Vol I part 1 p.3

upon him) called them his “supportive arms”²⁹. Women were beginning to take part in this jihad of the pen for the revival of Islam.

During the time of the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him,) as well as after his demise, women were also blessed with the excellent example of Hazrat Amman Jan (may Allah be pleased with her). There were countless women during this period who were privileged to receive direct guidance and education from her.

In the book “Hadrat Amman Jan (ra): An Inspiration for Us All”, she is described as “Mother of the faithful” and indeed, her influence on her own progeny and household, as well as on the generations of Lajna Ima’illah who were to come after her, cannot be underestimated. Similar to Hazrat Ayesha (may Allah be pleased with her), who was able to hand out the treasures that she had learnt from the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), Hazrat Amman Jan (may Allah be pleased with her) also outlived the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) and continued to nurture and teach those around her, all that she had learnt from her beloved Imam and husband.

Her own example in itself was enough to influence and train those around her. She would concentrate deeply when the Quran or hadith were recited and her religious

²⁹ *History of Lajna Ima’illah*, (translated from urdu) Vol I part 1 p.10

knowledge regarding the teachings of the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) surpassed many.

“She was a personification of Islamic values, a pillar of support for the Promised Messiah (as) and faithful to the institution of Khilafat from its early inception. Her influence has rippled through the blessed progeny of the Promised Messiah (as) like a strong but imperceptible undercurrent. Her values and moral training influence the Jama’at even today, as she was the matriarch of a blessed progeny, that includes 4 of 5 of the khulafa of the Ahmadiyyah Muslim Community to date.”³⁰

Hazrat Amman Jan (may Allah be pleased with her) took responsibility for the education and training of the many women that visited her. She gave them advice and educated them about the teachings of the true Islam. She also donated her house for an all-girls school, *Madrassatul- Binaat* (a school for daughters).

This school was later formally inaugurated in 1909 during the Khilafat of Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih I (may Allah be pleased with him).

³⁰ Munavara Ghauri, *Hadrat Amman Jan (ra): An Inspiration for Us All*, p.ix

Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih I^{ra}- Dars from the Khalifah

Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih I (may Allah be pleased with him) was also deeply concerned about the education of women in the Community. He introduced some initiatives to encourage women in this field, such as the publication of a magazine entitled *Ahmadi Khatoon* (Ahmadi Lady). It would sometimes have articles written by women. Furthermore, the school for the training of girls *Madrasatul Binaat* (A school for daughters) that had initially been set up in the lifetime of the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him), was formally inaugurated in 1909 by Huzoor (may Allah be pleased with him). To begin with, it had thirty five students and two teachers. As mentioned before, Hazrat Amman Jan (may Allah be pleased with her) had donated her house for this purpose. The Al-Fazl newspaper of 1914 reported: ³¹

“The number of students in the Madrasatul-Binaat (School for daughters) had also increased since last year. On 1st April the annual inspection of Madrasatul-Binaat took place. Of the sixty girls attending the school, only a few failed the test. Very young girls were reciting the Quran in an excellent manner. Through her immeasurable graciousness, Hazrat Ummul Momineen (may Allah be

³¹ *History of Lajna Ima'illah*, (translated from urdu)Vol I part 1.p.22

pleased with her) graciously donated both sides of her lower verandas for the girls' school".³²

Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih I's (may Allah be pleased with him) commitment to women's religious education can be seen in his efforts to personally deliver *dars* of The Holy Quran (Qur'anic lesson) and Hadith to women. This concern was reflected in his last will. After he passed away, his daughter Hazrat Sayyeda Amtul-Hayye sahiba, wrote to Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II (may Allah be pleased with him), relaying her father's desire that full effort should be made for the continuation of *dars* after his demise.³³

During his Khilafat, the education of women was always an important objective, and with the publication of Al-Fazl newspaper, on the 19th of June 1913, he agreed that two columns should be dedicated solely to 'women's matters'. In his article explaining the motives and layout of Al-Fazl, Huzoor (may Allah be pleased with him) wrote:

"Two columns will be designated for women."³⁴

The article went on to say that two columns were not enough for women, but since women read the communities newspaper as well, those two columns were specifically for women, pertaining to their interest and benefit. As Sheikh Yaqoob Ali Sahib, editor of Al-Hakam,

³² *History of Lajna Ima'illah, (translated from urdu) Vol 1, part1 p.28*

³³ *History of Lajna Ima'illah, (translated from urdu) Vol I p.25*

³⁴ *History of Lajna Ima'illah, (translated from urdu) Vol I part 1. P.20*

had initiated a separate magazine for women by the name of 'Ahmadi Khatoon', women were encouraged to avail this too.

In 1913, the first edition of Al-Fazl also contained an article written by Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II (may Allah be pleased with him), entitled "Who is responsible?"

In this article, Huzoor argued that men were responsible for the religious education of their wives and daughters, and that it was only through these means that women would educate their children and in turn, put a stop to the decline of faith in society at large.³⁵

Hazrat Musleh Maud^{ra}- The establishment of Lajna Ima'illah

The Khilafat of Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II (may Allah be pleased with him) was a great blessing for Ahmadi women. When Huzoor became Khalifah in 1914, very few Muslim women were educated and there were very few schools for girls. Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II (may Allah be pleased with him) understood that the religious education of women was vital for the success of Islam, and with this in mind he ensured that Ahmadi women were given the opportunity to be educated in religious knowledge.

³⁵ *History of Lajna Ima'illah, (translated from urdu) Vol I part 1.p.21*

His first step was to honour the advice given to him by Hazrat Khilafatul-Masih I (may Allah be pleased with him), as he personally continued to give *Dars ul Quran* and Hadith to Ahmadi women. He continued from where Hazrat Khilafatul Masih I (may Allah be pleased with him) had left off and began his dars from the first *Ruku* (subdivision of Quranic chapters) of Surah Al Maidah. At that time, 100 women attended the *dars*.³⁶

Hazrat Syeda Amtul-Hayye Sahiba, daughter of Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih I (may Allah be pleased with him), related this message to Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II (may Allah be pleased with him):

“In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Ever Merciful

Hazrat Ameerul Momineen Sahib

Assalamo alaikum warahmatullah wabarakatuhu

My father told me two days before he passed away that he wished to advise me. I asked him to kindly instruct me, I will Insha’Allah follow his guidance. He said to try my utmost to learn the Quran and ensure that it reaches other people as well. [He said] If after him, Mian Sahib is elected as Khalifa then I should convey my father’s message to him that the Dars for women should continue. Hence, I submit it to you and hope that you may accept it. It is my wish as well as of many women and young girls that Mian Sahib

³⁶ *History of Lajna Ima’illah, (translated from urdu) Vol I p.27*

may hold these Dars. Please kindly start these Dars from tomorrow, I will be much obliged to you.

Amtul-Hayye, daughter of the late Nuruddinn”³⁷

Furthermore, on the 12th April 1914, a delegation arrived from within Punjab and other parts of Hindustan. In Hazrat Khilafatul-Masih II’s (may Allah be pleased with him) discourse with them, Huzoor again stressed that no man or woman from the Jamaat should remain illiterate.³⁸

Huzoor also set up a committee to look into the educational needs of the community and as a result of this a primary school for girls was opened in *Bunga District Jalandhar*, for less privileged village girls.³⁹

Jalsa for Ladies

During this time, women attended Jalsa but there were no special arrangements made for them. They would attend with their husbands and listen in from a separate area.

At the Jalsa of 1914, Hazrat Khilafatul-Masih II (may Allah be pleased with him), instructed that women should be allocated one day of the Jalsa. Following this, the Jalsa was extended to 4 days from the 26th to the 29th of December.

³⁷ Bushra Bashir Mohsinaat p.47

³⁸ *History of Lajna Ima’illah, (translated from urdu)* Vol I p.28

³⁹ *History of Lajna Ima’illah, (translated from urdu)* Vol I p.30

Lectures were organised for the women, some of which were delivered by women themselves. Four hundred women attended this Jalsa. Al-Fazl reported:

“Considering that this was the first women’s Jalsa Salana and that it had also not been very widely advertised, the attendance was sufficient and satisfactory.”⁴⁰

At this Jalsa, Hazrat Amman Jan (may Allah be pleased with her) with some of her relatives, did great work with regards to hospitality of the Jalsa guests, to the extent that she cleared many of the important rooms in her house for women and organised their meals herself.⁴¹

In his speech at the Jalsa Salana 1915, Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II (may Allah be pleased with him) advised that as well as emphasising the importance of men studying the Quran, men should also focus upon teaching their wives the study of the Holy Quran. Huzoor no longer wanted to see households where the men knew the Quran and women were left ignorant.⁴²

During the occasion of the Jalsa Salana of 1917, it was announced that a separate Jalsa would be held for women, in which Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II (may Allah be pleased with him) would deliver two speeches. One speech was delivered on 26th of December and the other on 28th of December. Accommodation and meals for women were

⁴⁰ *History of Lajna Ima’illah*, (translated from urdu) Vol I part 1 p.31

⁴¹ *History of Lajna Ima’illah*,(translated from urdu) Vol I part 1 p.31

⁴² *History of Lajna Ima’illah*,(translated from urdu) Vol I part 1 p.36

organised at the residence of the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) and the residence of Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II (may Allah be pleased with him).⁴³

A short report was published on the Jalsa Salana for women:

“This time the attendance of women exceeded that of the previous year and their Jalsa progressed in an excellent manner and was consistent.”⁴⁴

This was the first Jalsa for women that was organised separately.

The first Jalsa in Lahore was held in the Ahmadiyya Mosque of Lahore, which was attended by 20-25 women. Maulana Ghulam Rasul Sahib Rajiki (may Allah be pleased with him) gave a speech from behind a partition, reminding them to take part in services on a national scale.⁴⁵

Ladies Supplement in “Al-Fazl” Newspaper

The administration of Al-Fazl decided to add a few supplementary pages to the main newspaper which would be dedicated to religious instructions for women. These supplements, instead of being published with every issue, were published on a monthly basis.

⁴³ *History of Lajna Ima'illah, (translated from urdu) Vol I part 1 p.48*

⁴⁴ *History of Lajna Ima'illah, (translated from urdu) Vol I part 1p.48*

⁴⁵ *History of Lajna Ima'illah, (translated from urdu) Vol I part 1.p.32*

Soon after the above announcement from Al-Fazl, the first supplement for women, comprising of 20 pages, was published on 16th December 1916. In this issue, the announcement for an essay competition with a prize for the best essay was also announced. The title chosen was "Hospitality" and the prize was five rupees. The essays were to cover the following aspects.

1. The importance of hospitality and its effects on society
2. The requirements for honouring and respecting one's guest.
3. Things a host should take care of for the comfort of the guest
4. Are there any negative aspects to hospitality? And if so, what are they? ⁴⁶

It was Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II's (may Allah be pleased with him) wish that women should turn their attention towards the betterment of their knowledge and achievements within Ahmadiyyat. He wanted them to have a true purpose and participate in all Jama'at activities. Huzoor (may Allah be pleased with him) initiated speech competitions for women and made further arrangements for their education. A school was established within his house, providing education in the Arabic language, the Holy Quran, Ahadith etc.

⁴⁶ *History of Lajna Ima'illah, (translated from urdu) Vol I p.38*

The establishment of Lajna Ima'illah

Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II (may Allah be pleased with him) firmly believed that a nation could not make any progress unless its women were well educated. He wanted to empower women and inspire them to reach their full potential. He understood that women play a vital role in society, the community and in the upbringing of future generations of Ahmadi Muslims. He stated that Islam would undoubtedly succeed if they were able to reform 50% of its female population.

Huzoor (may Allah be pleased with him) said that if mothers are virtuous then your children will become virtuous".⁴⁷

In July 1915, in his address to the women of Lahore, Huzoor was already emphasising that women should meet regularly to learn about their faith. He advised them to meet, at least monthly, in order to study the translation of the Holy Quran and Hadith and then to revise and learn what they had discussed at home. He said that in this way religious education would be easier for them to access.⁴⁸

⁴⁷Orhni waliyon ke liye phool p.1

<https://www.alislam.org/library/browse/pdf/.urdu.pdf.orhni/#page/8/mode/1up>

⁴⁸Orhni waliyon ke liye phool. P.7

<https://www.alislam.org/library/browse/pdf/.urdu.pdf.orhni/?!=Urdu#page/10/mode/1up>

Huzoor's second wife Hazrat Amtul Hayye (may Allah be pleased with her) had a great passion and zeal for this cause and also became a catalyst in inspiring Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II (may Allah be pleased with him) to establish the institution of Lajna Ima'illah on 25th December 1922 in Qadian.

In an article entitled, 'To the Women of Qadian', Huzoor (may Allah be pleased with him) wrote:

'In order to fulfil the purpose of our creation the struggle by women is required and is as critical as by men. I think that women have not yet acquired the understanding of what Islam requires from us: how we should spend our lives, so that by gaining the pleasure of Allah we can get the blessings of Allah not only after our death but in this world as well. If we seriously examine this situation, we realise that many women do not consider any other work worth doing, except their household duties.'⁴⁹

When we read this, we can understand how forward thinking Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II (may Allah be pleased with him) was. Huzoor had recognised that women's role was not just confined to household chores but they needed to realise their full potential and aspire to the same spiritual and educational status, as that of men. In many ways, in reinforcing Islam's true teachings, he freed

⁴⁹ Extract from address to ladies at Jalsa Salana Qadian 1922

<<https://www.reviewofreligions.org/275/the-establishment-of-lajna-Ima'illah-and-the-sacrifices-of-early-ahmadi-muslim-women/>>

women from the shackles of ‘backward’ thought and empowered them in a way that Western ideologies of feminism could not do.

With this in mind, Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II (may Allah be pleased with him) wrote a historical letter to some prominent ladies in the community. In it, Huzoor outlined the role that Ahmadi ladies were to play in the spread of Islam. These few women were asked to disseminate his views and understand his plans to form an association to help the resurgence of Islam. Thus, the great institution of Lajna Ima’illah was established.

Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II (may Allah be pleased with him) set out some simple and clear guidelines as a foundation for the key expectations from this association. This was the scheme which was placed before Ahmadi women on 15th of December by Huzoor. Fourteen women signed it, and their names are as follows:

1. Hazrat Ummul Mominin, Umme Mahmood, Nusrat Jehan Begum sahiba. (may Allah be pleased with her) blessed wife of the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him).
2. Hazrat Sahibzadi, Nawab Mubaraka Begum sahiba. (may Allah be pleased with her).
3. Hazrat Syeda Mahmooda Begum (may Allah be pleased with her)– wife of Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II (may Allah be pleased with him).

4. Hazrat Syeda Amtul Hayye Begum sahiba (may Allah be pleased with her) – wife of Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II (may Allah be pleased with him).
5. Hazrat Syeda Maryam Begum sahiba (may Allah be pleased with her) – wife of Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II (may Allah be pleased with him).
6. Hazrat Hajra Begum sahiba – wife of Ch. Fateh Muhammad Sahib.
7. Saliha Begum sahiba - wife of Mir. Muhammad Ishaq Sahib. (may Allah be pleased with her).
8. Maryam Begum Sahiba - wife of Hafiz Roshan Ali Sahib. (may Allah be pleased with her).
9. Hameeda Begum Sahiba – daughter of Sheikh Yaqoob Ali Sahib Irfani.
10. Razia Begum Sahiba – wife of Mirza Gul Muhammad Sahib. (may Allah be pleased with her).
11. Kulsoom Bano Sahiba (may Allah be pleased with her) - wife of Qazi Muhammad Abdullah.
12. Maimoona Sophia Sahiba (may Allah be pleased with her) - wife of Maulvi Ghulam Muhammad Sahib.
13. Saira Khatoon Sahiba - wife of Maulvi Rahim Baksh. (His name was later changed to Maulana Abdur Raheem Dard Sahiba, and was to become the Imam of the London Mosque.

14. Bushra Begum Sahiba - daughter of Master Sheikh Abdul Rehman sahib.

Once the fourteen members had signed, Huzoor (may Allah be pleased with him) stated that all those women who had become members of Lajna Ima'illah should gather at the home of Hazrat Amman Jan (may Allah be pleased with her) on 25th of December 1922.⁵⁰

Initial guidance for Lajna Ima'illah

After the establishment of this scheme, Huzoor (may Allah be pleased with him) called a meeting with these fourteen women. At the meeting Huzoor (may Allah be pleased with him) gave them organisational guidance with regards to annual Jalsa and proposed a name for the organisation. His speech at this meeting was summarised and sent by Secretary Lajna Sahiba of the time and is given below.

Huzoor (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

“Due to shortage of time, having proposed the name Lajna Ima'illah for the organisation, brief instructions will be given regarding Jalsa. Advice on various other matters will Inshallah be given later. Lajna is like a club and this signifies those like-minded women work together and only those are its members who concur with each other's opinions. If,

⁵⁰ *History of Lajna Ima'illah, (translated from urdu) Vol I p.78*

at a later stage someone changes their views and cannot abide by the regulations set by the club, they may disassociate themselves from it.

Firstly, a president should be elected with a majority of votes. The president should have the following requisites:

1. Make others follow the regulations. Have authority over people but be subservient to the constitution.
2. She should not be of fiery nature but should be a good administrator over others. She should be hard-working and not simply have a commanding presence. She should be capable of convincing others of her plans and should also be accepting of others.
3. There should be a secretary for writing manuscripts etc, to make Jalsa notifications, and attend to other similar matters. This position is also referred to as 'katib-e israr'.

51

For now the organisation of the Jalsa is impending. It is my intention that this work should be done by your Lajna. Therefore, I will briefly mention how it should be organised:

1. Deliberate over mistakes which arose in previous years.
2. There should be regularity in visits of lecturers.

⁵¹ Literally meaning someone who writes confidentially.

3. Women should not interfere in men's addresses.
4. Distribute your work. Do not all work on the same task and do include other sisters. Work under one management and in collaboration.
5. There should be one person in-charge for the stage and Jalsa Gah.
6. In case of any disagreement or confrontation in the Jalsa Gah, report this to the secretary.
7. During the organisation, one has to deal with people from every social group and people have different dispositions. Do not consider yourself to be right in all matters. If a mistake is made, whether by an organiser or anyone else, one should take them aside and advise them in private.
8. Do not commit any such act which could signify your authority. Influence emanates from tenderness, kindness and wisdom, and love. Never use harsh words.
9. Draft a programme that would come in useful as an alternative to lectures by men. Select women with good, powerful voices for readings from 'Kashti-Nuh' and other key essays, as well as poetry recitals.

Increase your relations with those houses where more women stay, like ours and house of Hazrat khalifatul Masih I and foster a connection with these guests during their stay.

Inquire about their situation, how extended is the Jama'at there, and how are children educated there. Increase your information in this way.”⁵²

After hearing this guidance, all members came together and deliberated, electing Mahmooda Begum Sahiba, wife of Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II (may Allah be pleased with him) as *sadr* (president of Lajna) and suggested Amatul Hayye Sahiba as secretary.

Hazrat Amman Jan (may Allah be pleased with her) chaired the first Lajna meeting. After the election of Hazrat Umme Nasir (may Allah be pleased with her) as president Lajna, Hazrat Amman Jan (may Allah be pleased with her) took her by the hand and sat her in the presidential chair. It is a distinction of Hazrat Umme Nasir (may Allah be pleased with her), that from 1922 to 1958, except two years due to ill-health, she served as Sadr for central Lajna. She led the Taleem and Tarbiyyat department (education and training) of women.⁵³

⁵² *History of Lajna Ima'illah, (translated from urdu) Vol I, part 1 p81*

⁵³ *History of Lajna Ima'illah, (translated from urdu) Vol I, part 1 p81*

THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:

More than ninety years later, at the 2017 National Ijtema of Lajna Ima'illah UK, Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih V (may Allah be pleased with him) elaborated on this vision of his predecessor saying:

“It was for the very sake of making our Ahmadi women understand their responsibilities, and to remove any doubt about the need for women to be involved in religious matters and other activities, that Hazrat Musleh Mau'ud^{ra} [Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-din Mahmud Ahmad, the second successor and worldwide head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community from 1914-1965] established Lajna Ima'illah so that every Ahmadi lady could become an active member of the Jamaat.

Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him) said that for a man the best name is “Abdullah”, and in the same way the best name for a woman is “Amtullah” – because all men should desire, above all, to be a man of God and His servant; likewise, all women should desire to be a woman of God and His servant. Indeed, in the Holy Quran, of all the qualities of the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) one mentioned by Allah the Almighty is of his being “Abdullah” – a true man of God and His servant. Therefore, to be a sincere servant of Allah, should be the greatest desire for any Muslim lady

and this is the reason your auxiliary organisation has been named Lajna Ima'illah.”⁵⁴

Instructions of Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II (may Allah be pleased with him) : The aims and objectives of Lajna Ima'illah as laid down by Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II (may Allah be pleased with him) addressing the members of Lajna Ima'illah in 1922 are as follows:

- “In order to fulfil the objectives of our creation the efforts of our women are equally necessary to the effort of our men. As far as I perceive, this realisation has not yet been created in our women of what our Faith requires of us; how we should spend our lives, so as to attain Allah’s pleasure and receive His bounties, not only after death, but also in this very life.
- Reflection will show that most women do not realise there are tasks beyond their daily chores. The mistrust and ill-feelings against Islam which are being spread amongst children by the woman among the enemies of Islam can only be countered through the efforts of our women.
- The spirit of sacrifice can be produced in children only through the efforts of the mothers. Apart from their own spiritual, intellectual and moral uplift, the future progress of the Jamaat is also greatly dependent upon the role played by our women in this respect. This is because

⁵⁴ <http://www.reviewofreligions.org/13446/womens-rights-and-equality/>

the children are more easily influenced to a very large extent in their earlier life compared to their later years when they will not be as strongly impressed.

- The reformation of women can be better affected by other women. Keeping in mind these facts, to those of my sisters who support this viewpoint and consider the following necessary, I invite them to fulfil these objectives. They should work together and if you too are in agreement with the following points, then please inform me so that we can begin this work immediately.

There is a need that:

- i) Women should strive together to enhance their knowledge and spread the knowledge they have attained to others.
- ii) A body be established for this purpose so that this work can be carried out systematically.
- iii) Certain rules and regulations are formulated to run this body which should be binding on all the members.
- iv) The rules and regulations should conform to Islam as interpreted by Silsila Aliya Ahmadiyya and be contributory to its progress and strength.
- v) Papers regarding various aspects of Islam particularly those pertaining to contemporary issues be read in their meetings and events and be written by the members

themselves so that they should learn to use their knowledge.

vi) In order to increase knowledge, this body should arrange lectures on selected topics which it deems necessary to be delivered by those versed in Islam.

vii) In order to preserve the spirit of unity in the Jamaat, the affairs of this body shall be conducted in conformity with the schemes prepared by whoever is the Khalifa of the time.

viii) You shall endeavour to be constantly active in promoting unity among the Jamaat as enjoined upon every Muslim by the Holy Quran, The Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) and you should always be prepared to offer every sacrifice for this cause.

ix) You should always pay attention to enhancing your moral and spiritual standards, and should not merely restrict your focus to just eating, drinking and clothing yourself. You should fully help each other in this matter and think of and devise ways and means to achieve this.

x) You should especially realise your duty regarding the Tarbiyyat of your children and shall not let them be alienated, negligent or lazy in religious matters. Instead you shall try to make them active, alert and able to bear hardships. Teach them all the matters about religion which you are aware of and inculcate in them the love and

obedience of Allah, the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) and the Khulafa. Instil in them the passion to spend their lives for the sake of the true religion and in accordance with their desire, and to devise suggestions to make this possible and act upon them.

xi) When you start working together, you should overlook the faults of each other. Efforts to reform should be carried out with patience and perseverance. In no case should resentment and anger be allowed to create differences and divisions amongst you.

xii) Since every new project is ridiculed by people at the outset, it is necessary, therefore, that you should disregard their mockery and the lesson to bear taunts and insults, with fortitude and bravery (whether given privately or in public) should be learnt beforehand so that by seeing your example other sisters should also come forward to perform their duty.

xiii) In order to strengthen this scheme and to sustain it permanently you should go and convince other sisters to think along the same line and this endeavour can only be achieved if every sister who joins the body considers it her duty to develop the same way of thinking in other sisters.

xiv) To save the programme from disruption it is necessary that only such sisters should be allowed to become members of the body who are in full agreement with these aims. If, God forbid, at some stage a member feels that she

disagrees with these aims, she should voluntarily disassociate herself from the body or else be removed from it. *Note: at a later stage Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II (may Allah have mercy on him) decided that membership of Lajna Ima'illah should be compulsory for every Ahmadi woman.

xv) The community (Ahmadiyya community) does not infer any special denomination of people. It includes all classes of people; young and old, poor and rich and therefore there should be no discrimination between the rich and the poor in this body. Instead love and equality should be inculcated amongst the poor and the rich and the feelings of contempt and superiority should be eliminated from their hearts, because despite the differences in status, all men are brothers to one another and all women are sisters to one another.

xvi) Suggestions should be presented to form plans for the service of Islam and to help the poor and needy brothers and sisters in a practical manner.

xvii) As Allah is the Source of all help, blessings and successes, it is necessary that we fervently pray to Him and also request others to pray that He kindly inspires us with such aims which fulfil the purpose of our creation. We should further pray that He enables us to choose the best available means and use them to the best of our ability for achieving this purpose. We should also pray that we are granted a blessed end and that our future generations are

also recipients of His guidance, through His grace, and that, according to God's Will, He always sustains this work, until the end of times, Ameen."⁵⁵

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[http://www.lajnausa.net/web/webfiles/publications/Updated%20Lajna%20Constitution%20\(English\).pdf](http://www.lajnausa.net/web/webfiles/publications/Updated%20Lajna%20Constitution%20(English).pdf)

Chapter 1

RIGHTEOUSNESS, FAITH IN ALLAH AND STEADFASTNESS

ix) You should always pay attention to the enhancement of your moral and spiritual standard and should not merely restrict your focus to just eating, drinking and clothing yourself. You should fully help each other in this matter and think of and devise ways and means to achieve this.

xvii) As Allah is the source of all help, blessings and successes, it is necessary that we fervently pray to Him and also request others to pray that He kindly inspires us with such aims which fulfil the purpose of our creation. We should further pray that He enables us to choose the best available means and use them to the best of our ability for achieving this purpose.

xii) Since every new project is ridiculed by people at the outset, it is necessary, therefore, that you should disregard their mockery and the lesson to bear taunts and insults, with fortitude and bravery (whether given privately or in public) should be learnt beforehand so that

by seeing your example other sisters should also come forward to perform their duty.

We are living in a world where we are constantly being bombarded with the idea that material gain and superficial enjoyment is the key to happiness. We need to constantly assess ourselves and be wary that we are not spending more time on looking good or in the pursuit of acquiring the latest handbag or pair of shoes, and losing ourselves in the pursuit of this material world. Do we ponder over and understand the true purpose of our existence? Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II (may Allah have mercy on him) recognised the attractions of the material world, and made it clear that his vision for Lajna was for every one of its members to achieve a high standard of *taqwa* (righteousness). If we have fear of Allah and love of Allah, our every action and deed will be blessed. All our efforts will be for the love of Allah and not for any worldly gain, this in itself will become the key to our success.

In order to achieve that standard of righteousness that is required of us, we need to worship and pray with zeal and sincerity, we need to follow the commandments of Allah, love and follow the guidance of Holy Prophet Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

The Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) said:

“In the Holy Quran more emphasis has been laid on virtue and righteousness (*taqwa*) than any other commandment. The reason for this is that righteousness bestows the

strength to resist all vice and urges progress towards all good. Righteousness is in all circumstances a charm that guarantees security and is a citadel for safeguarding against all harm. A righteous person can avoid many vain and harmful contentions that often lead other people to ruin.”⁵⁶

If we look at the aims and objectives that Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II (may Allah be pleased with him) laid out for us, it is clear that for us to adopt these aims, we have to first and foremost develop true righteousness.

Hazrat Khalifatul- Masih V (may Allah be his helper) highlighted this in his address to Lajna.

“In this era, the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) said that, after developing a true love for Allah and for the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), his followers must also form a bond of love with him. Thus, if we wish to remain part of the Jama’at of the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him), we must manifest our love for him by fulfilling the conditions of our Bai’at and remain obedient to his teachings. The Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) said, in my Jamaat, I wish to see a spiritual transformation which distinguishes Ahmadis from all others. If we are just the same as other Muslims, then what is the benefit of doing Bai’at? If we are weak and lazy in our prayers like other Muslims, then what is the benefit?

⁵⁶ (Ayyam-us-Sulh, Ruhani Khazain, Vol.14, p.342- Essence of Islam, Vol. II, p.347

If we are weak and lazy in reading the Quran and do not follow its teachings, then what is the benefit?"⁵⁷

Whilst explaining the condition of faith and the way to rectify it, the Promised Messiah^{as} in one place writes: "In actuality, there are two types of faith in God. One is restricted merely to the lip-service which has no effect on deeds and actions." (Faith is expressed but is not demonstrated in actions).

The second type of faith in God is such which comes with practical testimony.

He states:

"I know that these people declare their faith in God but I see that despite this declaration, they are engulfed in the filth of this world and polluted with the mist of sinfulness."

"Thus, the first responsibility of man should be to review their belief in God Almighty. This implies that they must not commit any deed that would indicate that they do not hold any regard for the Majesty of God, nor should it contradict any command of God Almighty."

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⁵⁷ <http://www.reviewofreligions.org/13446/womens-rights-and-equality/> address to Lajna UK at the National UK Ijtema 2011

⁵⁸ <https://www.alislam.org/friday-sermon/2017-06-02.html> (English PPT slide 8 and 9)

Paragons of Righteousness

There are countless examples of women in our community who have shown this high standard of righteousness, and being armed with this firm foundation, have excelled in demonstrating a deep love of Allah, love of the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and a firm resolve in the face of all obstacles. Their strong faith and piety are demonstrated through the way they lived their daily lives, and the many examples of dreams and revelations that they received, are testament to their true connection with Allah the Almighty.

Let us take a look at the role models and excellent exemplars in our own history of Ahmadiyyat, and let us learn from them in order to be the best that we can be.

Hazrat Sayyeda Nusrat Jehan Begum sahiba (may Allah be pleased with her) - Wife of the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him)

Hazrat Amman Jan (may Allah be pleased with her) proved to the world that true piety in women was not a thing of the past. On the contrary, her piety was of such high calibre that she is a great inspiration for all Lajna today.

“What is remarkable about Hazrat Amman Jan (may Allah be pleased with her) is that the true passion of her life was worship.”⁵⁹

She never let her household chores and the many other duties she had as a wife and a mother divert her from her worship of Allah. Her care of the poor, orphans, and widows were in effect worship in itself as she was carrying out the commandments of Allah. When she wasn't performing *Salat*, she would continue to worship and would spend most of her time in doing verbal prayers.

Hazrat Amman Jan's (may Allah be pleased with her) daughter, Hazrat Nawwab Mubaraka Begum sahiba (may Allah be pleased with her), relates how Hazrat Amman Jan (may Allah be pleased with her) not only observed her Prayers with great fervour and passion, but was also meticulous about the etiquettes of *Salat*. She recalls that she never saw her mother rush her Prayers.⁶⁰

In describing the extent of his mother's righteousness and piety, Hazrat Mirza Bashir Ahmad Sahib (may Allah be pleased with him) said that not only was she regular and punctual in her daily Prayers and *Nawafil*, but she was also regular in her *Tahajjud* Prayers. He said that:

“The remarkable nature of Hazrat Amman Jan's Prayers was such that the passion and ardour with which she

⁵⁹ Munavara Ghauri, *Hazrat Amman Jan (ra)- An Inspiration for us all*, p.33

⁶⁰ <https://www.alislam.org/library/books/Hadrat-Amman-Jan.pdf> p.36

supplanted would inspire those around her to engage in 'Salat' as well."⁶¹

Hazrat Amman Jan's (may Allah be pleased with her) granddaughter, Amatul Qayyum Begum sahiba, relates that the beauty of Hazrat Amman Jan's Prayers are difficult to describe. "The intense humility of her prayers was such that it seemed as if she was actually prostrating in front of Allah Almighty and clinging to His feet."⁶² Her love of worship, deep faith in Allah, and steadfastness are all clearly evident in the beautiful and dignified way in which she faced the death of her son, Bashir Awwal. Not only was she full of grief at the critical condition of her ill son, but she knew that they would have to face the taunts and mockery of their enemies who were aware of the prophecy of "The Promised son".

Despite her son's critical condition, she performed her ablutions for Prayer and commenced to observe her *Salat* at the appointed time. On completing her Prayer, she asked about her son and was told the heart-breaking news that he had passed away. We cannot even begin to imagine the grief that a mother feels at losing her child, but Hazrat Amman Jan (may Allah be pleased with her) simply uttered, "*Inna lillahi wa inna ilaihi raji' un*" (To Allah the Almighty we belong and to Him shall we return) and was silent. There were no cries or laments of sorrow at the loss

⁶¹ Munavara Ghauri, *Hazrat Amman Jan (ra)- An Inspiration for us all*, p.34

⁶² Munavara Ghauri, *Hazrat Amman Jan (ra)- An Inspiration for us all*, p.36

of her child, neither did she wail or weep – her silence, patience and steadfastness were testimony to her unwavering bond and faith in Allah.⁶³

“It is hard to conceive a more stressful situation for a mother, the devoted spouse of a prophet and the mother of a spiritual community.”⁶⁴

On this occasion, when the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) saw her resilience and patience, he praised her saying, "I am very happy about this". Hazrat Amman Jan's (may Allah be pleased with her) reply was, "I am happy with Allah the Almighty's Decree." Her incredible patience, fortitude and steadfastness were rewarded with the glad tidings of the pleasure of Allah The Exalted as communicated to the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) in a revelation: "Allah the Almighty is well pleased".

When Hazrat Amman Jan (may Allah be pleased with her) heard about this, her response was truly inspiring and memorable. She said:

"This revelation has caused me so much happiness that even if two thousand Mubarak Ahmads were to die, I would not care".⁶⁵

Hazrat Amman Jan (may Allah be pleased with her) was indeed, *Ummul Mu'mineen*; Mother of the believers. Her

⁶³ <https://www.alislam.org/library/books/Hadrat-Amman-Jan.pdf> p.35-36

⁶⁴ Munavara Ghauri, *Hazrat Amman Jan (ra) An Inspiration for us all*, p.35

⁶⁵ Munavara Ghauri, *Hazrat Amman Jan (ra)- An Inspiration for us all*, p.153

righteousness and faith in Allah was an awe-inspiring example for all Lajna members to learn from and aspire to achieve.

Hazrat Sayyeda Nawab Mubaraka Begum Sahiba
(may Allah be pleased with her)

‘Your house will be filled with blessings and I shall perfect My favours unto you and you will have a large progeny from blessed women, some of whom you will find hereafter.’

[Revelation of the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) of 1886, Tazkarah]⁶⁶

As the daughter of the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) and Hazrat Amman Jan (may Allah be pleased with her), Hazrat Sayyeda Nawab Mubaraka Begum sahiba had the best teachers and role models to influence and nurture her. Indeed, there is no doubt that Hazrat Sayyeda Nawab Mubaraka Begum sahiba was an exemplary model of righteousness, so much so, that her deep love of Allah was already kindled at the tender age of 4, when she asked Hazrat Maulvi Abdul Kareem sahib’s (may Allah be pleased with him) wife, (who lived in a part of Darul Masih) to wake her up for *Tahajjud* Prayers. Sometimes, being such a young child, she would find it difficult to wake up, and Hazrat Maulvi Abdul Kareem sahib’s (may Allah be pleased

⁶⁶ Seerat wa Sawaneh Khatoun Hadhrat Mubaraka Begum Sahiba; Professor Syeda Naeem Saeed; Pages 24-25

with him) wife would continue to try and awaken her. If the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) saw this however, he would tell her not to wake her up, and to recite '*tasbih*' and 'Tahmeed' while lying down.⁶⁷

Like her mother, many remarked on the intensity of her Prayers. Sayyeda Maryam Siddiqah sahiba, wife of Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him), relates that Hazrat Nawab Mubaraka Begum Sahiba (may Allah be pleased with her) would perform her Prayers with much strength and honesty, and the length of her Prayers would be so long. Even when she was suffering from weakness in her old age, she would sit and perform her Prayers. It got to the point that when she was so weak and had to lie down and pray, she would still spend hours busy in worship.⁶⁸

“From the time of Maghrib Prayer till a long while after the Adhan for Isha Prayer had been called, Hazrat Nawab Mubaraka Begum’s (may Allah be pleased with her) Prayer would not be finished. Once she finally came out of her room from praying, there would be weakness visible, and her legs would be so tired that she would walk unsteadily to her bed. This was the level of worship and amount of

⁶⁷ Seerat wa Sawaneh Khatoun Hadhrat Mubaraka Begum Sahiba; Professor Syeda Naeem Saeed; Pages 97-100

⁶⁸ Seerat wa Sawaneh Khatoun Hadhrat Mubaraka Begum Sahiba; Professor Syeda Naeem Saeed; Pages 97-100

time such a woman would dedicate for the love of Allah Almighty.”⁶⁹

Hazrat Nawab Mubaraka Begum (may Allah be pleased with her) prayed for the Jamaat and the success and continuation of Islam Ahmadiyyat tirelessly. She would pray for others with heartfelt compassion. Her compassionate nature meant that when people wrote to her for Prayers, she would pray for them with so much integrity and intensity that, even if they would forget to inform her that their troubles were over, she would continue to pray for them.

Hazrat Sahibzaadi Nawaab Amtul Hafeez Begum sahiba (may Allah be pleased with her)

Hazrat Sahibzaadi Nawab Amtul Hafeez Begum sahiba (may Allah be pleased with her) was the Promised Messiah’s (peace be upon him) second daughter. She had a very strong faith in Allah and belief in the power of Prayer. When she was healthy enough, she would spend hours in worship. The Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) passed away when she was only four years old and, in many ways, she spent her life in the ‘lap’ of Allah. There were times when she would be in need of something or express a desire for something in her heart, and it would appear as if from nowhere. She would then continuously

⁶⁹ Seerat wa Sawaneh Khatoun Hadhrat Mubaraka Begum Sahiba; Professor Syeda Naeem Saeed; Pages 97-100

show such gratitude to Allah and such joy that He had taken care of her needs.⁷⁰

Hazrat Sayyeda tun Nisa (may Allah be pleased with her) — Mother of Hazrat Umme Tahir.

Hazrat Sayyeda tun Nisa (may Allah be pleased with her) was God-fearing and immersed in the worship of Allah from childhood until old age. She was a golden example of righteousness and purity. After diligently offering the obligatory Prayers, she would spend most of her time in the remembrance of Allah the Almighty. Her Prayers would reach such an intensity that she would weep uncontrollably. Even when she became ill, she continued to pray with the same zeal. She would be reminded that Allah The Exalted does not desire difficulty or to burden anyone with more than they have the strength to bear, but her answer would be that she gains nothing but pleasure from the worship of Allah. Many hours would be spent in the worship of Allah and she wouldn't feel any fatigue.

She remarked that true Prayer is when you feel that you are prostrating at the threshold of Allah. She said, "I never say '*salam*' (final act of Salat) in my Prayer until my soul lays prostrate in the presence of Allah. It is only when I feel that condition that I pray for true Islam, and the whole Ahmadiyya Jamaat."⁷¹

⁷⁰Bushra Bashir, *Mohsinaat*, p.21

⁷¹ Bushra Bashir, *Mohsinaat*, p.22

She was the recipient of true dreams and revelations even before she took Bai'at. Her husband, Hazrat Doctor Syed Abdul Sattar Shah sahib, related that in a dream, his wife saw the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) who raised his index and middle finger together and said, "Myself and the Messiah are one and the same". After this dream, he relates that his wife urged him to go to Qadian and taking leave for three months, together with his wife and family, he arrived in Qadian. There, he was allocated a house by the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) himself, near his home.⁷²

Hazrat Sayyed Wali ullah Shah sahib (may Allah be pleased with him), her son, relates an incident about his father Hazrat Syed Abdul Sattar shah sahib saying, "It was during this time that the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) on one occasion was speaking to him telling him that this is your home and if you need anything you must ask without hesitation. In the course of the conversation, The Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) said to him that you have three relationships with me; one that you are my disciple, second that you are from Sadaat⁷³ and thirdly there is one more relationship. On uttering these last words, he fell silent."⁷⁴

⁷² Bushra Bashir, *Mohsinaat*, p.22-23

⁷³Sadaat is a name given to the descendants of Holy Prophet ^{sas}

⁷⁴<https://www.alislam.org/library/browse/pdf/.urdu.pdf.Ume-Tahir/?!=Urdu#page/5/mode/1up>

Hazrat Umme Tahir (may Allah be pleased with her) wasn't even born when those words were uttered. It was only after many years passed that the full realisation of these words was revealed. Not only did her daughter, Hazrat Umme Tahir (may Allah be pleased with her) marry Hazrat Bashir Uddin Mahmood Ahmad (may Allah be pleased with him), but she became the mother of the fourth Khalifah of the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him). This in itself bears witness to the high calibre of her righteousness.

Hazrat Sayyeda Maryam Begum sahiba (may Allah be pleased with her) (Umme Tahir- Mother of Khalifatul-Masih IV.)

Umme Tahir (may Allah be pleased with her) was a paragon of righteousness, virtue and love of Allah. Her son, who became the fourth successor of the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him), related that she prayed fervently, worshipped with intensity, and had a deep love for the Holy Quran. She had a particular zeal for the recitation of the Holy Quran and reciting *durood shareef*. Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih IV (may Allah have Mercy on him) himself praised her, saying that she recited the Holy Quran beautifully and her pronunciation was so accurate that it was like the tongue of a native speaker.⁷⁵

⁷⁵ Bushra Bashir, *Mohsinaat*, p.24

She was devoted to Hazrat Amman Jan (may Allah be pleased with her) and after *Maghrib* Prayers would sit in her company and advise her children to also do the same. Hazrat Umme Tahir (may Allah be pleased with her) was one of those blessed with a closeness to Allah The Exalted, her every act was for the sake of Allah and her deep faith in Allah was unwavering.

Sahibzaadi Amtul Rasheed, wife of Mian Abdul Rahim Sahib recalls that there are many incidents where Hazrat Umme Tahir's (may Allah be pleased with her) Prayers were answered. She describes an incident about a lady who came regularly to visit her requesting for Prayers. She told her that she had been married for twelve years but was still childless. She expressed to Hazrat Umme Tahir (may Allah be pleased with her) that she believed that Allah The Exalted would listen to her Prayers and to promise that she would pray for her, that she would one day become a mother. Hazrat Umme Tahir (may Allah be pleased with her) prayed for her and also requested Prayers daily from Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II (may Allah be pleased with him). Allah The Exalted heard their Prayers and the lady was blessed with a daughter. Hazrat Umme Tahir (may Allah be pleased with her) was overjoyed and visited the mother with presents for the child and distributed sweets to those who were present.⁷⁶

⁷⁶Bushra Bashir, *Mohsinaat*, p.27

As a righteous mother, Hazrat Umme Tahir's (may Allah be pleased with her) sole wish for her only son was that he would serve his faith. She felt so passionately about this, that tears would fill her eyes, she would repeat, "Oh Lord! Make my Taari (nickname) your worshipper and your pious servant. Make him serve the cause of faith. Fill him with love and devotion for yourself, Mohammed the messenger of Allah (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him)."⁷⁷

Qulsoom Begum, wife of Chaudhry Mushtaq Ahmed Sahib Bajwah, related that once, Hazrat Sayyeda Umme Tahir sahiba confided in her saying that my son Tahir will become Khalifah. She also told her that this was a secret and that she mustn't reveal it to anyone. It was only when he became Khalifah, that Qulsoom Begum revealed this incident.⁷⁸ Allah The Exalted had given her the glad tidings that her son would become Khalifah, and indeed Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih IV (may Allah have mercy on him) embodied all that she prayed for, serving his faith with a passion and zeal that was outstanding.

Hazrat Sayyeda Maryam Siddiqah sahiba (may Allah be pleased with her)- wife of Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II

⁷⁷ Bushra Bashir, *Mohsinaat*, p.28

⁷⁸ Bushra Bashir, *Mohsinaat*, p.25

Hazrat Sayyeda Maryam Siddiqah (may Allah be pleased with her) was the daughter of Hazrat Doctor Mir Muhammad Ismaeel (may Allah be pleased with him) and wife of Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II (may Allah be pleased with him). She was blessed to have her upbringing by an extremely pious father and then, after her marriage, the guidance of her husband and Khalifah. This environment was a huge factor in raising her standard of righteousness and love of Allah to a high degree.

She was extremely diligent regarding Prayers and fasting and made every endeavour to offer optional Prayers (*nawafil*).

During Ramadan, she fasted with fervour and passion, and would ensure that she listened to *dars* regularly. She had a deep knowledge of the Holy Quran and Hadith, and was a living example of someone who lived by the commandments of Allah.

She would give speeches and advice in such a way, that her words would touch the listener and fill their hearts with the love of Allah and His Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Every moment of her life was spent in the fear and love of Allah and deep love for the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). She was indeed an example of deep piety and excellent character.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ Bushra Bashir, *Mohsinaat*, p.29

Hazrat Hussain Bibi sahiba – Mother of Zafrulla Khan Sahib

Chaudhry Zafrulla Khan sahib (may Allah be pleased with him) has beautifully written about his mother in the book ‘My Mother’.

In the foreword of the booklet we read:

“This booklet is a mirror of the self-sacrifice, self-respect, courage, integrity, trust in God and conformity to Islamic values of a lady behind the veil. Every Muslim woman can learn from it how she should comport herself.”⁸⁰

The incidents he relates, fills the heart with admiration. Her righteousness, steadfastness and faith in Allah are an inspiration for us all. Her connection with Allah was so deep that He himself guided her to accept the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) through a true dream:

“She saw in her dream that she was busy one evening in her home making preparations to welcome a large number of guests. Suddenly, she perceived a glow of light in a room to the west, which surprised her as she could not recall that a lamp had been placed in that room. She advanced into the room, found it brilliantly lit, and saw a venerable personage with a bright countenance sitting on a sofa writing in a note-book. She moved silently towards his

⁸⁰ Chaudhry Zafrulla Khan, *My Mother*, Forward

back, so as not to disturb him, but he, perceiving that someone had come into the room, moved on the sofa as if preparing to depart, whereupon she begged him to stay a little longer as his presence had brought her ineffable joy. He stayed awhile and when he was about to depart, she ventured to ask him: 'Sir, should anyone ask me who is the venerable personage you have seen, what shall I say?' He looked back at her over his right shoulder and raising his right arm said: 'Should anyone enquire from you; say you have met Ahmad.'⁸¹

Hazrat Hussain Bibi sahiba (may Allah be pleased with her) had in fact seen the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) in her dream. Later on, when news came that the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) would be visiting her hometown, Sialkot, she again saw a dream in which she walked to a house within the town, and on entering it, again beheld the same noble personage. He enquired from her whether she believed yet. She replied "Praise be to Allah, I believe."⁸²

When the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) did indeed arrive in Sialkot, her faith was unwavering. She knew that Allah The Exalted had guided her and was anxious to see with her own eyes if the noble person in her dream was in fact the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him). On arriving at the house that she had seen in her

⁸¹ Muhammad Zafrulla Khan *MyMother* p.18-19

⁸² Muhammad Zafrulla Khan *MyMother* p.18-19

dream, she presented herself to Hazrat Ummul Momineen (may Allah be pleased with her) and made a request to her to be able to see for herself the noble face of the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him).

As soon as he arrived in the room, she knew he was the same person that she had seen in her dream, and without hesitation, said that she would like to take Bai'at. The Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) immediately repeated the words of the Bai'at and after silent supplication, left the room. Muhammad Zafrulla Khan sahib says in his book that this had been an unusual occurrence on the Promised Messiah's (peace be upon him) part, as the convert was a woman whose husband was not a member of the Movement. No question had been asked on either side, not a single word was exchanged apart from the prescribed words of the pledge. He felt that it seemed as though there was "complete spiritual accord between the seeker and the sought."⁸³

If we read the inscription that was written for her tombstone by Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II (may Allah be pleased with him), we can see the respect that she had earned, not because of any worldly feats or successes, but purely because of her righteousness and faith in Allah.

"The following inscription was composed by Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II for her tombstone: The wife of

⁸³ Muhammad Zafrulla Khan *MyMother* p.21

Chaudhry Nasrullah Khan (may Allah have mercy on him) mother of Chaudhry Zafrulla Khan (may Allah keep him) was recipient of true dreams and visions. Through her dreams she was favoured with the identification of the Promised Messiah and made her covenant ahead of her husband; and through her dreams she was guided aright on the question of Khilafat and took her pledge before her husband took it. She entertained extreme jealousy for the faith, and was fearless in expounding the truth. She was invested with the quality of caring for the indigent and led a simple and austere life. She was a virtuous wife and a loving mother. May Allah bestow His bounties upon her and upon her husband, who was a respectful and sincere servant of the Movement, and appoint for them a station close to Himself and watch over their progeny. Amen.”⁸⁴

As Lajna, we must aspire to this standard of righteousness, and recognise that it does not come without self-evaluation, a willingness to improve, and knowledge of Allah and His commandments.

Faith in Allah and true dreams and revelations

Not only was Hazrat Hussain Bibi (may Allah be pleased with her) an example of a woman whose righteousness shone through in the way that Allah revealed so many true

⁸⁴ Muhammad Zafrulla Khan *MyMother* p.106

dreams to her, but many of the pious ladies mentioned before her were also blessed with dreams from Allah the Almighty.

In his address to Lajna on the occasion of the Annual Ijtema in Germany 2011, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (may Allah be his Helper) said:

“Since I have talked about Allah’s blessings and His making our work easy for us, I will give you a few examples of how He is opening up the hearts of the people, including women. I have taken the examples of few women whom Allah is including among those who are striving to fulfill the rights of being the best Ummat. Halwaani Sahibah from Syria relates her dreams. In her first dream, she says that I saw a group of Ulema (religious scholars) who, it seemed, were sitting in Al Hawaar-ul-Mubaashir (which is one of our programs on MTA), and were sharing information about the life of the Promised Messiah^{as}. Upon waking up, I could only remember the word ‘Punjab’ which I had never heard before. I related this dream to an Ahmadi friend of mine and asked her the meaning of this word, who was astounded at hearing this. Sometime later in a dream I saw a Noor (light) in the form of a person who was wearing a turban and sitting crossed- legged (on the floor) and telling me that he was the Mahdi. When I woke up, I was very happy and expressed my desire to take bai’at (oath

of initiation); but my bai'at was delayed for some reason. Then she says, that I saw in a third dream that I was lying down during the day for rest, when a voice addressed me saying that 'I am telling you for the third time that I am the Mahdi, who are you waiting for?' After this my daughter woke me up and I felt both astonished and worried. Therefore, I quickly did bai'at. She is reading the books of the Promised Messiah^{as}. She says that she is reading the book "At-tabligh". She says that she feels very happy and honored at reading it. She says that I discern the power of God the Exalted's in this book and I witness the powers of God the Exalted which are manifested in this book. Whenever I learn anything new, I feel the need to prostrate before God's powers and my heart sings His praises.

A lady from Syria wrote to me and said that when I sought guidance from God about the Jama'at, I saw you (she is mentioning this to me in her letter that she saw me) approaching me. I say to you that I am very tired therefore you should take me with you. You said to me to finish the Holy Qur'an and then either I will come to you or I will send someone to get you. At this I said that, if I came to you then I will not return to Syria. At this you placed your hand on my head compassionately and smiled. After this I woke up and asked my Ahmadi husband to send out a letter of my bai'at. The meaning was that by entering the Jama'at, I would

InshAllah remain steadfast and would try to be amongst those who do not return back to evil. Instead, they are the ones who spread goodness and are included in the best Ummat.

Another lady from Tunis has related her dream that she saw ten years ago. She saw that, she was in a big place where Sharif Odeh Sahib is present there at a reception. She, too, entered the reception and saw Maha Dabbus Sahibah—an Arab Ahmadi working with great dedication and she is very active in Tabligh (propagation), she works as if she is a Waqf (life-devotee) for the jama'at. (Continuing with the dream) I also saw numerous Pakistani Lajna members and asked them questions regarding Purdah and they replied that your purdah is fine.

She says that sometime later, after I had done bai'at, one day I was watching MTA with my sister Sumairah, and Al Hawaar-ul-Mubaashir was on. My sister asked me that who are these people (in the program). I told her that they were helpers of the Promised Messiah^{as}. Then I saw a picture of the Promised Messiah^{as} on MTA. Seeing that, my sister told me in amazement that she had seen a similar picture of Promised Messiah^{as} and the same people and the same scene in a dream ten years ago. Look how Allah is gathering people and bringing them in this direction to include them in the best Ummat. And we, out of which majority of those who are

sitting in front of me are born Ahmadis, should focus our attention towards our responsibilities with great concern that what are our responsibilities. How should we be included among those believing women who are rightfully called the best Ummat? And this dream dates back to the time when MTA AlArabia had not been established.

A missionary from Ivory Coast writes that he visited 20 places in April and May of 2011. In a village called Nayakara, there was a lady whose name was Manofutu. She had incurred some sickness and was pregnant. She was humbled due to her illness but continuously prayed for herself and the baby. One night, she saw a man with a turban in her dream. She was frightened and started running here and there. But wherever she ran, she would see the same person. Finally, that man in the turban told her not to be frightened, I will pray for your health and you will get better, InshAllah. She woke up after this. Four months later she gave birth to a healthy baby. One day she happened to visit the Ahmadiyya Mission in Nayakara where she saw my picture. She immediately said that this was the same man who had prayed for me in my dream and I got well. She was told that this is Khalifatul Masih V and after that along with her husband, she did bai'at. So whenever Allah shows any Khalifa in a dream or vision to people who do not even know (them), He

does it to prove the truthfulness of the Promised Messiah^{as}. There is an Arab lady in Italy. Her story, about how she saw MTA, is long. Her husband had advised her to watch MTA. So, she kept watching it and ultimately decided to become an Ahmadi and do Bai'at. But her husband due to his busy schedule was not converting to Ahmadiyyat. At last, he lost his job due to some reason. She advised her husband that you should spend your time watching MTA. Upon watching MTA, many questions came to his mind. When he went to get the answers from his Maulvis (Muslim clerics) they were unable to give answers. Finally, one day he did his Bai'at also. Speaking of her dreams she says that in the beginning, when we both (husband and wife) used to have discussions about Ahmadiyyat, we went to a distant place to ask people about Ahmadiyyat. Upon return, my husband seemed to be in low spirits. He said that how can I consider myself better than these scholars who have read the whole Qur'an. Another reason for his anxiety was my intense inclination towards Ahmadiyyat. That night I offered two rakat nafal (voluntary prayers) and cried to God that I believe in Imam Mahdi, the Promised Messiah^{as} and my husband also seeks satisfaction of the heart in this matter, so manifest to him the truth and keep me steadfast. In reply Allah showed me some dreams. She says that in my first dream I saw that (she saw me) that you had

come to visit my house and things are scattered around in the house the sofa and chairs are in utter disarray. When I heard that the Khalifa of the time is about to arrive, I tried to set the things in order but they remained scattered. She says that when you (Huzur) entered, me and my husband stood beside you and I started to show the scattered things in a way of complaint that the children have made this mess. Suddenly there is a knock on the door. I open the door and saw a woman from a Tablighi Jama'at (a group that propagates faith) who asked me to come along since people were leaving 16 on a journey for tabligh (propagation of faith). I said to her that I was not willing to go with them. I wanted that women to leave at once because the Khalifa of the time is visiting my home and I am very happy. Then, she says that she wrote to her Missionary or she is at the office that I saw (regarding me) a shop belonging to him (Huzoor aba) which is filled with sacks of wheat and people are taking sacks from there. I picked up a sack also. Suddenly a man starts to quarrel with her and says that one day all the wheat in the shop will be finished. I courageously respond to him by inquiring that do you see this vast piece of land, this is our land. If I sow one grain of the wheat in it, it will produce a hundred grains. What do you think, how many grains would those thousands of grains produce? Hence after these dreams, she did her

bai'at and courage took root in her being. This is how with Allah's blessings one seed is sown and Allah continues to produce a hundred out of it. This is how Allah fulfills His promise to the Holy Prophet^{sa} in the Holy Qur'an that his Ummat is the best Ummat. This best Ummat is growing and shall continue to grow, Inshallah. For this purpose, you should do your part. Allah is bringing those women into the fold of Ahmadiyyat who are joining the Jama'at of the Promised Messiah^{as} before their husbands, and they are conveying Salaam (of the Holy Prophet^{sa}) on him (the Promised Messiah^{as}). They are joining those who are fulfilling their rights of being the best Ummat. They are trying to reform their husbands and children and are becoming the cause of their reformation. If you do the same work today and leave here having made a promise to yourself that you have to do this, then you will be counted amongst the women who were the recipients of the Holy Prophet's approval. It is only the Jama'at of the Promised Messiah^{as} which is the true Jama'at worthy of being the best Ummat who has received the glad-tidings of benefitting from the "Awaleen" (those came before i.e. the early Muslims) whilst being of the "Akhireen" (those who came last i.e. the community of the Promised Messiah^{as})."

- **Faith in Allah- the key to steadfastness and courage**

The Holy Quran states:

‘As to those who answered the call of Allah and the Messenger after they had received an injury — such of them as do good and act righteously shall have a great reward; Those to whom men said, ‘People have mustered against you, therefore fear them,’ but this only increased their faith, and they said, ‘Sufficient for us is Allah, and an excellent Guardian is He.’ ⁸⁵(3:173-174)

In explaining this verse from the Holy Quran, The Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) wrote that, ‘These verses illustrate that true courage derives from steadfastness. To be steadfast against every personal passion or against any calamity that attacks like an enemy and not to run away out of cowardice is true courage.’ ⁸⁶

True courage is not only when we stand against open enemies or situations, but when we face and overcome our personal passions and weaknesses as well. It is only then that we will be able to show the courage of the great women in the history of Islam and Ahmadiyyat. This is why

⁸⁵ <https://www.alislam.org/quran/app/3:173>

⁸⁶ Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam*, p. 75

righteousness and courage go hand in hand; true courage is always acquired by faith in Allah.

If we look at the example of Hazrat Umme Amaarah (may Allah be pleased with her) in early Islam, her courage and bravery in the battle of Uhud was exemplary. She showed more skill and proficiency than the men and carried out tremendous feats of bravery and even suffered severe injuries. Her courage was praised by the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself.

Living in these hostile times, we can become weak in the face of the smallest of challenges. When the teachings of Islam are misunderstood, and are questioned and criticised, being an Ahmadi Muslim woman who practices her faith requires courage and steadfastness. In his speech at the Jalsa Salana USA in 2012, Huzoor (may Allah be pleased with him) highlighted the need for the women of the jamaat to show such courage:

“Do you wish to acquire the status of Umm -e-Amaarah (may Allah be pleased with her) only through words? If you believe that this is impossible, then you are greatly mistaken. Struggle against your *personal desires* for the sake of Allah’s pleasure. In order to achieve such a status, you must carry out a struggle against your personal desires and self-interests. You must struggle and face up to the prescription held by certain segments of society about you. You must be courageous and strive to establish your pure values in the face of ridicule and mockery, and you must strive to always implement the laws and teachings of the

Quran in your daily lives. Only then will you be deemed a true believing woman.”⁸⁷

Let us look at some true examples of this very courage amongst the noble women of Ahmadiyyat.

Hazrat Sayyeda Maryam Begum Sahiba- courage of a lioness

In the book *“Umme Tahir”*⁸⁸ there is a beautiful recount of how Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II (may Allah be pleased with him) describes his wife, Hazrat Sayyeda Maryam Begum sahiba’s (may Allah be pleased with her), courage with such pride and love, saying that she was an incredibly strong woman, who in the face of any trial, could be relied upon with full conviction. He describes how courage and determination would be reflected on her face and any onlooker would see that for her, there are only two choices - do or die⁸⁹, there was no third choice. Huzoor relates how, all he had to say to her was that this is a delicate matter for the Jamaat, and she would rise like a lioness with no care for herself, forgetting to eat and even her children and Huzoor would

⁸⁷ Huzoor’s address to ladies at Jalsa Salana USA 2012
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TGowf_ebusU&ab_channel=AhmadiyyaMuslimCommunity

⁸⁸ (Seerat sayeda Umme Tahir page 12) <https://www.alislam.org/urdu/pdf/Ume-Tahir.pdf>

⁸⁹ Do or die comes from an Urdu phrase

be forgotten, her only thought would be for the task at hand.⁹⁰

Hazrat Hussain Bibi (may Allah be pleased with her)

“Put my grievance to the viceroy”

It is not easy to stand in front of someone who, in worldly terms, holds a high status, and to put forward your grievance with strength and fortitude. Yet, here is another example of how faith in Allah can instil courage and dignity.

After the demise of Hazrat Hussain Bibi sahiba (may Allah be pleased with her), a note of condolence from Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II (may Allah be pleased with him) was published. In the note, he referred to the incident described below and praised Hazrat Hussain Bibi’s (may Allah be pleased with her) courage, saying that many a man could learn from her example.

In the summer of 1935, a member of the Ahrar political movement⁹¹ assaulted Sahibzada Mirza Sharif Ahmad (may Allah be pleased with him), the youngest son of the

⁹⁰ Bushra Bashir, *Mohsinaat*, p.96 (seerat sayeda Umme Tahir page 12)
<https://www.alislam.org/urdu/pdf/Ume-Tahir.pdf>

⁹¹ The support of the Ahmadiyya Movement for an Islamic state was closely monitored by the Viceroy's government. In 1934 there was wide scale rioting in the Punjab and other parts of India with the houses of Ahmadis looted and burned until then there had been sporadic harassment of individual Ahmadis, never of the Community as a whole. It was led by the Ahrar Movement, an anti-Ahmadiyya organisation.
<https://www.alislam.org/book/brief-history-ahmadiyya-muslim/conspiracies-against-jamaat/>

Promised Messiah (peace be on him), with a stick. News of this painful incident distressed Hazrat Hussain Bibi (may Allah be pleased with her) grievously. She was very anxious about its impact on Hazrat Ummul Momineen (may Allah be pleased with her) and Hazrat Hussain Bibi (may Allah be pleased with her) informed her son that, after praying earnestly about this affair, she had decided to put her case before the Viceroy of India. She had already met with Lady Willingdon and felt she had deep affection and regard for her. She hoped that she would meet Lady Willingdon when the Viceroy could also be present, and tell them how the Provincial government was treating the Ahmadiyya Community. Her request to her son was to arrange the meeting and interpret for her, saying the rest she would handle herself.

For a moment, think about the courage of this elderly lady, she neither spoke English nor knew about politics, but her love of her faith and anxiety for Ahmadiyyat was her driving force. She conveyed her worries to Lady Willingdon and the Viceroy in her own simple way and showed no fear. She explained to the Viceroy that, since she had heard of this incident, she could neither eat, nor drink, nor sleep. Her last few words were charged with so much emotion that Lady Willingdon could no longer restrain herself, and almost shouted at the Viceroy: What is this, and what are you going to do about it? She comforted Hazrat Hussain Bibi (may Allah be pleased with her) with kind and affectionate gestures and words, and addressing Zafrulla

Khan (may Allah be pleased with him) asked him to explain to his mother: “Tell mother, in these very words, tell her I shall give the Governor of the Punjab what for, I shall give him what for!”⁹²

Dignity and courage- Jalsa Qadian 1945

In 1945, during the Jalsa in Delhi, some opponents of Ahmadiyyat decided to cause trouble and began hurling stones at the attendees. At this Jalsa, there were many non-Ahmadi women attendees who became very anxious and began screaming. Our Ahmadi ladies of Qadian however, showed no fear and sat silently until they realised that the non-Ahmadi ladies were becoming more and more perturbed. In order to reassure them, they formed a circle around the non-Ahmadi ladies, showing true courage and defiance in the face of danger.

These women were able to show this level of courage because their faith was strong and they were used to the discipline of the Lajna organisation. They showed no weakness in the face of danger and demonstrated a high level of discipline.⁹³

⁹² Muḥammad Zafrulla Khan *My Mother* p.76-78

⁹³ Bushra Bashir, *Mohsinaat*, p.99

Walk of courage from Sialkot to Rabwah

In one of his sermons Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II, (may Allah be pleased with him) related an incident that occurred during the troubles of 1953.

A lady walked all the way from Sialkot to Rabwah to alert the Jamaat of the problems that the Ahmadis were facing there. No man had the courage to leave their home, but she made her way alone to Rabwah.

It was because of her courage, that the Jamaat was able to send men back with her to Sialkot to help others who were suffering. Huzoor praised her saying that by the Grace of Allah, the ladies of our community are braver than our men.⁹⁴

Lajna defend Qadian from Sikh and Hindu attack

Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II (may Allah be pleased with him) mentioned a lady from Bhaira, a town in Punjab, as another great example of fortitude and bravery. Her name was Khadija Begum sahiba (wife of Khan Bahadur Ghulam Muhammad Sahib of Gilgit.) During the attacks of Hindus and Sikhs on Qadian, she was appointed as leader of a group of women who were posted outside of the town.

⁹⁴ Bushra Bashir, *Mohsinaat*, p.100

These women showed immense courage, and when they were faced with Hindus and Sikhs who were armed with guns and knives, the women stood firm, climbing on the walls that were erected to safeguard the town, driving them off and causing these men to flee rather than attack. Khadija Begum sahiba was at the forefront of this group of women and displayed more courage than the men of the community.⁹⁵

Jihad of the Pen

The first Ahmadi lady journalist in Pakistan was Begum Shafi. After personal study of Ahmadiyyat, she converted in 1922. Her husband, Dr. Shafi Ahmed Dehlvi, was a prolific writer. He served Islam in the field of journalism for almost 28 years, writing and publishing 40 books in the defence of Islam, and was editor of 18 newspapers. He was recognised as belonging to the circle of top-rated authors of India. Unfortunately, he passed away in 1942, and his wife was not only left with the responsibility of the care of seven children from between the ages of six months and 21 years, but she had to fill the shoes of someone who excelled in his field. She, however, accepted the challenge with firm conviction and faith in Allah.

In 1945, when India was facing many political challenges, Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II (may Allah be pleased with him) showed full support to the Muslim League and Quaid- e-

⁹⁵ Bushra Bashir, *Mohsinaat*, p.101

azam. The Ahmadiyya community stood firmly by his side and Begum Shafi, in turn, committed herself and her newspapers to the service of the Muslim League.

She was admitted as a journalist to crucial conferences and was also present at the inauguration of Nehru in September 1946. During this period, Quaid-e- Azam, who was aware that she was an Ahmadi, would seat her near himself with great respect and praise her work.

On one occasion, during a question answer session with Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II (may Allah be pleased with him), a man made a complaint about Begum Shafi, saying that she attends men's meetings and conferences. Huzoor was fully aware of this, but asked the man if she observes *purdah* (Islamic injunction of wearing the veil) then she can attend these meetings.

By coincidence, a Hindu journalist, Tara Chand, who was a friend of the late Dr. Shafi, was also present at this session and immediately spoke up, saying, "Yes she observes *purdah*. Not only does she cover her face but she wears gloves on her hands and socks on her feet. She always speaks with dignity; nobody would dare speak to her in an inappropriate manner. I am also a journalist and also attend these meetings."

On hearing this, Huzoor reprimanded the man who made the complaint saying that if she is doing *purdah*, showing such dignity, and taking on the responsibility of her

husband's profession, why do you have an issue with this?⁹⁶

Begum Shafi's strength of purpose and courage were in no doubt a product of deep faith. Before attending any meeting, she would offer two optional Prayers (*Nafil*) and was regular at offering *Tahajjad* Prayers

After the partition of India and Pakistan, at one particular press conference, Begum Shafi bravely asked Nehru, "What precautions have you taken to protect the Holy places of the Muslims?" Nehru replied that measures were already in place. However, Begum Shafi persisted and reiterated that the Muslims of Qadian were in serious danger. To this, Nehru replied that Qadian was safe and secure.

Begum Shafi called Qadian to confirm this and Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II (may Allah be pleased with him) asked her to convey the message to Nehru that, let your home be as peaceful as you claim it is in Qadian. On hearing this, Begum Shafi rose to the challenge and was determined to confront Nehru, not only because he had lied about the situation in Qadian, but to ensure that he took measures to protect Qadian.

At this time, the 48 hour curfew had been suspended for two hours, and Begum Shafi was determined to present her case to Nehru. It was extremely dangerous for a

⁹⁶ Bushra Bashir, *Mohsinaat*, p.106,107

woman to be venturing out on her own, but despite being discouraged by her family, she remained steadfast, saying that what good was her influence and newspapers if she didn't take this step for Qadian. ⁹⁷

During this time, Begum Shafi was vice president of the Muslim League in Delhi, and she would wear a green niqab to show her allegiance to this group. Taking her son with her, she finally managed to hail a tanga⁹⁸. Owing to the precarious situation, the driver pleaded with her to take off her burqa as it was a clear sign of her not only being a Muslim, but also a member of the Muslim League. Begum Shafi refused and reassured him saying, you pray to your God, I will pray to mine. Everything will be fine. During the whole journey she repeated the Prayers: Surah Fatihah, the last three chapters of the Holy Quran, Ayatul Kursi and a Prayer for protection.⁹⁹

She describes how she felt as though she, as a humble servant of the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him), had been given a measure of the revelation he had received: 'You have been helped with prestige'¹⁰⁰- the help of Allah that he was promised. There was bloodshed everywhere, severed limbs, drawn swords, and blazing fires. Begum Shafi continued, praying that Allah make me a recipient of the blessing of the revelation of The Promised Messiah

⁹⁷ Bashir Bushra Mohsinaat p.109

⁹⁸ Horse-drawn carriage

⁹⁹ Bashir Bushra Mohsinaat p.110

¹⁰⁰ Hazart Mirza Ghulam Ahmed, *Tadhkirah*, p. 912

(peace be upon him) ‘...for fire is our servant and indeed the servant of our servants.’¹⁰¹

Astonishingly, they were stopped by rioters many times but each time, they would simply warn Begum Shafi, telling her to take off her niqab as this would put her in danger, but she continued as she was determined to reach her destination as she was.

Her strength and conviction in continuing to wear her niqab in the face of such adverse conditions should serve as an example to Muslim women of today. She was not afraid to stand out, or stand for what she believed in - even if it put her in danger.

Eventually, she reached Nehru’s house and was allowed in to see Nehru. Without hesitation, she presented the case for Qadian, saying that “a river of fire and bloodshed is surrounding Muslims from all sides and destroying them. Qadian is in danger, rioters are roaming the streets of Qadian and you say that there is peace there. Our Khalifah has sent you the message that let there be the same peace in your home as you see in Qadian.”

Nehru responded by promising that he would immediately send the army to Qadian for its protection and at the same time, tried to appease her by saying, “I can organise safety for you and your dear ones in New Delhi.” Begum Shafi replied, “My ‘Dear ones’ are *all* Muslims” and left the room

¹⁰¹ Hazart Mirza Ghulam Ahmed, *Tadhkirah*, p. 537

saying, “What protection will your army give to Qadian? Allah The Exalted Himself will protect Qadian.”¹⁰²

Begum Shafi often recalled this incident with awe and wonder at how she managed to get through that river of bloodshed in one piece. With true sincerity, she would say that this in itself was a manifestation of Allah’s mercy and a sign of the truth of Ahmadiyyat.

In 1953, Begum Shafi again showed her incredible resolve and courage. At this time, the Maulvis had started another campaign against Ahmadiyyat and as a result of this, the Government shut down the publication of the Al-Fazl newspaper. In 1954, when this restriction was uplifted, no press was willing to print the Al-Fazl as they had been threatened by the Maulvis that if any printing press printed this newspaper, it would burnt down to the ground.

Begum Shafi was approached, as hers was the only press that they felt would agree to print Al-Fazl. She replied with great zeal, that of course not only her press, but she herself, was ready to make any sacrifice for Ahmadiyyat.

As a result, this press continued to print Al-Fazl from 30th March 1954 to 15th April 1954.

She knew that her courageous decision could only be a success with the help of Allah. While the manager of the press oversaw the printing during the night, Begum Shafi

¹⁰² Bashir Bushra Mohsinaat p.111

would prostrate before Allah in Prayer supplicating for safe printing of the paper.¹⁰³

Let us ponder over the faith, courage and sacrifice shown by these inspirational Ahmadi women. They were ready to face every challenge for the sake of their faith and had an unwavering connection with their Lord. Now let us reflect on our humble selves. Do we fail at the smallest of challenges? Could we increase our faith in Allah? Is our spirit of sacrifice what it should be? Are we examples of the vision that Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him) set up for us in the Lajna constitution? These are the aims and goals that we should aspire to in order to truly understand what our Lajna constitution means and begin to understand the huge responsibility that lies on our shoulders.

¹⁰³ Bashir Bushra Mohsinaat p.112

Chapter 2

SPIRIT OF SACRIFICE

'Never shall you attain to righteousness unless you spend out of that which you love; and whatever you spend, Allah surely knows it well.'¹⁰⁴ (3:93)

The word 'sacrifice' means to give up something of value for the sake of other considerations. The concept of sacrifice is as old as history itself and can be found in every religion.

In Islam, the philosophy of sacrifice is developed throughout its teachings. It is deeply embedded in every narrative; it is entrenched in the life of the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and his companions and it continues to play a pivotal role in the lives of every true believer, as without sacrifice there cannot be faith.

The above verse of the Holy Quran clearly sets forth the definition of sacrifice according to the Islamic faith. To attain true faith, which is the essence of all righteousness, one must be prepared to sacrifice everything that one loves and holds dear. The highest stage of righteousness

¹⁰⁴ <https://www.alislam.org/quran/app/3:93>

can only be attained by spending or sacrificing that which one loves best in the way of God, with the intent of winning His pleasure alone.

In the Holy Quran we are given the parable of Cain and Abel:

“And relate to them truly the story of the two sons of Adam, when they *each* offered an offering and it was accepted from one of them and was not accepted from the other. *The* latter said, ‘I will surely kill thee’. The former replied, “Allah accepts only from the righteous”¹⁰⁵(5:28)

This was the first lesson for mankind on the philosophy of sacrifice. It taught man that the only sacrifices accepted by God are those that are sincere, free from impurity and done for the sake of Allah’s pleasure alone. The act of making a sacrifice in itself is not enough if it is devoid of pure intention.

Our beloved Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has thrown light on this philosophy: He explained that gifts increase love between two parties. If the person gives the gift with the intention of being compassionate to his family and pleasing Allah, rather than out of obligation or show, then the reward of the person is increased manifold.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ <https://www.alislam.org/quran/app/5:28>

¹⁰⁶ <https://www.alislam.org/library/articles/Benevolence-of-the-Holy-Prophet.pdf>

The philosophy of sacrifice is clarified in the Holy Quran in the story of Hazrat Ibrahim (may Allah be pleased with him). He saw in a vision that he was sacrificing his son Ishmael. In order to fulfil the dream, he prepared for the sacrifice with the consent of his son. Just as he was about to carry out the sacrifice, God informed him that there was no need for the physical sacrifice. His sacrifice had already been accepted by Allah. Once again mankind was taught that sacrifice with sincerity of intent for the sake of Allah is accepted in His court.

The Holy Quran is full of examples of sacrifices undertaken by every prophet in the way of Allah. The pinnacle of these sacrifices can be seen in the life of our beloved Prophet Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) whose life was the epitome of sacrifice. Indeed, Allah the Almighty bears witness to this in the following verse of the Holy Quran:

“Say ‘My prayer and my sacrifice and my life and my death are *all* for Allah, Lord of all the worlds.” ¹⁰⁷(6:163)

This verse is a summary of the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). His every breath was spent in remembrance of Allah, his every act was to win Allah’s pleasure. His every

¹⁰⁷ <https://www.alislam.org/quran/app/6:163>

moment was spent doing the works of Allah. His every sacrifice was for the sake of Allah.

We are also all familiar with the sacrifices carried out by the companions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) which are unparalleled in history. They sacrificed their lives and wealth following the example of the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). They endured every hardship for the cause of their faith. The Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said that his companions were like stars: 'whoever you follow from among them, you will be guided.'¹⁰⁸

The notion is often perpetuated that Islam only gives importance to men, and that women are not recognised and have no status, hence, their sacrifices are not recognised or remembered. However, upon deeper study of the Holy Quran and the history of Islam, one finds that women are afforded equal importance to that of men and are given a high status. They are recipients of the same spiritual bounties that are vouchsafed to men. They are remembered with great honour in the History of Islam and the Holy Quran often talks of their great sacrifices.

Related earlier is the account of Hazrat Ibrahim (may Allah be pleased with him) when he laid the foundation of Islam. Acting upon the commandment of Allah the Almighty, he had left his son Hazrat Ismael (may Allah be pleased with

¹⁰⁸ <https://www.alislam.org/library/books/Odyssey-of-Sacrifice.pdf>.22

him) and his wife Hazrat Hajra (may Allah be pleased with her) in a barren valley with a limited supply of food and water. Bewildered by what was going on, Hazrat Hajra (may Allah be pleased with her) watched as her husband walked away from them, looking back at them every so often. She questioned him as to why he was leaving them there. Overcome with emotion and unable to speak, Hazrat Ibrahim pointed to the heavens indicating that it was Allah's will. At once Hazrat Hajra (may Allah be pleased with her) was satisfied.¹⁰⁹ She understood that Hazrat Ibrahim (may Allah be pleased with him) was acting in accordance with Allah's command. She was instrumental in the great sacrifice that ultimately saw the laying of the foundation of Islam, a sacrifice which could only be truly appreciated with the advent of the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Men, women and children were all involved in this great sacrifice and are equally remembered.

In the Eid-ul -Adha sermon 31st July 2020. Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (may Allah be his Helper) mentioned Hazrat Hajra's sacrifice:¹¹⁰

“His Holiness narrated that on the instruction of Allah the Almighty, Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) left his wife and son in the wilderness of Mecca with a few dates and some water. As she faced this trial, Hazrat Hajra

¹⁰⁹ <https://www.alislam.org/articles/prophets-of-god/>

¹¹⁰ <https://www.alislam.org/press-release/head-of-ahmadiyya-muslim-community-delivers-eid-sermon-from-islamabad/>

enquired if her husband was leaving them on the command of Allah the Almighty. The Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) replied in the affirmative. Narrating her pious and noble response, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad said:

‘With complete conviction and trust in Allah the Almighty, Hazrat Hajra replied ‘If you are leaving us upon the command of Allah the Almighty then He will not let us be ruined. You may go wherever you need.’

Speaking of the incomparable reward that Allah the Almighty granted them in return for their sacrifices, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad said:

‘History testifies to how Allah the Almighty rewarded the faith of Hazrat Hajra and so He did not forsake her or her son, rather in return, an incredible nation was born to them and they had the ultimate honour that a great prophet, the Seal of the Prophets, Muhammad, the Chosen One (peace and blessings be upon him) was raised from amongst them who became a Prophet for all mankind.’”

In the Holy Quran there is also mention of the mother of Hazrat Musa (peace be upon him), who was told by Allah in a dream to lay her child in a basket and place it in the nearby river, in order to save him from the decree of Pharaoh. With full faith in Allah, she did as she was told, without being prevented by the thoughts of dangers the baby might succumb to. Hazrat Musa (peace be upon him) was saved as per God’s plan and her sacrifice and attained

prophethood. Then there is mention of Pharaoh's wife, who saved the baby Musa (peace be upon him) and persuaded Pharaoh to let her raise him. The Holy Quran gives her a high status due to her piety and belief in Allah, despite the luxury and power that she was surrounded by. The sacrifice and the role of both these women was crucial in laying the foundation of a religion.

There is also the example of Hazrat Maryam (may Allah be pleased with her) who gave birth to a Prophet of God alone, suffering much abuse. She nurtured him and supported him in his mission and bore his being put on the cross, with unrivalled patience and fortitude.

With the advent of Islam, history records the tremendous sacrifices made by Hazrat Khadija, (may Allah be pleased with her) the first to believe in the prophethood of Hazrat Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). She supported him emotionally and financially and made every sacrifice to spread the message of Islam. She endured great sufferings and saw her last days in Shaab Abi Talib during the boycott.

The sacrifices of many women have been preserved in the history of Islam. Indeed, the first martyr in Islam - Hazrat Sumayyah bint Khabbat (may Allah be pleased with her) was a woman. Women were ready to make every sacrifice for the cause of faith and some even took part in battles because they wanted the blessings of partaking in Jihad. They sought to sacrifice everything for God and were not

interested in worldly pursuits. They bore torture and abuse in the same way as men and their accounts are in the history books for all to read. They serve as a reminder to future generations of women that sacrifices have to be made to keep faith alive and that it is only through the sacrifices of both men and women those great nations are built.

This narrative of sacrifice was continued in the era of the Imam Mahdi, the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him). Even before his call he sacrificed his every moment to defend Islam from the attacks of opponents. After his divine call, he sacrificed his body, mind and wealth to revive Islam. His legacy of sacrifice was continued by his companions. They made sacrifices akin to the time of the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and continue to do so to this very day.

Through Highlighting the importance of sacrifice in Islam, Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him) wanted to instil this spirit of sacrifice in Lajna Ima'illah. Every effort of Ahmadi Lajna requires sacrifice. Whenever we start our meetings, we are reminded of this when we say our pledge;

'I affirm that I shall always be ready to sacrifice my life, property, time and children for the cause of faith and nation. I shall always adhere to truth and shall always be prepared to make every sacrifice for the perpetuation of the Ahmadiyya Khilafat, Insha'Allah' (God willing)

Women have made sacrifices for faith alongside men throughout the history of Islam. In the present day, Ahmadi women bear witness to the living spirit of sacrifice. Their narratives are treasured so as to inspire and remind them of their aims and objectives as members of Lajna Ima'illah.

These women are not remembered for their housekeeping, appearance or their culinary skills. They are remembered as teachers, warriors and defenders of faith and as martyrs. Ahmadi women have a great purpose and have asserted themselves as great role models.

In 1922, Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him) established the Lajna Ima'illah with the aim of continuing the tradition of great Muslim women. This sentiment is beautifully described below;

'In order to fulfil the purpose of our creation the struggle by women is required and is as critical as that by men. I think that women have not yet understood what Islam requires from all of us and how we should spend our lives; by gaining the pleasure of Allah, we can get the blessings of Allah, not only *after our death* but in this world as well. If we seriously examine this situation, we realise that many women do not consider any other work worth doing, except their household duties.'¹¹¹

¹¹¹ The Establishment of Lajna Ima'illah and Sacrifices of Ahmadi Muslim women - Review of religions -Al-Islam.org

With the establishment of the Lajna Ima'illah, a new era of sacrifice by women began. The women of the household of the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) began the task of educating women and activating them for the cause of faith. Hazrat Amman Jan (may Allah be pleased with her) was nominated the first President but she appointed Hazrat Sayyeda Mahmuda Begum sahiba (may Allah be pleased with her) in her stead, who remained president until her death in 1958. Thereafter, the baton was passed on to Hazrat Maryam Siddiqah (may Allah be pleased with her). We can read accounts of thousands of sacrifices made by Ahmadi women all over the world, of which a few shining examples are given to you below.

Personal Sacrifice

On July 30th 1994, Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih IV (may Allah be pleased with him) delivered an address entitled 'Outstanding Sacrifices of Ahmadi Ladies'.¹¹² In that speech, he related the story of Sayyeda Afzal sahiba, the wife of Muhammad Afzal sahib Khokhar, who was a good friend of Huzoor (may Allah be pleased with him). Sayyeda Afzal sahiba relates that a few days before the martyrdom of her husband she was sitting on her bed crying. Her husband had just returned from *Isha* prayers and said "Sayyeda why are you crying?". She replied that she had just been reading the book '*Roshan Sitaray*' (Illustrious stars) and her heart was filled with a longing to have been

¹¹² Bushra Bashir, *Mohsinaat*, p.161-182

alive at that time of the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) so that her name too was mentioned in some way in this book. To this Afzal sahib replied, "We are living in the latter day. If you make sacrifices in the way of Allah then you too will be counted amongst those who have come before."

On the 31st of May, agitations against the Ahmadis began and for many, the night passed in continuous prayer. It didn't cross Sayyeda Afzal Sahiba's mind that this would be the last night she would spend with her son and husband. On June 1st the agitators launched an attack and Afzal Sahib sent the ladies to the neighbours' house - both father and son stayed home. The attack continued all day. The women could hear the sounds of destruction but had no idea that both father and son had been martyred, or what inhumane treatment they had endured.

Huzoor (may Allah be pleased with him) related that the callous agitators had killed the son in front of his father in such a horrific manner that a non-Ahmadi who was amongst the crowd lost consciousness. When he recovered, he related that when Afzal Sahib was told to curse Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (peace be upon him), he asked the crowd "Do you consider me to be of weaker faith than my son who gave his life in front of my eyes with such courageousness? In his dying breaths when he was crying and gasping for water, sand was put into his mouth." Afzal Sahib said "Do whatever you wish with me - I will not

renounce my faith. At this point Afzal Sahib was killed in an even more brutal manner than his son.

Allah the Almighty only accepts the sacrifice of those who are wholeheartedly ready to sacrifice everything for their faith. Sayyeda Afzal sahiba and her family were of this calibre.

In another account, Huzoor (may Allah be pleased with him) related the story of Saffiya Siddiqah sahiba - the wife of Chaudhry Manzoor Ahmad sahib (who gave his life for Allah). In June 1974 during the agitations against Ahmadis, Saffiya Siddiqah stated that at the instigation of a Maulvi, her son was taken from the shop to the police station and was locked up in a cell. The very next day the mobs began to attack their houses. The women were sent to what was thought to be a safe Ahmadi house. As evening fell the women still had no word and were hearing rumours that the mob had set their homes alight and those who were inside had been badly injured. The mob had also heard that there was a house which was full of women alone. With their safety compromised, the ladies made their way to Rahwali under the cover of darkness. At this point they were totally oblivious to the fate that had befallen their loved ones. They had no idea where they were, or whether they had been injured. It was only when a truck arrived at Rahwali bearing the corpses, that they realised that their loved ones had been martyred.

Saffiya Siddiqah Sahiba's husband, Manzoor Ahmad, her son Mahmud Ahmad and her son in law Sayyed Ahmad had already died. Her youngest son was severely injured, and her eldest son was in a police cell, completely unaware of the calamitous events that had befallen his family.

Saffiya Siddiqah Sahiba relates that a policeman who witnessed the atrocities unfolding before his eyes, on the night of 1st June, said that the scene was reminiscent of the accounts in history of the manner in which the companions of the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had sacrificed their lives some fourteen hundred years ago for their faith.

He continued saying that he would never be able to forget the boy who was only 17 or 18 years old, fair skinned and tall. The mob was beating the boy, someone shouted, "become a Muslim and recite the Kalima!" Muhammed Ahmed Tahir (son of Safiyya Siddiqah Sahiba) recited the Kalima and said, "I am a true Ahmadi and a Momin (believer)."

Someone else shouted, "Curse Mirza Ghulam Ahmed." The boy pounded his head with his hands and said, "I have never sworn in my life nor have I ever heard swearing and you are asking me to curse that person who is dearer to me than this life?" After this he said "Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) zinda baad, Ahmadiyyat zinda baad" he had barely finished saying this and the mob lifted him up and threw him off the roof. The policeman said that he had

already been pelted with bricks and stones and now the mob broke wooden slats and threw them on him. He stated “He gave up his life before my eyes.”

Saffiya Siddiqah sahiba wrote the following about her son

‘My son Mahmud had a beautiful countenance as well as a beautiful nature. He was very pure. He was regular in his five daily prayers and was devoted to calling people to Allah.’

Huzoor (may Allah be pleased with him) also related the tragic story of Rukhsana Tariq sahiba. She was martyred on the day of Eid in June 1986. Rukhsana sahiba indicated that she wanted to go for Eid prayer. Basharat, her husband’s older brother, who was not an Ahmadi, admonished her severely and told her that she could not go. She found this restriction very difficult to reconcile so she went to Rabwah in her old clothes, even though this was her first Eid after her marriage. She decided if they wouldn’t let her get ready and go, she didn’t need new clothes and would go as she was. She cried heavily during Eid prayers but on the way back home she felt happy. In good spirits she made breakfast for everyone. Her husband said that he was surprised at how happy she was. She greeted everyone joyfully, unknowing that these were the last moments of her life. At this, Basharat shot her three times, hitting her in the chest and leg. Soon after, she attained martyrdom.

Her father relates that soon after Ruksana got married, she had performed an act which was quite out of the ordinary. With her father's permission, she distributed all her *jahez*¹¹³ amongst the poor. Her husband relates that she would often say to him that when I die and become the beloved of Allah, bury me near the mountains, and so it was - she was buried at the foot of mountains.¹¹⁴

Here again is another example of a young girl who was prepared to make every sacrifice, for her faith. An outstanding example indeed.

Huzoor (may Allah be pleased with him) related the story of the bravery of Maryam Sultana sahiba, wife of Dr Muhammed Ahmad Khan sahib. They and their four children were living in Til in the district of Kohat. There was no other Ahmadi family in that area. In 1953, the fire of hatred reared its ugly head. Under false pretences some opponents of Ahmadiyyat took her husband to an unknown area where they killed him. When Sultana sahiba got news of the martyrdom, she had no one she could turn to for help. She was surrounded by enemies. She gathered her emotions and strength. Leaving her children in Allah's care, she went out to retrieve her husband's body. It was a near impossible task. She had no idea where to start looking. She roamed around looking for his body whilst the people of the area celebrated his death. She remained

¹¹³ Gifts received by a bride from her parents.

¹¹⁴https://www.lajnausa.net/web/webfiles/tarbiyat/Huzoor's_Addresses_2012/Addresses%20to%20Lajna%20Jalsa%20Germany%202012%20.pdf

resilient and calm and continued this harrowing task with fortitude. Not one person shared in her grief or offered her support.

Eventually she found the body and made arrangements for its transportation. The body was placed in a truck and with her four children, she made her way to Rabwah. With tears and prayers on her lips she continued the journey. People were astonished at the immense bravery and fortitude she displayed. Her husband's shop was looted, and the killer shamelessly roamed the streets, but no one held him to account for what he had done. However, the wrath of Allah is far greater. The killer eventually lost his mind and after a while totally disappeared. An accomplice to Dr Sahibs murder, was killed by his brother and so too were his wife and children. Huzoor (may Allah be pleased with him) said that cruel people are always avenged by Allah whether people accept this to be true or not.

In 2010, the Darul Zikr Mosque and the model town Mosque in Lahore were attacked by gunmen, who mercilessly martyred innocent Ahmadi worshippers young and old. The response of the mothers and wives of those who were martyred was not one of lamenting and wailing. Instead they proclaimed that they were ready to make every sacrifice for the cause of their faith. One mother said that she had placed her young child from her lap into the lap of Allah.¹¹⁵ Another mother who lost her only son, who

¹¹⁵ <https://www.alislam.org/.../jalsa-salana-germany-2018-huzoors-address-to-ladies/>

was studying at medical college, said that she too was ready to be martyred for her faith.

In 2011 in Layyah, a city in the Punjab, an Ahmadi home was besieged by non-Ahmadis. A woman by the name of Maryam Khatoon was martyred by the brutal blows of the perpetrators. Unfortunately, the officials at the time favoured the killers as the law in Pakistan supports those who kill Ahmadis.¹¹⁶

In his address to ladies at the Germany Jalsa 2018, Hazoor (May Allah be his helper) related the account of Fazila Bibi. She had converted to Ahmadiyyat and was treated with immense cruelty by her relatives and other villagers. Her cattle were stolen and she was beaten viciously resulting in a broken hand. Yet despite the hostility that she faced; she did not leave Ahmadiyyat. She put up with every cruelty. In time, by the Grace of Allah, her hand healed, her tormentors were avenged, and her financial situation improved.

In the same address Huzoor (may Allah be pleased with him) related the brave account of Samina sahiba of Bangladesh. After finding out that his wife had accepted Ahmadiyyat, her husband beat her so viciously that she fell unconscious, after which he threw her out of the house.

¹¹⁶<https://www.alislam.org/.../jalsa-salana-germany-2018-huzoors-address-to-ladies/>

She spent the next thirty to forty years on her own. Being illiterate, she learnt how to read and write, with the aim of understanding the translation of the Holy Quran in Bangla. She taught young children to read the Holy Quran and devoted her life to the service of her faith. She passed away in 2011 leaving her home to the Jamaat.

There are numerous examples of vicious and cruel treatment towards women in Pakistan and Bangladesh. Many have been martyred but those who survived the ill treatment remained firm in their faith. They often sacrificed their families, their personal pleasures and desires for the cause of their faith.

In the western world, women do not often have to endure the physical tortures of those in South East Asia, as they are protected by the law of the land. However they do endure discrimination and abuse.

In Kazakhstan, a young girl accepted Ahmadiyyat along with her family. In 2002, she gained admission into an Arab Kuwaiti University, where her parents also worked. When it came to light that she was an Ahmadi, she was pressured into denouncing Ahmadiyyat. She was continually ostracised, yet she remained firm. Her father told the administration that if they continued to intimidate his daughter, then Allah the Almighty would close down the university. By 2005 the university had ceased to operate.

These are but a few shining examples of the personal sacrifices made by Ahmadi women for the cause of their

faith. They remained true to their pledge of putting their faith before all worldly pleasures and pursuits.

Financial Sacrifice

“And the case of those who spend their wealth to seek the pleasure of Allah and to strengthen their souls is like the case of a garden on elevated ground. Heavy rain falls on it so that it brings forth its fruit twofold. And if heavy rain does not fall on it, then light rain *suffices*. And Allah sees what you do.” ¹¹⁷ (2:266)

To spend in the way of Allah out of the many blessings He has given us with the aim of winning His pleasure alone, is said to be the sign of a true believer. Of the many sacrifice that one can make, financial sacrifice is imperative in order to cleanse one’s soul and to purify one’s wealth. Often, people find financial sacrifice very difficult, but Allah the Almighty has taught us its importance again and again in the Holy Quran. It is, in fact, a Pillar of Islam.

Those who lived during the time of the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) and those who came after, set outstanding examples of financial sacrifice. When one reads accounts of their sacrifices, one is reminded of the sacrifices made by the companions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

¹¹⁷ <https://www.alislam.org/quran/app/2:266>

In the early history of the Jamaat, the number of Ahmadis was few and their income was low. In particular, women had no source of income or wealth. Despite this, those women who had the means, stood side by side with men in the financial field of sacrifice whenever their Imam called for it. They did this with full faith and sincerity and have continued to do so, until the present day.

Of these women, the sacrifice of Hazrat Syeda Nusrat Jahan Begum (may Allah be pleased with her) was unparalleled.

In 1891, the first Jalsa Salana (Annual Gathering) was held in Qadian. Guests came in large numbers and the hospitality expense was borne by the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him). However, whenever the need arose his wife provided essential support.

In *Tarikh-e-Lajna* the following incident is recounted;

“Once, during Jalsa Salana we ran out of funds. In those days, separate chanda [financial sacrifice] was not collected for Jalsa Salana. The Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) used to meet the requirements from his own pocket.

One day, Mir Nasir Nawab (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that there was nothing left to feed the guests that night. The Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) instructed him to ask *Biwi Sahiba* (his wife) to spare whatever jewellery she could and sell it to arrange for food. Mir Nasir sahib (may Allah be pleased with him) sold

or pawned the jewellery and got the money to provide food for the guests.¹¹⁸

She partook in every scheme generously blessing it with her donation. After making her promise, she was swift in making the payment. She sold land, property and jewellery in the cause of Allah. Some of her sacrifices are as follows:

- She sold a house in Delhi to aid in the construction of Minaratul Masih giving 1000 rupees for the fund. Other ladies also donated towards this construction and their names are engraved on the Minaratul Masih.
- She sold some land and gave 1000 rupees towards the publication of Al-Fazl newspaper.
- She gave 500 rupees each towards the building of the Berlin Mosque, the *Talimul Islam* college fund, and the Khlilafat Jubilee fund.
- In 1935, after the Quetta earthquake, she gave 200 rupees towards the victim fund.
- As soon as Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him) announced the commencement of the following year's Tehrik-e-Jadid Chanda, Hazrat Amman Jan (may Allah be pleased with her) would make her promise, increasing it from the previous year and would pay it immediately.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸ Bushra Bashir, *Mohsinaat*, p.184

¹¹⁹ Bushra Bashir, *Mohsinaat*, p.185

In those days these amounts were of huge worth. Hazrat Amman Jan (may Allah be pleased with her) was a shining example to all women in the spirit of sacrifice. Through her excellent example, she inspired and motivated Ahmadi women.

Whenever the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) and his successors started a scheme, women always participated. The women of the family of the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) were the first to set an outstanding example, motivating other women to follow in their stead. They did this despite facing terrible hardship. Even through the challenging time of Partition¹²⁰ when the Jamaat was required to emigrate from Qadian to Rabwah, a barren dusty landscape, where they had to start rebuilding their lives and homes all over again, the women of the Jamaat showed immense courage. Those that stayed behind were ready with their husbands to give up their lives if need be, in order to protect Qadian. Yet despite these immense struggles, there was no relenting in their zeal and enthusiasm to sacrifice all that they had for the cause of their faith.

Hazrat Umme Nasir (ra) made an outstanding sacrifice during difficult times to help launch the Al-Fazl newspaper. Women's love for jewellery is legendary. Her husband's financial situation did not allow for the jewellery to be replaced. These two factors made her sacrifice even more

¹²⁰ The division of India by the British into two separate states of Pakistan and India

dignified and beautiful. This is why Hazrat Musleh Maud (ra) always spoke highly about this sacrifice. Purely a strong desire to serve one's faith was the only criterion Hazrat Musleh Maud (ra) considered when choosing a spouse which was quite different from that sought by most husbands.

Once referring to this generosity Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II (ra) said,

'As God had incited Hazrat Khadija (ra) to help the Holy Prophet (saw) in the same way He incited my wife to my help. She knew fully well that to invest money in a newspaper, specially one brought out by Mehmood, who was in those days perhaps, the most condemned, was equivalent to throwing money in a ditch. Yet, she gave me two of her ornaments; one, her own pair of Karras: secondly a pair of gold bangles which she possessed since her childhood and which she had reserved for our daughter, Nasira Begum. I took the jewellery and went to Lahore where they were sold for Rs 475. This was the initial capital of the "Al-Fazl". The "Al-Fazl" will always remind the people of my helpless condition and keep alive my wife's sacrifice. So far as I am concerned, each paper of the Al-Fazl evokes strange emotions in me. It reminds me again and again of the critical condition of the Jamaat in which the need of a newspaper was imperative; and it reminds me time and again of my wife's sacrifice. Neither my early treatment deserved it nor has my subsequent behaviour made me worthy of it. Till that time I had not given her

even a ring and later on, I just made her one ring only. Indeed, her sacrifice has left an imperishable mark on my heart and even if I were to disregard her other sacrifices and considerations and overlook my own harsh and strict behaviour, this one kind gesture of hers is enough to overwhelm me. Her generosity as it were, gave me hands to serve religion; it turned a new leaf in my life and equipped the Jamaat with an effective weapon. How true is this saying? A woman is a quiet worker. Her example is that of the rose from which perfume is derived. People remember the shop from which they buy the perfume but no one thinks of the rose which dies to provide them pleasure. I wonder what would I have done, or in what way would I have rendered some service, or how the mischief that was gaining strength day to day would have been suppressed, had not Allah provided me in this way?’

A few notable projects that were realised due to the financial sacrifices of women are given below:

Berlin Mosque fund

The first official sacrifice requested of women by Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II (may Allah be pleased with him) was for the construction of the Berlin Mosque. As stated earlier, the noble example was set by Hazrat Amman Jan (may Allah be pleased with her), followed by other female

members of the family of the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him).

When Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him) launched this project, he specifically addressed the women of Qadian. He told them that if they showed zeal and courage, in turn, the women from outside Qadian would also be motivated by them and would follow their example. However, he went on to say that if the women of Qadian showed reluctance and weakness, then this would have a detrimental effect on the fervour of those outside.¹²¹

On hearing the words of their Khalifah, the women of Qadian were so moved and motivated that 8500 rupees was donated on the same day, and that was not including monetary pledges. It is worthy to note that the majority of people living in Qadian had modest and meagre means of living. Despite this, they were willing to sacrifice whatever they had in the way of Allah.

Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him) mentioned the sacrifice of an elderly Pathan lady, who was among those who took part in this sacrifice. She was very poor and had migrated to Qadian in order to protect herself from the cruelties of the Maulvis in her area. She spoke Pashto and could only speak a few words in Urdu. She was living on an allowance from the community. She gestured to her '*dubatta*' (head scarf) and said "This is

¹²¹ <https://www.reviewofreligions.org/275/the-establishment-of-lajna-Ima'illah-and-the-sacrifices-of-early-ahmadi-muslim-women/>

from the Jamaat [the Ahmadiyya community].” She then held her shirt and said “This is from the Jamaat.” She pointed towards her shoes and said “These are also from Jamaat.” She then presented her two-rupee allowance, which she had saved for herself to the community.

Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him) said “On the one hand, every single word of hers was cutting through my heart like a sharp knife and on the other, my heart was overflowing with gratitude for the Benevolent God who gave life to such strong souls in a dead nation. A voice within me said ‘O my God! How great was your Messiah who completely turned the condition of these Pakhtoons, who used to steal from others, now consider it an honour to sacrifice their country, their relatives, and their wealth for the sake of your religion.’”¹²²

As a result of the zeal of Ahmadi women, they were able to raise the amount requested by Huzoor (may Allah be pleased with him) within a month. Women from every background, from near and far donated whatever they had for the cause. Every woman was determined to outdo the others in her sacrifice.

In an essay entitled ‘Berlin Mosque: Model of Sincerity of Sisters’, published on 1st March 1923, in the Al-Fazl newspaper, Huzoor (may Allah be pleased with him) praised these unparalleled sacrifices.

¹²² Khan, Mahmood- Odyssey of Sacrifice, p. 45

Fazl Mosque

In the end, due to a variety of reasons, the Berlin Mosque could not be constructed. Huzoor (may Allah be pleased with him) once again addressed the women of the Jamaat on the 23rd October 1928. In his speech, Huzoor (may Allah be pleased with him) told the women that although the Berlin Mosque could not be constructed, the women's donations were redirected towards building a mosque in London. The building of the London Mosque ultimately became attributed to them, and Huzoor (may Allah be pleased with him) commented upon how fitting it was that the mosque built in the centre of Christianity was built by women: a practical response to Christianity which blames Islam for the 'violation of women's rights.'¹²³

It was through the financial sacrifices of women and with the blessings of Allah, that the Fazl Mosque was built. This blessed mosque became the home of Khilafat-e Ahmadiyya for over four decades. It housed the studios of MTA, through which the voice of Khilafat reached the four corners of the world, fulfilling the grand prophecy of the Promised Messiah (peace be on him):

¹²³ <https://www.reviewofreligions.org/275/the-establishment-of-lajna-imaillah-and-the-sacrifices-of-early-ahmadi-muslim-women/> p.6

'I shall cause thy message to reach the corners of the Earth'¹²⁴

This demonstrates how those blessed women made such huge sacrifices at a time when they had so little; and how fruitful their sacrifice was!

After the partition, the financial situation of the members of the Jamaat was very weak. Despite this, in 1950, the women of the Jamaat stepped up to the challenge once again. When their Imam called upon them to make donations for the construction of Mosques in Washington and the Hague, they donated generously. In his sermon of 14th Dec 1951 Hazrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud (may Allah be pleased with him) praised them for their zeal and enthusiasm, despite their meagre means.¹²⁵

In 1964, fifty years of the Khilafat of Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him) was marked by the Lajna Ima'illah offering to build a mosque in Copenhagen, Denmark. Ahmadi women celebrated their happiness by winning God's pleasure in continuing the task of spreading the true message of Islam to the corners of the Earth.¹²⁶

¹²⁴ <https://www.reviewofreligions.org/27438/true-prophets-are-always-victorious-over-the-opponents/>

¹²⁵ <https://www.reviewofreligions.org/275/the-establishment-of-lajna-imaillah-and-the-sacrifices-of-early-ahmadi-muslim-women/> p.6

¹²⁶ <https://www.reviewofreligions.org/275/the-establishment-of-lajna-imaillah-and-the-sacrifices-of-early-ahmadi-muslim-women/> p.7

Tehrik- e- Jadid

In 1934, Huzoor, (may Allah be pleased with him) began the Tehrik-e- Jadid scheme. The purpose of the scheme was to acquire funds with which Allah's message could be delivered throughout the world with ease and facility, thus establishing the Oneness of God, honouring the high status of the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and raising the flag of Islam all over the world.

In his speech on 23rd November 1934, Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him) presented the requirements and fundamental principles of Tehrik e Jadid. For this, Huzoor set forth some specific demands of women. He said:

'In this sacrifice we need the cooperation of women otherwise our sacrifices shall remain a sacrifice only in words. So, I particularly draw the attention of women to the fact that they need to focus on making sacrifice and cooperate with men in these matters. Our women should remember there have been women before them who have made amazing sacrifices.'¹²⁷

The specific sacrifices that Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him) required of women, in order to

¹²⁷ <https://www.reviewofreligions.org/275/the-establishment-of-lajna-imaillah-and-the-sacrifices-of-early-ahmadi-muslim-women/> p.8

encourage them to give this money in chanda instead, for three years were as follows:

- To eat simple food.
- To wear simple clothing and to avoid extravagance.
- Not to purchase new Jewellery

In repose the Sadr Lajna held a meeting in which the Naib Sadr, wife of Hafiz Roshan Ali Sahib (scholar and companion of Promised Messiah, peace be upon him) presented a resolution which was signed and sent to Huzoor (may Allah be pleased with him) by 117 women. The resolution promised that the Lajna would try their best to live a life of simplicity according to Huzoor's directives. They also affirmed that they were ready to sacrifice their lives and possessions for the cause of faith. They pledged that their comfort and adornment and their peace lay in the progress of Islam. They affirmed that they would stay true to the promise that they had made to Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih (may Allah be pleased with him) during Bai'at.¹²⁸

Historical accounts of the time recount how women, in keeping with their promise to make extraordinary

¹²⁸ <https://www.reviewofreligions.org/275/the-establishment-of-lajna-imaillah-and-the-sacrifices-of-early-ahmadi-muslim-women/> p.9

sacrifices, led a life of simplicity and austerity so that they could partake in the noble objectives of Tehrik-e- Jadid.

Missionaries

When missionary work began and missionaries were sent to foreign countries, their wives displayed outstanding sacrifice and resilience. The financial situation of the Jamaat was such that often they were unable to return home for many years at a time. The wives of missionaries displayed enormous endurance. They supported their husbands and lived off meagre means without complaint. They were proud to be the wives and children of those who were at the forefront of spreading the message of Ahmadiyyat. Their sacrifices made the sacrifice of their husbands possible.

In the MTA documentary Servants of Allah, we hear an account of the sacrifices made by the wife of Hazrat Maulana Nazir Ahmad Ali sahib^{ra} who was a pioneer missionary in West Africa. His son Maulana Mubarak Ahmed Nazir relayed:

“Our women stay in the background and sometimes we do not mention them but behind as they say, the work of a man there is a woman, who stands behind him. Had it not been for the support of my mother Muhtrama Amina begum, it would have been very difficult. She was also a pillar of support and I remember two of us, my elder brother and myself, sometimes my mother thought that

we were sleeping, she would put both of us on the bed and she thought that I was sleeping but I was not sleeping. I was listening and I could see tears flowing from her eyes, that Oh Allah their father is not here, I am managing these children, put them on the Right path, let them do the right things and I used to see her praying and she took care of the children. My father his resources were so meagre and we were six brothers. One thing my mother never compromised on, was that the children should *not* go to college. She did not compromise on that at all. You have to do your studies. She could accept everything but not saying your prayers or not going to college or not doing your studies; that's why all my brothers by The Grace of Allah, are highly educated, highly intellectual doctors, specialists in Medicine. Even this younger brother who was just speaking has a PHD, so they are all highly qualified and they got their education, sometimes they didn't have better shoes to wear. Sometimes I used to see one of them wearing one shoe and one of them wearing another boot and this is how they went to college in Rabwah and this is how they did wonders. Our father had also demised and also, we had the kindness of Hazrat Amirul Momineen. I remember when my father died Hazrat Amirul Momineen gave me an allowance of 30 rupees every month so that, that would take care of my education. My education was all taken care of by the Jama'at and this is how he helped the children. The quarters where we used to stay, Huzoor said this will remain with Mrs. Nazir Ahmed Ali until her demise, she would stay there permanently, free of charge.

It was a great support, great respect and great acknowledgement of these people. My mother was in the background. Just now we are recording and those children who are now doing this recording are not coming on the show but they are the people behind, they are behind this taping. So, this is how she remained in the background. She had a very difficult time. I have no hesitation in saying that for all my time in Africa, I never wore new clothes, I fully remembered when I got a new shirt and it was Eid and that was the first time I got a new shirt and now by the Grace of Allah we have dozens and dozens of shirts and other things but those were the difficult times and we should never forget as we move ahead, never forget to look backwards and see how you started and see how this Jamaat started and what was the condition of these missionaries and look at how Allah Taalaha has blessed their family abundantly. We have so much now that we are overwhelmed by what we have.

Once Hazrat Ammajan^{ra}, Hazrat Masih Maud's^{as} wife, when my father came back from Africa in 1945, once quietly came to Darul Burkaat and knocked at our door. All the way from Masjid Mubarak. So, my grandfather opened the door and Lo, before us was Hazrat Ammajan^{ra} and I still remember, my father was standing as if a servant stands before a master. Hazrat Ammajan^{ra} said I heard that Maulana Nazir Ahmed Sahib Ali has come back from Africa, so I just wanted to say my Asolamoalikum to him and ask him how he is. My father like a meek servant said, Hazrat

Ammajan^{ra}: There is a lot of progress in Sierra Leone, we want you to send one of your children or one of your grandchildren to go there and work so that we work under those children because there is a lot of progress in Africa and Hazrat Ammajan^{ra} smiling said, "Maulvi sahib, you are also our children, in fact all the missionaries are my children. So, this is how Allah Taalaha granted Hazrat Masih Maud^{as} a woman of such calibre that despite her illness and despite her age she walked all the way from Mahalla Ahmadiyya and walked to Darul Burkaat which is near the railway station. She walked on foot in the morning, unannounced and came just to say Asolamoalikum to the missionaries. These are the things, the motivations, these are the propellants, this is the fuel. Now tell me Hazrat Ammajan^{ra} coming to your home, how can such a person ever fail, there's no difficulty for him in the world."

Basharat Nazir son of Hazrat Maulana Nazir Ali relayed some of the difficulties Muhtrama Amina begum faced whilst accompanying her husband to Africa.

"My father, my mother and her 11-year-old child, they actually embarked on quite a dilapidated, old ship. The ship's name I think was Akbar. This ship took them to Port Sudan via Aidan. They disembarked from port Sudan and from there they had to cross from the East side of Africa all the way to the West of Africa. The only way was through the Sahara. There was no transport or roads of any kind. There were just some goods trucks. French goods trucks which were operating, open back. So, these people

travelled for weeks in different trucks, crossing from Sudan all the way to the West, reaching Nigeria. They then took trains to reach Lagos. They stayed I think about a week in Lagos then they took a ship from Lagos to go to Freetown and from there they took the road to the city of Bo which was their destination. All this journey took them exactly three months. So, they were in journey or in transit for three months. When I think about what kind of sacrifices my mother made, this is one thing which comes to my mind, that they were separated for so many different times for so long and then when she goes with him (my father), she goes through this arduous journey. Actually, I worked out, (I know when I was born and I know when this journey took place) that my mother was pregnant with me at that time and she did *all* this journey.”¹²⁹

The early members of Lajna Ima'illah are a shining example for Ahmadi women. Their sacrifices in every field will always be remembered. They worked in perfect harmony with Khilafat, ready, waiting and eager to carry out every instruction like faithful soldiers. They became the embodiment of the vision that Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him) had. Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him) recognised that without the service of women the ultimate aim of Jamaat Ahmadiyya

¹²⁹ <https://beta.mta.tv/programme/31545/servants-of-allah-maulana-nazir-ahmad-ali-sahib>

could not be fulfilled. Through his guidance, women were given a greater purpose, the same purpose that was vouchsafed to women at the time of the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) through Divine Guidance.

The fulfilment of the aims and objectives that were outlined by Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him) and the seeds that were laid by fourteen women, have, by the Grace of Allah, become a strong healthy fruit bearing tree that extends its branches all across the world. The Lajna Ima'illah today consists of a strong body of women who continue to excel in every sacrifice and every field and continue to work to advance the cause of Ahmadiyyat under the blessed guidance of Khilafat e Ahmadiyya.

‘In order to fulfil the purpose of our creation, the struggle by women is required and is as critical as by men’¹³⁰

Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him)

¹³⁰ <https://www.reviewofreligions.org/275/the-establishment-of-lajna-imaillah-and-the-sacrifices-of-early-ahmadi-muslim-women/> p.2

Chapter 3

LOVE AND OBEDIENCE TO KHILAFAT

iv) The rules and regulations should conform to Islam as interpreted by Silsila Aliya Ahmadiyya and be contributory to its progress and strength.

vii) In order to preserve the spirit of unity in the Jamaat, the affairs of this body shall be conducted in conformity with the schemes prepared by whoever is the Khalifa of the time.

viii) You shall endeavour to be constantly active in promoting unity among the Jamaat as enjoined upon every Muslim by the Holy Quran, The Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) and you should be always be prepared to offer every sacrifice for this cause.

xi) When you start working together, you should overlook the faults of each other. Efforts to reform should be carried out with patience and perseverance. In no case

should resentment and anger be allowed to create differences and divisions amongst you.

xiv) To save the programme from disruption it is necessary that only such sisters should be allowed to become members of the body who are in full agreement with these aims. If, God forbid, at some stage a member feels that she disagrees with these aims, she should voluntarily disassociate herself from the body or else be removed from it. *Note: at a later stage Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II (may Allah be pleased with him) decided that membership of Lajna Ima'illah should be compulsory for every Ahmadi woman.

Lajna Ima'illah Silsila Aliya Ahmadiyya shall be a permanent organisation. It shall function under the supervision of Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih and the Markaz (Headquarters) of Silsila Aliya Ahmadiyya shall always be the Markaz of this organisation.¹³¹

“Allah has promised to those among you who believe and do good works that He will surely, make them Successors in the earth, as He made Successors *from among* those who were before them; and that He will, surely establish for them their religion which He has chosen for them; and that He will surely give them in exchange security *and* peace after their fear; They will worship Me, *and* they will not associate anything with Me. Then who so is

¹³¹<http://www.lajnausa.net/web/webfiles/publications/Constitution/English%20Constitution%20Final%206.4.pdf>

ungrateful after that, they will be the rebellious.”¹³²(24:56)

The streets were dark, cold and crowded, illuminated intermittently by dull streetlamps. The air was thick with anticipation, people were immersed in their own personal prayers, yet conscious of everything that was going on around them. Slowly, what can only be described as this massive wave of humans became alert simultaneously, as they heard the crackle through the loudspeaker of the voice of their newly elected Khalifa. Huzoor (may Allah be pleased with him) spoke for the first time, from Fazl Mosque to the crowds that spilled onto Granville Road and the surrounding streets, he said “Sit down”, in Urdu. Every single person sat down on cold pavements and roads and wherever they were standing. It was the road immediately in front of the entrance to Fazl Mosque, no cars on these roads tonight! A rather heavy-set lady, clearly out of breath, asked, “Does Huzoor mean us? Do we have to sit...?” A voice replied, “Our Khalifa has spoken and asked us to sit, we need to sit”. And so, a scene, not sure ever witnessed before in the streets of London occurred; the human wave collectively sat, regardless of comfort, on the cold dark pavements, roads and ground. We then proceeded to be joined in a human chain, each Ahmadi connected to another, and took bait at the hand of Hazrat

¹³² <https://www.alislam.org/quran/app/24:56>

Mirza Masroor Ahmed (may Allah be his helper), Khalifatul Masih V. The date was 22nd April 2003.

This event, for all those present and not present but watching and listening from afar, encapsulated the spirit of Khilafat. Unfailing obedience to Allah's vicegerent on earth; our Khalifah. A self-defining moment, which epitomises the Arabic word '*labaik*', meaning 'I am here Allah, at your service'. But what is Khilafat and what does it mean to modern man?'

We live in a world which is moving towards two polarising extremes politically, socially and economically, at a very fast pace. Where, on both sides of the spectrum, obedience to a religious institution and authority seem a little old fashioned and even draconian. In a world that screams for liberty, freedom and free speech to the point of no censorship, obedience to one religious figure may well, on the face of it, seem archaic. Parts of the world, particularly the so-called 'developed world', are dangerously hurtling towards a right-wing narrative. Where, obedience to a religious institution and authority are deemed as dangerous and even as a threat to the status quo. In a world where people are demanding that 'immigrants' and 'foreigners' show unyielding loyalty to their new home countries and authorities, obedience to a religious figure and authority seems to be at odds with each other. These societies seem to be moving further and further away from God and religion, particularly organised religion.

This begs the question; can humankind live without spiritual leadership? Is temporal leadership sufficient to make people good? To make humanity moral? Can only temporal, political leadership alone guide humankind to live a life of equality, justice and peace? If we look at this leadership, what has it achieved? Has temporal leadership in the world eradicated poverty? Has temporal leadership eradicated racism and bigotry? Has temporal leadership eradicated inequality? If humanity can live without rightly guided religious leadership, then why is there so much civil unrest in the world?

Yet, in this tumultuous and turbulent climate, we see the growth of a movement, a community of Allah, led by his appointed leader, his Khalifa, that is growing from strength to strength. Its birth was in a small town in India and today it spans, literally the corners of the Earth. To whom kings have given their allegiance. To whom ordinary people have sworn their lives, their children and their time and which is a beacon of light. The members of this community are the adherents of the true and authentic Khalifah of Islam; this community is no pretender to the throne. It is indeed 'the real thing'. It has millions of followers, from all walks of life, cultures, races, economic groups. Their objective is to spread the message of the true Islam and to bring justice and peace to the world. Who are these people? They are the true followers of their master Hazrat Muhammad Mustafa (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). They are the adherents of the Promised Messiah and

Mahdhi of the latter days, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as). They are Ahmadi Muslims.

Underpinning their loyalty to Khilafat, Ahmadi Muslims believe fundamentally that the institution of Khilafat and recognising its authority, has to be the collective action of one group of people, rightly guided by Allah, through His representative on earth, His Khalifa. Unfailing obedience to one voice which then represents our faith community and every element of its organisation.

What is Khilafat? Why do we need it? Who can hold the title of Khalifah? How will we recognise the Khalifah of our time? Let us start at the beginning and refer back to the verse cited at the start of this chapter. Chapter An Nur, Verse 56 is vital for understanding how to resolve problems concerning moral, social and political issues in the world and within the Muslim world in particular. Allah also tells us in this verse, that the only way to establish spiritual enlightenment in the world, is through Islam and the institution of Khilafat; a leadership which is full of spiritual blessings. Believers have been promised peace and prosperity and a life devoid of fear, but it is conditional. The condition is total obedience to Allah and His Prophet – the Holy Prophet Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) through the leadership of the Khalifah of Islam. Because the Khalifah of Islam is the Successor of a Prophet he must, therefore, be given unconditional obedience. The promise of peace and prosperity is one given to the whole of the Muslim nation,

but Muslims are reminded here that the institution of Khilafat will be embodied by actual people leading them. It is not a mere notion or an idea, Khilafat will be personified in the person of an actual leader. But the 'successors of the nation' will only be blessed by this leadership if they observe prayer, give *Zakat* and obey all of Allah's laws. Khilafat of the latter days will not come to a people who are incapable of recognising it and the Promised Messiah and Reformer. When Allah is satisfied that Muslims are worthy of being the recipients of the blessed institution of Khilafat, they will be made leaders of nations themselves. They will go from fear to peace and security because of their allegiance to the true Khalifah of Islam. It is in this atmosphere that Islam will reign supreme over all of the world. It is with this Khilafat that the true purpose of Islam will be firmly established; the establishment of the Unity and Oneness of Allah.

It is important to note that the Holy Quran mentions three types of Khulafa in the following terms and that verse 56 in Surah Al-Nur encompasses all of these types:

“1. Khulafa, who are Prophets such as Adam and David. About Adam, God says in the Quran: “I am about to place a vicegerent in the earth” (2:31); and about David He says: “O David, We have made thee a vicegerent in the earth” (38:27).

2. Prophets who are the Khulafa of another and a greater Prophet such as the Israelite Prophets who all were

the Khulafa of Moses. About them, the Quran says: “We have sent down the Torah wherein was guidance and light. By it did the Prophets who were obedient to Us judge for the Jews:” (5:45).

3. Non-Prophet Khulafa of a Prophet, with or without temporal powers, such as godly people learned in the Law. Their mission is to protect and preserve the law from being tampered with (5:45).

The above commentary continues to explain that:

“Briefly, the verse under comment covers all these categories of Khulafa, viz., the Holy Prophet’s rightly-guided Khulafa, the Promised Messiah, his Successors and the spiritual Reformers or *Mujaddids*. Their mission, as the above verse says, is to protect the Law and to bring back “the erring flock into the Master’s fold.”

The special marks and characteristics of these Khulafa are:

- They are appointed Khulafa through God’s own decree in the sense that the hearts of believers become inclined towards them and they voluntarily accept them as their Khulafa;
- The religion which their mission is to serve becomes firmly established through their prayers and missionary efforts;

- They enjoy equanimity and peace of mind amidst hardships, privations or persecution which nothing can disturb; and
- They worship God alone, i.e. in the discharge of their great responsibilities they fear no one and they carry on their duties undaunted and without being discouraged or dismayed by the difficulties that stand in their way.

The verse may also be regarded as embodying a prophecy which was made at a time when Islam was very weak, and idols were being worshipped throughout Arabia, and the Muslims, being small in number, feared for their very lives. Yet, in the course of only a generation, the prophecy was literally fulfilled. Idolatry disappeared from Arabia and Islam became firmly established, not only in Arabia, but also reigned supreme in a large part of the world. The followers of the Holy Prophet, erstwhile regarded as the dregs and scum of humanity, became the leaders and teachers of nations.

The words, “Whosoever is ungrateful after that, they will be the rebellious,” signify that Khilafat is a great Divine blessing. Without it, there can be no solidarity, cohesion and unity among Muslims and therefore, they can make no real progress without it. If Muslims do not show proper appreciation of Khilafat by giving unstinted support and obedience to their Khulafa, they will forfeit this great

Divine boon and in addition, will draw the displeasure of God upon themselves.¹³³

The above verse in Surah Al Nur makes it abundantly clear that the establishment of Khilafat as the successors of the message of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), is the one and only guide for humanity and mankind after his prophethood. There is no other way, there is no other right path, there is no other guided path until the end of time and the existence of the world. This Khilafat, in subservience to its holy master, Hazrat Muhammad Mustafa (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is another sign of his superiority over all other prophets sent to the world by Allah. We live in a time today where we are witness to his most devoted servant – Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (peace be upon him) and his Khulafa.

¹³³ The Holy Quran with English Translation and Commentary, Vol. 4, p.2289-22890.
(pub1988)

Our Pledge of Allegiance to Khilafat

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ
وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ-

I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allah. He is one and has no partner, and I bear witness that Muhammad (saw) is His servant and His Messenger.

I affirm that I shall always be ready to sacrifice my life, property, time and children for the cause of faith and nation. I shall always adhere to truth and shall always be prepared to make every sacrifice for the perpetuation of the Ahmadiyya Khilafat, Insha'Allah.'

We need to consider whether we make the pledge honestly and sincerely. We need to ensure that we ponder upon the meaning of each word that we utter and that we are sincere in our loyalty and commitment to the institution of Khilafat.

Allah reminds us in the Holy Quran: "And remember Allah's favour upon you and the covenant which He made with you, when you said, 'We hear and we obey.' And fear Allah. Surely Allah knows well what is in the minds." (5:8)

The Holy Prophet Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be on him) said: “Make an oath only in the name of Allah – adhere to the truth and fulfil it strictly.”¹³⁴

Thus, our pledge or oath of allegiance to Khilafat has no significance if we do not make every effort to reform ourselves and reform others around us. When we recite the pledge, we are making a solemn promise to Allah, to the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be on him), to the Promised Messiah (peace be on him) and to our Khalifa (may Allah strengthen his hand). As Lajna, we promise that we will protect Islam, make sacrifices, raise good children and continue to perpetuate Islam and Ahmadiyyat.¹³⁵

Thus, when Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him) laid stress on obedience to Khilafat, unity and sisterhood in the aims and objectives of Lajna, he knew how vital this was for the success of Lajna, for without these crucial elements Lajna Ima’illah cannot stand firm.

We know that making a verbal pledge and putting the pledge into actual practice are not the same. In showing obedience to Khilafat, we need to reflect on the little changes that lead to true reform and success. This is made evident in the many directives that our Khalifah has given to Lajna in particular. These range from self-reflection, the

¹³⁴ <https://www.alislam.org/library/books/Wisdom-of-Holy-Prophet.pdf>.79

¹³⁵ <http://lajnausa.net/web/webfiles/publications/ayesha/ayeshawinter2008.pdf>

importance of purdah, to upbringing of children to name a few. Those of us who have made concerted efforts to act on these directives, see how these small steps improve their lives; bringing them closer to Allah, enabling them to establish bonds of sisterhood and in turn, remain steadfast and unified through common values.

We are blessed to be a part of Lajna Ima'illah- The Servants of Allah. Lajna Ima'illah was created solely for us and in order to fulfil the goals and objectives of this esteemed auxiliary, we must be faithful to Khilafat and uphold our pledge.

The Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) said, 'Do not wear Islam as an outer robe, but practice its teachings and you will be transformed'.¹³⁶

In a speech delivered to Lajna at the Jalsa Salana 2012, Huzoor reiterated how important it was that every Ahmadi man or woman understands their responsibilities and pays heed to the guidance given to them by their Khalifah.

“Upon taking the Bai’at, the responsibility of every Ahmadi increases and so each Ahmadi, man or woman should remain constantly focussed on fulfilling his or her responsibilities. This is something that I constantly and repeatedly remind Ahmadis of during my speeches and sermons and similarly I have admonished and counselled

¹³⁶<https://assets.lajnausa.net/library/ayesha-magazine/ayesha-2008-winter.pdf> p.94

the members of Lajna Ima'illah about their roles and responsibilities again and again."¹³⁷

Sisterhood and Responsibilities of Duty holders.

In the aims and objectives of Lajna, we read this admonition from Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him): "When you start working together, you should overlook the faults of each other. Efforts to reform should be carried out with patience and perseverance. In no case should resentment and anger be allowed to create differences and divisions amongst you."¹³⁸

This concept of unity amongst Lajna members was a foresight "That is crucial for the success of this auxiliary movement. We have all heard the saying "United we stand divided we fall". As Lajna we must adopt a sense of sisterhood and beware of petty jealousies or any type of acrimony that can bring nothing but discord and division amongst our members. We need to show respect for each other, for those placed above us and for those who work with us.

¹³⁷ jalsa Salana USA 30th June 2012

<https://www.lajnausa.net/web/webfiles/events/Jalsa%202012/OFFICIAL%20TRANSCRIPT%20-%20Jalsa%20Salana%20USA%202012%20Address%20to%20Lajna%20Day%20%20on%2030.06.2012%20-%20APPROVED%20V.1%20-%2004.08.2012.pdf> p.2

¹³⁸ Constitution of Lajna ima'illah p.4

<http://www.lajnausa.net/web/webfiles/publications/Constitution/English%20Constitution%20Final%206.4.pdf>

In a speech delivered to Lajna Ima'illah on the occasion of Jalsa in Germany in 2010, Huzoor (may Allah be his Helper) explained the true qualities of a believer as mentioned in the Holy Quran.

“And the believers, men and women, are friends one of another. They enjoin good and forbid evil and observe Prayer and pay the Zakah and obey Allah and His Messenger. It is these on whom Allah will have mercy. Surely, Allah is Mighty *and* Wise.”¹³⁹(9:71)

He explained that in mentioning some of the qualities of a believer, Allah says that believing men and believing women are each other's "*Wali*". *Wali* means "friend" and implies that believers are like a single soul. He explained that to be a true "*Wali*" one must possess feelings of great love and affection for one other; they are each other's helpers; each other's protectors and they safeguard each other's matters. Huzoor further clarified in expounding this verse:

Allah Almighty also mentions:

“And those who are with him are hard against the disbelievers *and* tender among themselves. Thou seest them bowing and prostrating

¹³⁹ <https://www.alislam.org/quran/9:71>

themselves *in* Prayer, seeking Allah’s grace and pleasure.”(48:30)¹⁴⁰

Believers are those who display great mercy to each other – these are the people who have formed strong mutual relationships whilst completely following the true teachings of Islam. They consider a fellow believer’s pain to be their own pain, they enjoin reciprocal patience and tolerance for the sake of mutual harmony.

Thus, the true meaning of being a “*Wali*” is one who removes all worldly boundaries of caste or creed to create feelings of love, affection and bonding. In explaining this idea, Huzoor said,

“Hence, you, the ladies and men whom I am addressing, should always remember that if you are in search of true paradise, then not only should you advance in performing good deeds, but you should also become each other’s aides in performing them. Flourish the bonds of love and affection. Instead of raising walls of anger and grudges on minuscule matters, eradicate them. Some people raise such walls, which become quite difficult to eliminate. “¹⁴¹

Huzoor further highlighted the responsibilities of duty holders saying that another connotation of being a “*Wali*” is to be the custodian of matters. If all Jamaat officeholders

¹⁴⁰<https://www.alislam.org/quran/48:30>

¹⁴¹ Jalsa salana germany June 2010

https://www.lajnausa.net/web/webfiles/tarbiyat/OFFICIAL_VERSION_Address_by_Hadhrat_Khalifatul_Masih_V_at_J%E2%80%A6.pdf

demonstrate feelings of love, affection and safeguarding of rights by personal example, then 50% reformation can occur. He explained that if we consider the officeholders of the Jamaat at every level, including the officeholders of Khuddamul Ahmadiyya, the officeholders of Ansarullah and – the Lajna officeholders at each level, then 50% of the members of the Jamaat are in some way or the other offering their services. Hence, a reformation of that 50% may be considered completed.¹⁴²

The love and obedience to Khilafat creates a bond which is shared between every Lajna sister and it is this bond that gives us strength and steadfastness in our ultimate goal of serving Islam to the best of our capabilities. This was the expectation that Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him) had for the women to whom he first presented the aims and objectives of Lajna Ima'illah and the very same bond and obedience to khilafat should be an aspiration for all generations of Lajna now and in the future.

¹⁴²Jalsa salana germany June 2010
https://www.lajnausa.net/web/webfiles/tarbiyat/OFFICIAL_VERSION_Address_by_Hazrat_Khalifatul_Masih_V_at_J%E2%80%A6.pdf

Chapter 4

EDUCATION AND MORAL TRAINING OF WOMEN

i) Women should strive together to enhance their knowledge and spread the knowledge they have attained to others.

v) Papers regarding various aspects of Islam particularly those pertaining to contemporary issues be read in their meetings and events and be written by the members themselves so that they should learn to use their knowledge.

vi) In order to increase knowledge, this body should arrange lectures on selected topics which it deems necessary to be delivered by those versed in Islam.

There are hundreds of contemporary charities and organisations built for the sole purpose of supporting and educating women around the world. Some of their mantras include ‘sustainable change starts with women,’ ‘empowering the next generation of female leaders’ and

‘progress for all’. One well known quote that many have heard in the West is:

“If you educate a man, you educate an individual, if you educate a woman, you educate an entire generation.”
(Brigham Young)¹⁴³

Indeed, these are inspiring and worthwhile sentiments, but it is amazing to think that Islam had already laid the foundations for such ideals 1400 years ago. It is equally astonishing that women in the 21st century are still fighting for those rights.

Men and women are repeatedly regarded as equals in the sight of Allah the Almighty. The Holy Quran states:

“And covet not that whereby Allah has made some of you excel others. Men shall have a share of that which they have earned, and women a share of that which they have earned. And ask Allah of His bounty. Surely, Allah has perfect knowledge of all things.”¹⁴⁴(4:33)

Specifically, in relation to education, there is also the short prayer, “O my Lord, increase me in knowledge,”¹⁴⁵ (20:115) which we are all taught as children regardless of our gender.

¹⁴³ <https://www.quotemaster.org/Educated+Women>

¹⁴⁴ <https://www.alislam.org/quran/app/4:33>

¹⁴⁵ <https://www.alislam.org/quran/app/20:115>

We can see here that Islam promotes equality between men and women, and encourages women to succeed and progress in their lives.

This equal treatment of women was always reflected in the actions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in his conduct towards his wives. He always encouraged them to learn and educate themselves. He once stated that “half the religion of Islam could be learned from Hazrat Ayesha.”¹⁴⁶ This high accolade was given to the knowledge of a woman; a testament to the fact that, all believers, regardless of whether they were men or women, could turn to this woman to learn about their faith.

The Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) laid great stress on the education of young girls. According to Hadith, it is related that he said: “It is the duty of every Muslim man and every Muslim woman to acquire knowledge.” (Ibni Majah)¹⁴⁷ In this way, not only would they become good mothers and educate their children in the best possible manner, but they would also be able to make a positive contribution to society.¹⁴⁸

Unfortunately, as time went by, these teachings were forgotten and overlooked. Religious leaders wanted to monopolise religious knowledge, in order to control the

¹⁴⁶ <https://www.alislam.org/book/pathway-to-paradise/ch.2>

¹⁴⁷ <https://www.alislam.org/book/pathway-to-paradise/ch.2>

¹⁴⁸ <https://www.alislam.org/library/book/pathway-to-paradise/womens-issues/>

‘common’ people and women in particular. Cultural thought diluted the true teachings of Islam. Educating women meant empowering them and this was something men feared, so women were encouraged to remain in their homes without the right to education and enlightenment.

In the 19th century, the education of boys, let alone girls, was not given any importance. In India, it was considered a luxury for the rich and powerful, and even within wealthy homes, only men were assigned tutors. After the establishment of the British Empire, many schools were set up throughout India but Muslim women were still unable to take advantage of these schools. Due to strict regulations of *purdah* (segregation), girls were unable to attend. Women and girls were expected to wear their veils even in their backyards and leave the house in a palanquin.¹⁴⁹ This palanquin would be placed at the entrance of her home, and large sheets covered the door to the palanquin so that a woman would not be seen even climbing into it.

With the advent of the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him), who came as a reformer of Islam and through the wisdom and forward thinking of his Khulafa, the rights to a secular and religious education were re-established for women. The Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) was unequivocal in his belief that women have a huge role in

¹⁴⁹ A covered litter for one passenger, consisting of a large box carried on two horizontal poles by four or six bearers.

the reformation of the future generations of Muslims and they are also essential in achieving the goal of the reformation of the true Islam. He said:

“If you wish to reform yourself, it is essential that you reform your women first.”¹⁵⁰

Acquiring knowledge of the Holy Quran and Hadith became a priority, and Qadian gradually became a beacon of knowledge and learning.

1909-Madrassatul-Binat (A school for daughters)

The Khulafa that followed the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) ensured that the education of women remained a priority. Hazrat Khalifatul Masih I (may Allah be pleased with him) inaugurated the school for the training of girls *Madrassatul -Binat* (A school for daughters) in 1909 which had initially been set up in the lifetime of the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him). He also personally gave Dars (commentary of the Holy Quran) to ladies to improve their knowledge and understanding of the Holy Quran.

The education of the community was a key objective for Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II (may Allah be pleased with him). From a young age he had a passion for learning and education, and this was reflected in the way he encouraged members of his community to acquire knowledge and educate themselves in both religious and

¹⁵⁰ History of Lajna (translated from urdu) Vol 1 part 1 p.3

secular matters. With the purpose of educating the women of the Ahmadiyya community in mind, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II (may Allah be pleased with him) established Lajna Ima'illah, Nasiratul Ahmadiyya, Misbah Magazine, The Nusrat Girls High School and Jamia Nusrat between the years of 1922 and 1951.¹⁵¹ How sharp was the vision of our second Khalifa that he foresaw the importance and the need for Ahmadi women to focus on their education!

Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II (may Allah be pleased with him) placed such a high value on the education of Ahmadi women that he married some of his wives with this purpose in mind - particularly his marriages to Hazrat Amatul Hai Sahiba (may Allah be pleased with her) and Hazrat Aapa Sara Begum Sahiba (may Allah be pleased with her). Both of whom played an important role as role models and in Hazrat Amtul Hai Sahiba's (may Allah be pleased with her) case as an educator for not only the Ahmadi women of their time but for Ahmadi women of the future too. He wished for his wives to become educators for Ahmadi women, training them himself and preparing them for the task of teaching members of the community in both secular and religious spheres.¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ Mujeebur Rahman, *Fazl-e-Umar Hadhrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad*, p.228-229

¹⁵² Mujeebur Rahman, *Fazl-e-Umar Hadhrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad*, p.213 & 219

After her marriage to Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II (may Allah be pleased with him). Hazrat Sayyeda Maryam Siddiqah Sahiba Sahiba (may Allah be pleased with her) continued her studies from home and passed her MA Arabic exam with flying colours. She was encouraged by Huzoor to write notes and she would write notes of Huzoor's Jalsa speeches for him and his letters, and articles.¹⁵³

In 1922, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II (may Allah be pleased with him) established Lajna Ima'illah. This was an organisation created to support and coordinate the aims and objectives that Huzoor had in mind for the women of his community. This women's organisation would propel itself from the initial 14 members all based in Qadian to thousands of Lajna members all over the world, all aspiring to educate themselves spiritually and excel in secular education for one purpose and goal; to serve their faith and propagate the true Islam throughout the world.

By the time Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him) became Khalifah, the education of women had already become a priority. There was still only one primary school for girls but arrangements were made for women to be taught the translation of the Holy Quran and Hadith in segregation.

In 1925 Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II (may Allah be pleased with him) set up a special learning centre in Qadian for the

¹⁵³ Bushra Bashir, Mohsinaat p.73-76 (<https://www.alislam.org/urdu/pdf/Khatabat-e-Maryam-Vol-1.pdf>)

education and training of older girls and women, so that some women may be chosen to be trained as teachers, or chosen for alternative offices within the community. This way, many women of the community completed their education and were also given the opportunity to complete the “Maulvi” degree from this institution.¹⁵⁴

Today, our beloved Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (may Allah be his helper) seamlessly furthers the progressive vision of Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him) for the education of Ahmadi Muslim women. He constantly nurtures and praises the intellect of our Lajna all over the world. During the Germany and UK Annual Jalsas and Ijtemas, Huzoor (may Allah be his helper) graciously takes time out of his busy schedule to personally congratulate and reward the high academic achievers with awards. Each Lajna member’s name, degree and achievement is announced and broadcasted all over the world as viewers watch and witness how much value is placed on the celebration of our Ahmadi women’s academic success.

AMWSA (Ahmadi Muslim Women’s Student Association) and AMRA (Ahmadi Muslim Research Association) are fairly recent branches of the education sector of our Jamaat. Both are departments aimed at students and academics; they create a space to encourage bonding and sisterhood between fellow Ahmadi students and allow members to contribute towards and explore various

¹⁵⁴ History of Lajna (translated from urdu) volume 1 part 1p.70

aspects of academic research. Huzoor (may Allah be his helper) takes time out for *Mulaqaats* (meetings) with AMWSA girls to give them encouragement and advice. This also gives the opportunity for some girls to present their research topics to our beloved Huzoor (may Allah be his helper).

Umoore Talibaat (student affairs) was also established in March 2018 by Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (may Allah be his helper) to:

- Promote communication with students
- Promote academic excellence
- Provide support in all areas of student life
- Endeavour to ensure that student members of Lajna Ima'illah UK actively participate in all Lajna and Jamaat activities
- Support AMWSA

Huzoor has said in his address to Waqf-e-Nau on 28th February 2015:

“The Jama’at requires doctors, teachers, translators, journalists and also those skilled in a range of other fields suitable and appropriate for Ahmadi girls.”¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁵ <https://www.alislam.org/articles/address-at-waqf-e-nau-ijtema-2015-girls/>

“The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said that wisdom is like the lost belonging of a believer - wherever it is found, he or she should grab hold of it. Hence our women and girls, and in particular the Waqf-e-Nau, should attain the highest standard of education and then they should strive to use that knowledge to give benefit to the world.”¹⁵⁶

Today we see a myriad of platforms upon which our Lajna proudly present and showcase their successes in education. We see their hunger for knowledge through the beautifully intricate and informative exhibitions, as well as through speeches prepared for Ijtemas and annual Jalsas. The Taleem and Tarbiyyat (education and moral training of women) departments have excelled in the deliverance of this education. It is organised for women by women under the guidance of Khilafat, and is of such a high standard that we are constantly seeing Allah’s blessing as our girls make great strides towards fulfilling the vision that Hazrat Musleh Maud had for the women of his community. Our community boasts an array of highly educated women from every walk of life, excelling in hundreds of fields of study. We have doctors, dentists, teachers, psychologists, graphic designers, engineers - the list is endless.

¹⁵⁶ <https://www.alislam.org/articles/address-at-waqf-e-nau-ijtema-2015-girls/>

Let us journey back and see how the seeds for the education of women were first planted and how Lajna grew into the incredible institution that it is today and look at some of the great examples of Lajna who helped pave the way towards Hazrat Musleh Maud's (may Allah be pleased with him) vision.

Key Milestones

1916 - Ladies Supplement in “Al-Fazl” Newspaper – Ahmadi women become writers

There is no better way to refine education than to encourage the ‘written word’ and indeed, as early as 1916, women were given this opportunity. A few supplement pages were added to the Al-Fazl newspaper for the enhancement of religious knowledge for women. Not only was this something women could read and ponder over, but they were also encouraged to write for these pages.

On 16th December 1916, the first supplement was published and an essay competition was announced. The title chosen was ‘hospitality’.¹⁵⁷ It is incredible that at a time when women all over the world were still fighting for their rights to a simple education, and when becoming a writer or having your writing acknowledged and published as a woman was still a struggle, Hazrat Musleh Maud (may

¹⁵⁷ *History of Lajna Ima’illah(translated from urdu) volume 1 part 1 , p.38*

Allah be pleased with him) was bringing women forward into the literary field and encouraging them to write.

Today, the Ahmadiyya community all over the world sees magazines like the An-Nusrat, Ayesha(Nasirat) Maryam Magazine, An-Nisaa (Lajna Ima'illah Canada) all being written and published by women. Women's articles are seen in the Review of Religions and various other periodicals and their speeches are heard at Jalsas and Ijtemas all over the world. These are the educated voices of the women that Islam and Ahmadiyyat nurtured and encouraged through the establishment of Lajna Ima'illah and the guidance of Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him)

1925-Learning centre in Qadian

In 1925 Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II (may Allah be pleased with him) set up a special learning centre in Qadian, for the education and training of older girls and women, so that some hand-picked women may be trained as teachers and others for alternative offices within the community. This way, many women of the community completed their education and passed the "Maulvi" degree from this institution; one girl gained the first position in the "Maulvi" degree in the whole of the Punjab.

As part of their education apart from 'Religion' and 'Upbringing of Itfal' they were given lectures on 'Basics of

Mathematics’, and of topics such as ‘History’, ‘Geography’ and a bit of ‘English’; a library for women had also been established..¹⁵⁸

1936 - Initiation of Deeniyat (Religious) Classes

Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II (may Allah be pleased with him) wished for the girls in the community to not only be taught a general education but to be taught religious knowledge too. Thus, in April 1936, on Huzoor’s (may Allah be pleased with him) directive, *Deeniyat* Classes were started in Nusrat Girls High School. The syllabus covered the commentary of the Holy Quran, Hadith, Fiqah (Islamic Jurisprudence), History, and accounts of Islam, as well as the books of the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him). Furthermore, the girls were also given guidance on how to give speeches.¹⁵⁹

1937 - Learning practical skills - Nusrat Industrial school

We are all aware of the craft exhibitions and competitions set out by our Trade and Industry department and perhaps we look at it as some light relief or simply a showcase for some of the handicrafts that Lajna members make. However, if we look at the roots behind this idea, we

¹⁵⁸ *Lajna History Vol 1-P70*

¹⁵⁹ *History of Lajna Ima’illah (translated from Urdu) vol 1 part 3 p.401*

cannot help but be awe inspired by the far sightedness of Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him).

In 1936 at the local Lajna Ima'illah Ijtema, Huzoor gave an address in which he highlighted the need for women to acquire handicraft skills. He clarified that this was so that unemployed women who were perhaps widows or homeless could make a living for themselves instead of relying on state handouts. He wanted every woman in his community to be empowered to earn her own income through these skills. It is these foundations set by Huzoor (may Allah be pleased with him) that built the basis for the work that is being done all around the world by the industry and handicraft Department today. No one should have to resort to asking for money for their own upkeep.¹⁶⁰

With this vision in mind, a separate crafts department was created which Arfa Begum Sahiba, wife of Karam Daad Sahib, was put in charge of. To start off the initial work for this department, Huzoor himself donated funds. He personally instructed Arfa Begum Sahiba on how to keep records of income, expenditure, and how to distribute and collect materials.

After about a year, the work slowed down. On 3rd December 1937, Huzoor (may Allah be pleased with him) again drew the attention of the women to this:

¹⁶⁰ *History of Lajna Ima'illah (translated from Urdu) vol 1 part 3 p.398*

“I had started a scheme for women and had donated money to it myself. An attempt was made through Lajna to get poorer women to work. I am aware that there are a lot of women here who should be working. I have observed that they beg for their own upkeep but refused to work saying that the wages were too low. Even though the wages we gave out were double compared to those wages given in Amritsar for the same work, they would not work for them. Instead, they would sit at home and would write various applications that they required financial aid for this thing or that, even though I had already stated that the profit from this would also be spent on the poor. They should have worked even if the wages were small. If the wage for one *Azaarband* (waistband) in Amritsar is one “*paisa*” and here it would just be a “*Dhela*” or even just a “*Damree*¹⁶¹” they should work because the income would also go to the poor. They were not even happy with double the wages. And this is a very big shortcoming.”¹⁶²

In Qadian, this work was actively continued until 1940, though the work on the exhibition was continued on until the migration to Pakistan after the partition of India. After the migration in 1947, the Nusrat Industrial School was started in Rabwah, to inspire girls to learn crafts and introduce them to various skills. Many girls graduated every year with a diploma from this institution. Alongside that, in 1956, Lajna Rabwah started to raise funds for

¹⁶¹ Units of money. These are no longer in use.

¹⁶² *History of Lajna Ima'illah (translated from urdu) vol 1, part 3 p.398*

income and upkeep of the community through the sale of crafted items on a large scale.¹⁶³

It is these foundations set by Huzoor (may Allah be pleased with him) that underpin the work that is being done all around the world in the Trade and Industry department today. When you walk past the exhibition tent at the Ijtema or at Jalsa, recall the purpose and vision behind the many handicrafts we see. We should praise Allah for the training and education encouraged by Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II (may Allah be pleased with him) so many years ago.

1944 - The initiation of exams from Lajna Ima'illah

In 1944 for the first time Lajna Ima'illah participated in exams organised by Lajna Ima'illah. The exam was based on the book '*Kashti Nuh*' (Noah's Ark) by the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him). Five hundred members from Qadian and outside of Qadian participated in it. Prior to this Lajna Ima'illah used to participate in the exams set by Khuddam-ul-Ahmadiyya.

1945 - Nasiratul-Ahmadiyya: The seeds of education and moral training

¹⁶³ History of Lajna Ima'illah,(translated from urdu vol 1, part 3 p.399

Nasiratul Ahmadiyya was first established in 1928. Sahibzaadi Amtul Rashid Sahiba, daughter of Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II (may Allah be pleased with him), was one of the ladies who instilled the idea that just as meetings were held for women, they should also be held for girls. On many occasions in Qadian and Delhi, meetings for girls were held simultaneously with the Lajna meetings. Even before it was formally established, they were given the name Binaatul Ahmadiyya, Khadimatul-Ahmadiyya or Nasiratul-Ahmadiyya. However due to the fact that Lajna Ima'illah did not provide sufficient supervision, these meetings became inactive.

In 1945, a department for Nasiratul-Ahmadiyya was formally set up by the central Lajna Ima'illah Qadian so that girls could be trained in religious knowledge from a young age when children absorb and learn faster and when moral training is critical. Being part of the Nasirat would encourage sisterhood and unity, and girls would acquire a sense of belonging and commitment to their faith.

Nasirat-ul-Ahmadiyya's first secretary was Tayyaba Siddiqah Sahiba, wife of late Masood Ahmad Khan Sahib. By May 1945, every district in Qadian had set up a Nasirat-ul-Ahmadiyya branch. From there on, it was also established in various other large cities.¹⁶⁴

Thus, from a young age Nasirat girls were being given the spiritual training that would be the foundations for their

¹⁶⁴ *History of Lajna Ima'illah (translated from urdu)*, vol 1, part 4 p.633

religious knowledge as they grew to be Lajna. They were instilled with high moral values and taught the recitation of the Holy Quran, Hadith and the history of the life of the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings be upon him).

Nasiratul-Ahmadiyya programmes were held simultaneously with the Lajna Ijtemas so that girls could also get a chance to practice oratory and writing skills. The results of this were very encouraging as the quality of oratory skills increased yearly.

If we look at the standard of our Nasirat girls today, we are astonished at their level of religious knowledge, eloquence and zeal for their faith. The importance of Nasirat classes cannot be over emphasized. Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II (may Allah be pleased with him) knew that these organisations would be invaluable in arming our women with the religious and spiritual knowledge to combat harmful worldly influences and become the torch bearers of Islam and Ahmadiyyat.

1948 - Quran Class for Women

In the Al-Fazl magazine of 1921, Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him) expressed his joy at the prospect that illiteracy among women and girls in the community would be completely wiped out. He highlighted that indeed, if we take a look at the women in our Jamaat today, it is estimated that not only are 100%

of our women acquiring an education but literacy among our women is greater than the boys. The level of education of women in our Jamaat, particularly in Qadian is spreading so rapidly, that soon inshAllah women will be safeguarded from illiteracy altogether..¹⁶⁵

In 1948, in the *majlis -e-shura* (advisory committee) Lajna put forward a proposal for women to have a yearly Quran class, just as the men did. Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him) was pleased with the proposal and said, 'Was the Quran revealed just for men and not for women?'

As a result, in the same year, a Quran class was organised for women in Ratan Bagh,¹⁶⁶ Lahore during Ramadhan. This class began on the 12th July 1948. Thirty-four female students attended the class out of which twenty-four took the exam and passed.

The success of this class demonstrated the high standard of education that women were aspiring to.

With Allah's blessings, this class continued to be held in the many years that followed and the number of attendees at this annual class increased every year.

¹⁶⁵ Bushra Bashir, *Mohsinaat*, p.66-67

¹⁶⁶ Ratan Bagh was the place that Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him) stayed in after emigration from Qadian, until the establishment of Rabwah.

- 1982 - 100 attendees
- 1986 - 200 attendees
- 1997 - 415 attendees
- 1999 - 838 attendees
- 2000 - 911 attendees¹⁶⁷

1949 - The establishment of Jamia Nusrat Girls School Rabwah

In 1947, after the partition of India, Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II (may Allah be pleased with him) emigrated from Qadian to what is now Pakistan. Initially, temporary accommodation was organised for the incoming convoys of women and children. In 1950 at the annual Jalsa, Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him) announced the inauguration of Jamia Nusrat and outlined the purpose and vision for this new college. Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him) explained that there would be two types of students in this college; those that complete their education and enter the worldly sphere of work and those who strive for their faith. Huzoor explained that essentially, both of these aims go hand in hand. Those that work for their faith are also fulfilling the rights of man, and those who are helping in worldly matters are also fulfilling their rights to Allah. Huzoor stressed that all the girls who

¹⁶⁷ Bushra Bashir, *Mohsinaat*, p.70-95

enter this college should be aware of this vision and develop both this spiritual thirst, and the conviction to serve their fellow human beings.

Huzoor explained that unlike other girls who may forget their God and become immersed in worldly affairs, any girl who studies in this Ahmadi college should firmly take hold of both types of education; spiritual and secular and never be at ease until Ahmadiyyat, the true Islam is established in the world.

Jamia Nusrat college was recognised for its excellence by the principle of Lahore college who commented on how both the students and lecturers were fully immersed in their vision and purpose, and one could see the true essence of Islamic education in Rabwah.¹⁶⁸

Not only were the academic achievements of the girls of a very high standard but Jamia Nusrat excelled in sports and debates as well. To this day, it excels in secular education whilst also upholding the values and principles of an Islamic education.

1952 - Nusrat Girls College Qadian

After the unrest and chaos due to partition of India and the emigration of Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II (may Allah be pleased with him) to Pakistan, the organization of

¹⁶⁸ Bushra Bashir, *Mohsinaat*, p.81

education in Qadian had been severely disrupted. By 1952, there were no formal arrangements for the education of girls in Qadian. Girls would learn to read *Yassarnul Quran* with a local teacher called Qureshi Fazal Haq Sahib.

When this was brought to the attention of Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him), he sent '*ustaani*' (teacher) Rabia Khanum to Qadian to organise the teaching of the girls there. She began teaching the girls the national syllabus, initially at the home of Mirza Gul Muhummad Sahib. Gradually, more teachers were recruited and by 1969, girls were able to study to metric level. Under the Khilafat of Hazrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad (may Allah have mercy on him) Nusrat Girls College was established and girls were able to study for their BA and MA examinations locally.¹⁶⁹

Flag bearers for Lajna Ima 'illah

Who were the first women who strived towards this cause and became the initial flag bearers for Lajna Ima'illah? Let us look at some of the women who truly understood their responsibilities as well as the true essence of the aims and objectives that Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him) had laid down. So much can be learned from their examples.

¹⁶⁹ Bushra Bashir, Mohsinaat p.83

Wives of Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II (may Allah be pleased with him)

Hazrat Sayyeda Mahmooda Begum Sahiba(may Allah be pleased with her)

Hazrat Sayyeda Mahmooda Begum Sahiba (may Allah be pleased with her) was the first wife of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II (may Allah be pleased with him). She was the first daughter in law in the home of the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) and was included in the revelation of the Promised Messiah (as)

‘The blessed ladies’

Almighty Allah blessed her with the opportunity to benefit from the company of the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) she absorbed the moral training she received and served the Jamaat with great love and devotion.

After the formation of Lajna Ima’illah, Hazrat Amma Jaan (may Allah be pleased with her) herself asked Mahmooda Begum Sahiba (may Allah be pleased with her) to grace the presidency after a unanimous decision. In this way she was nominated the first president of Lajna Ima’illah and by the grace of Allah had the honour to serve as

Sadar Lajna for of 36 long years. She retained this office until her death in August 1958.

During the early days of Lajna, she outlined the principles of administration and governance. She tirelessly served to create a firm foundation for this seedling organisation. Her tender service of more than three decades gave Lajna Ima'illah a framework to build and flourish upon. She would teach the Holy Quran to children; check their memorisation of salat and would impart knowledge and moral training to them.¹⁷⁰

The home of Hazrat Umme Nasir ^(may Allah be pleased with her) became like a teaching institute where she used to teach the Holy Qur'an and give lectures on the books of the Promised Messiah ^(peace be upon him). Hundreds of girls learned the Holy Qur'an from her. She used to write articles for the journal "*Ahmadi Khatoon*" as well. She was blessed to receive training from the Promised Messiah ^(peace be upon him) himself that was further enhanced by Hazrat Musleh Maud ^(may Allah be pleased with him). Her children were reared in an excellent

¹⁷⁰Translated from Urdu to English-Al Mehrab-1989-page82

manner and became exemplary pillars of the community.¹⁷¹

Hazrat Sayyeda Amtul Hayee Sahiba (may Allah be pleased with her)

Hazrat Sayyeda Amtul Hayee Sahiba (may Allah be pleased with her) was the wife of Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II (may Allah be pleased with him). She played a huge role in the education and training of women in our community and was the initiator of many schemes and ideas for the education of women. She had a deep passion for the advancement of education and set up educational centres, created a syllabus for women, and established lecture societies for ladies to take part in. A yearly scholarship award was also set up for female students who achieved top positions in religious education.

In 1925, Hazrat Sayyeda Amtul Hayee Sahiba (may Allah be pleased with her) played a role in the establishment of a girl's school in Qadian followed by the opening of an all-girls school in Sialkot. This school was to deliver not only a general curriculum, but religious and moral training as well. This school soon became well known for its discipline and organisation as well as for the high standard of its religious and secular education. Non-Ahmadi girls also

¹⁷¹<http://www.lajnausa.net/web/webfiles/publications/ayesha/ayeshawinter2008.pdf>
p.47

attended the school so it became a hub, not only for education, but also for Tabligh.

When Hazrat Sayyeda Amtul Hayee sahiba (may Allah be pleased with her) passed away, the Al Fazl newspaper wrote:

“The death of Sayyeda Amtul Hayee has left an irreplaceable void amongst the women of our community. This death was the end of an era .”¹⁷²

For many of our younger readers, Amtul Hayee library probably rings a bell, but many wouldn't know that this library was set up in remembrance of Hazrat Sayyeda Amtul Hayee Sahiba (may Allah be pleased with her), who played a crucial role as one of our first female scholars in the history of Lajna.

This library was first established in Qadian as a centre for learning and later, it was set up in Rabwah. Many important and precious publications are available which are still to this day used for research and literary advancement

Such was her zest for learning and improving opportunities for women, that Hazrat Amatul Hai wrote a letter to His Holiness (reproduced here) before she was married to him in which she requests him to arrange religious classes for women.

¹⁷² Bushra Bashir, *Mohsinaat Vol 1*, p.68

Hazrat Sayyeda Sara Begum Sahiba (may Allah be pleased with her)

Hazrat Sayyeda Sarah Begum Sahiba (may Allah be pleased with her) was the wife of Hazrat Khilafatul-Masih II (may Allah be pleased with him). She was born into a highly educated family. From a very young age, her environment influenced her to develop a thirst for knowledge. She learnt Arabic and Persian from her father and the translation of the Holy Quran and was very familiar with the writings of The Promised Messiah (may peace be upon him). She was married to Hazrat Khilafatul-Masih II (may Allah be pleased with him) on 12th April 1925. The reasoning behind his marriage to Hazrat Sayyeda Sarah Begum Sahiba was for her to continue in the footsteps of Hazrat Amtul Hayee and nurture the many educational schemes that she had established for women.¹⁷³

When Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him) married Hazrat Sayyeda Sarah Begum Sahiba, he explained his reasoning for his marriage as follows:

“...my own thought was turned towards this that to inculcate the habit of higher learning among women and to create a strong bond between them and the Organisation, I should marry a woman who should be

¹⁷³ Bushra Bashir, *Mohsinaat* p. 70

educated and whom I could train to carry out the duties of education.”¹⁷⁴

Hazrat Sayyeda Sarah Begum Sahiba understood the importance of this mission and had only been a bride for a few days, when she began studying in order to prepare herself for this responsibility. Without worrying about her rest or health, she pursued her studies and passed her “Adeeb Maulvi” (religious studies) and matriculation. She also took the FA¹⁷⁵ exam but unfortunately, before she received her results, she passed away. Hazrat Sayyeda Sarah Begum Sahiba was a quick writer and had beautiful handwriting, therefore, she would often scribe articles or essays for Huzoor. She would also write articles for newspapers on women’s welfare issues.

Hazrat Sayyeda Sarah Begum Sahiba’s goal in life was to educate herself for the progress of Islam. This was her sole aim. She had no interest in gaining worldly accolades. Her *jihad* (struggle) was to educate herself for her faith. Unfortunately, because of her untimely death she was unable to fulfil her full potential. However, the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said that any person who dies seeking knowledge is a martyr. In this way, Hazrat Sayyeda Sarah Begum Sahiba received the status of martyrdom.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁴ <https://www.alislam.org/library/books/Fazl-e-Umar.pdf> p.219

¹⁷⁵ Students are awarded the Higher Secondary School Certificate (or HSSC). This level of education is also called the FSc/FA/ICS or 'intermediate'.

¹⁷⁶ Bushra Bashir, *Mohsinaat* p. 70-71

Hazrat Sayyeda Maryam Siddiqa Sahiba (may Allah be pleased with her)

Hazrat Sayyeda Maryam Siddiqa Sahiba (may Allah be pleased with her) was the daughter of Hazrat Doctor Mir Muhammad Ismaeel (may Allah be pleased with him). She was an incredibly intelligent and gifted lady and made great achievements in her education. She came first in her metric examination that she took in Nusrat Girls School in Qadian and also received a certificate of excellence in Religious Studies. She also achieved top marks of 82%, amongst all the men and women in the exam set by the directorate of education.

On the 30th September 1935, Hazrat Sayyeda Maryam Siddiqa Sahiba married Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him) and in many ways because of her intelligence, wisdom and knowledge she became a great support to him in his educational schemes and endeavours. A prime example of this, was in 1957 when Hazrat Musleh Maud (May Allah be pleased with him) was writing the commentary of the Holy Quran, Hazrat Sayyeda Maryam Siddiqa Sahiba was given the opportunity to not only scribe most of the translation for him, but also to write summary notes for this.

Hazrat Sayyeda Maryam Siddiqa Sahiba continued her studies from home and passed her MA Arabic exam with

flying colours. This passion for knowledge was so strong that while she was studying, her mother took care of her only daughter Amtul Mateen.

We cannot overlook the fact that during their 30-year marriage, Hazrat Sayyeda Maryam Siddiqa Sahiba (may Allah be pleased with her) was able to observe, learn and absorb the many golden moments of wisdom and knowledge from her spouse. Indeed, within the home setting, she had the opportunity to listen to the *dars* of the Holy Quran that he would give for her moral training and on many occasions, she would be asked to find references and quotations from various books for his own writings.¹⁷⁷

Hazrat Sayyeda Maryam Siddiqa Sahiba (may Allah be pleased with her) was a great orator. Her first speech was delivered in 1940 at the Jalsa Salana and was of a very high standard and well received by all. She continued to deliver speeches while she was in good health until 1997. In this way she made a huge contribution in the religious and moral education of the Lajna members who had the opportunity to hear her words. She inspired and guided using her knowledge of the Quran, hadith and the writings of the Promised Messiah (may peace be upon him). She would consolidate the guidance of the Khalifah and ensure his message was understood by the Lajna of that time.

Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him) was fully aware of her academic prowess and dedicated his

¹⁷⁷ Bushra Bashir, *Mohsinaat* p.73-76

book “Sair-e-Ruhaani”¹⁷⁸ to her. He said that he dedicated this book to her because his journey to Hyderabad was undertaken with the intention to show her this city and it was there that with the blessings of Allah, that this topic was made clear to him.

Hazrat Sayyeda Maryam Siddiqah Sahiba, was already a deep thinker and an enlightened individual but under the guidance and training of Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him), her knowledge was refined and polished in such a manner that she did full justice to the teachings of the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) and spread his teachings with dedication and zeal.

First members of Lajna Ima'illah

The first members of Lajna Ima'illah were highly educated women. Maryam Begum Sahiba, wife of Hazrat Hafiz Roshan Ali Sahib was a highly educated woman, so much so that the title ‘Ustaani’ or ‘teacher’ was put before her name whenever she was spoken about. In the same way, the daughter of Sheikh Yakub Ali Irfan Sahib and wife of Sufi Mati Ur Rahman Sahib and Razia Begum, daughter of Hazrat Doctor Khalifa Rashid Uddin and wife of Gul Mohammad Sahib were also highly educated. They were always immersed in writing, reading and acquiring knowledge.

¹⁷⁸ Bushra Bashir, *Mohsinaat* p.74

Ustaani Maimoona Sophia Sahiba

Ustaani Maimoona Sophia Sahiba was a student of Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih I (may Allah be pleased with him) and wife of Ghulam Mohammad Sahib. She passed her Maulvi exam (religious studies) from the girls' college in 1930. From an early age, she was very articulate and delivered excellent speeches. In 1928, she delivered her first speech and continued in this vein for many years. She was a teacher at the girls' school from 1948 and taught the study of the books of the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him). In 1946, she played a key role in the establishment of the young adult enterprise and was also a member of the election committee. Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him) praised this committee in the highest of terms. ¹⁷⁹

Farkhanda Akhtar Shah Sahiba

Not one of the first, but another early member of Lajna was Farkhanda Akhtar Shah Sahiba, or Mrs Shah as she was affectionately referred to by her students, was the daughter of Hazrat Sheikh Niaz Muhammad Sahib and wife of Hazrat Sayyed Mahmud ullah Shah Sahib. She was an extremely intelligent and wise lady of many good qualities.

She was the principal of Jamia Nusrat from 1945 until 1974. Many of her students still have fond memories of her.

¹⁷⁹ Bushra Bashir, *Mohsinaat*, p.75

Among them are two of our own Sadr Lajna UK; Qanita Rashed Sahiba and Mrs Amtul Rashid Sahiba.

When Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him) laid the foundations for Jamia Nusrat he sent Mrs Shah to Lahore from 1952 to 1954 to study for an MA in English.

As soon as she returned, she began lecturing in her subject and continued as principal of the college. Together with '*Chotee Aapa*', they ensured the educational standard of the college reached the highest levels and this was not an easy task as they had limited resources.

Mrs Shah kept standards high and kept the morale of the college up by inviting distinguished guests to distribute prizes and awards to the girls. Among these were: Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him), Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih III (may Allah be pleased with him), Hazrat Sayyeda *Chotee Aapa*, Hazarat Sayyeda Mansoorah Begum Sahiba, Minister of Education Begum Mahmooda Saleem and Dr Ali Muhammad Sahib amongst others. This raised the profile of the college and non-Ahmadi visitors were always deeply impressed by the college.

Mrs Shah always ensured that religious boundaries were observed and congregational prayers were observed at the hostel and later a prayer area was established.

Thousands of students and members of staff had the privilege of hearing Mrs Shah's religious lectures. In one of

her own articles, she mentioned how she was brought up in a religious atmosphere where religious knowledge went hand in hand with secular knowledge.¹⁸⁰

Despite having such a big responsibility on her shoulders, Mrs. Shah worked stoically for Lajna Ima'illah. She took on duties at Jalsa and other major events, and every year took on the arduous task of translating the incoming Lajna English reports, which were sent to them, with conscientiousness and diligence.

If we look back at the knowledge these women had and the great strides and efforts they made as the pioneers of women's enlightenment, we cannot help but stand in awe. Living and growing up at a time where education was considered a privilege, not a right, we must remember these inspirational women and never take for granted the ease with which we can acquire education in this day and age.

Glimpses of Hazrat Musleh Maud's (may Allah be pleased with him) vision for the Education and Moral Training of Women

- Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him) reiterated that, with the education of women, the moral training of the next generation of children would be

¹⁸⁰ Bushra Bashir, *Mohsinaat*, p.94

guaranteed. He explained that in this way, the foundations of a country would be strong and in turn, would come inevitable progress.¹⁸¹

- He believed that true moral training of women would come from religious education and an understanding of the rights that Allah had given them. He stressed that women would only be truly enlightened from understanding those rights and that men should never hesitate in giving them those rights. This was an essential part in ensuring excellence in their moral training. It is the ability to reflect and ponder which leads to true enlightenment. Huzoor explained that this was something that is not learned, but is a seed that is sown within a person. Women cannot progress unless they have the ability to reflect upon and understand their responsibilities.¹⁸²
- On 26th April 1944, in the '*majlis -e- Irfaan*', Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him) spoke to the congregation about the words that were revealed to him from Allah in relation to the education of women. It was stated that if you educate fifty percent of the population of your women, then Islam will be successful. He explained that if fifty percent are reformed then automatically half of the population of men will be reformed, as women can sometimes become a hindrance to men in their desire to make sacrifices for their faith.¹⁸³

¹⁸¹ Bushra Bashir, *Mohsinaat*, p.76

¹⁸² Bushra Bashir, *Mohsinaat*, p.76

¹⁸³ Bushra Bashir, *Mohsinaat*, p.77

- On the 27th December 1944, during an address to Lajna Ima'illah, Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him) stated that a woman is an extremely valuable diamond but if she has no moral training, she is not even equal to weak glass because even glass has its uses. A woman with no moral and spiritual education has no value. He went on to highlight that without the moral education and training of every individual, a nation can never be reformed.¹⁸⁴
- He reiterated that Lajna Ima'illah have a huge responsibility on their shoulders; to ensure that all Ahmadi women are able to understand and reflect upon the teachings of Islam. He stressed that Lajna Ima'illah still has great strides to make and in order to do this, many sacrifices will have to be made, be it day or night. He said that it is women like this that are needed, who are willing to sacrifice themselves for their faith just as men.¹⁸⁵

Let us ponder over the aims set out at the beginning of this chapter, that Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him) laid out for Lajna. They are still as relevant and essential as they were back in 1922. If we take a look at the vision that he set out, and observe the huge strides in education and moral training that have been made today, one is truly humbled. Lajna are working side by side with men in every field: Making programmes for MTA, writing articles for the Review of religions, taking an active role in

¹⁸⁴ Bushra Bashir, *Mohsinaat*, p.77

¹⁸⁵ Bushra Bashir, *Mohsinaat*, p.77-78

Tabligh efforts, organising large scale events for Tabligh, Taleem (education) and Tarbiyyat (moral training). Their lectures are heard in student unions, their writings are read in periodicals and newspapers. The progress that Lajna has made is indeed truly awe-inspiring.

Education has become easy for us to access in this age and is a right we can easily take for granted but we live in a time where there are different challenges, especially for our moral training. Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him) reiterated again and again that our worldly knowledge must be refined with our religious knowledge. We are so fortunate to have easy access to worldly education but we must continue to strive to improve our religious knowledge and in turn, improve our moral conditions. In his concluding address at the National Waaqifaat-e nau girls ijtema Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih V (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

“Hence, alongside your secular education in your schools and colleges, it is of paramount importance that you also strive to gain religious knowledge, because until you know what your religion teaches and expects, you cannot live your life according to its teachings. First and foremost, it is essential that you all read the Holy Quran with translation and study its commentary as much as possible. Only by becoming familiar with the Holy Quran will you be able to clearly understand the commandments of Allah the Almighty. Knowledge of the Quran will be the means of

your spiritual progress and will enable you to do the Tarbiyyat of your own children.”¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁶<https://www.alislam.org/articles/equality-of-women-role-in-society/>

Chapter 5

Tarbiyyat of Children

x) You should especially realise your duty regarding the Tarbiyyat of your children and shall not let them be alienated, negligent or lazy in religious matters. Instead you shall try to make them active, alert and able to bear hardships. Teach them all the matters about religion which you are aware of and inculcate in them the love and obedience of Allah, The Holy Prophet (sa), and the Promised Messiah (as) and the Khulafa. Instil in them the passion to spend their lives for the sake of the true religion and in accordance with their desire, and to devise suggestions to make this possible and act upon them.

If we read the expectations in this tenth aim for Lajna, we cannot underestimate or emphasise enough its importance. In many ways, all the other aims of Lajna link to this aim; our duty regarding the *tarbiyyat* (moral training) of children. Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him) knew that the role of women in the *tarbiyyat* of the future generations was vital. If we failed in this, the impact would be catastrophic for the future generations of Ahmadi Muslims and for Islam. In this regard, we have seen how much Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him) emphasised the need for

women to receive both spiritual and secular education. This holistic approach would enable them to teach and support their children. Furthermore, women would become role models and would have a huge influence on the mindset of the children of the future. Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him) highlighted the fact that, as women had the unique ability to bear children and to nurture them, their role in this crucial task cannot be underestimated.

Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him) exhorted his Lajna to work tirelessly in trying to raise the standard of belief and faith of the succeeding generations. He stated:

“Only such women are worthy of respect who do not give birth to a child but to a lion. Who do not give birth to a human but to an angel. This was exactly what the Companions did and this is the true example and true guidance for you.”¹⁸⁷

The *tarbiyyat* of children is no easy task, it takes courage, endeavour, perseverance and constant prayers to raise them to become the “lions” or “angels” of the future.

If we look at the teachings of the Holy Quran, we can see countless examples of the emphasis laid on praying for righteous children.

¹⁸⁷ <https://www.alislam.org/library/books/Fazl-e-Umar.pdf> p.295

“Kill not your children for fear of poverty. It is We Who provide for them and for you. Surely, the killing of them is a great sin.”¹⁸⁸(17:32)

These few verses contain much guidance with regards to the upbringing of children, but one interpretation of this verse is that, as parents, if we do not supply the child with a proper education, we will be responsible for that child’s moral and intellectual death.¹⁸⁹

We have seen the anguish parents go through when they fail to do the *tarbiyyat* of their children properly. When the time was right to nurture and educate their children, they were either prime examples of ‘lazy parenting’ or were too focussed on secular and worldly accolades for their children. These parents see their children grow up and push the boundaries of decency, then realise that it is too late.

In the Holy Quran, we read the prayers of Hazrat Abraham (peace be upon him) for his progeny. He prayed for virtuous children who could continue his mission. God gave him glad tidings of a forbearing son.

¹⁸⁸ <https://www.alislam.org/quran/app/17:32>

¹⁸⁹ <https://www.alislam.org/quran/five-vol/Five-Volume-Commentary-Vol-3.pdf>
p.1774

**“And he prayed, ‘My Lord, grant me a righteous son.’¹⁹⁰
(37:101)**

Furthermore, Hazrat Abraham (peace be upon him) offered the following prayer while re-building the Kaaba with Hazrat Isma‘il (peace be upon him):

“Our Lord, make us submissive to You and make of our offspring a people submissive to Thee. And show us our ways of worship, and turn to us with mercy; for Thou are Oft-Returning *with* compassion and are Merciful.”¹⁹¹(2:129)

The following prayer said by Hazrat Abraham (peace be upon him) is also recited in all of our daily obligatory prayers:

“My Lord, make me observe prayer and *my children too*. Our Lord, accept my prayer. Our Lord, grant forgiveness to me and to my parents and to the believers on the day when the reckoning will take place.” (14:41-42)¹⁹²

We are also taught this verse from the Holy Quran to pray that our children become the ‘delight of *our eyes*’.

¹⁹⁰ <https://www.alislam.org/quran/app/37:101>

¹⁹¹ <https://www.alislam.org/quran/app/2:129>

¹⁹² <https://www.alislam.org/library/books/Treasure-House-of-Prayers.pdf> p.26

“Our Lord, grant us of our wives and children the delight of *our* eyes, and make us a model for the righteous.”¹⁹³ (25:75).

In expounding upon this verse, Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih V (may Allah be his Helper) explained in his address to Lajna that women had a duty to develop a bond with Allah themselves and instil that bond in their children too. He explained that this prayer would not only keep them steadfast, but would safeguard their progeny from evil influences and guide them towards righteousness. Huzoor (may Allah be his Helper) reassured those ladies who complained that their husbands did not have a high level of faith and were irregular in their prayers, that men alone are not the leaders of the righteous, but that they themselves have the capacity, if they pray fervently and remain steadfast on the path of righteousness, to become the caretaker and Imam of their homes and to inculcate the bond of Allah in their future generations.¹⁹⁴

This responsibility however, begins before having a child. If we look at the verses of the Holy Quran that are recited when a man and woman pledge to marry, *taqwa* (righteousness) is mentioned 5 times within these verses. We can see that the key to the success of a marriage is righteousness. The Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings

¹⁹³ <https://www.alislam.org/quran/app/25:75>

¹⁹⁴ <https://www.alislam.org/book/social-media/responsibility-of-mothers-in-current-age/>

of Allah be upon him) gave advice on choosing a future partner, emphasising that the top priority in the search for a partner is righteousness.

“Some people marry for beauty, others for rank, and others for wealth; but you should marry a good and pious woman.”¹⁹⁵

Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih V (may Allah be his helper) explained this idea in ‘garments for each other’¹⁹⁶. He highlighted the fact that righteous parents will be better equipped to raise righteous children.

“In this manner, the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) actually directed attention to the means of attaining righteous progeny and a harmonious home. If a mother is righteous, then usually the children are righteous. There is no wealth greater than the peace of mind that comes from virtuous and righteous children. Only a righteous progeny can bring honor for parents in an Ahmadi society, so every Ahmadi should pay attention to this.”¹⁹⁷

Thus, the first step in the quest for the upbringing of righteous children is to be righteous yourself and choose

¹⁹⁵<https://www.alislam.org/book/pathway-to-paradise/islamic-marriage-system/>

¹⁹⁶Garments for each other. Selected excerpts from sermon of Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih V (aba) relating to Marital Harmony

¹⁹⁷<https://www.alislam.org/library/books/Garments-for-Each-Other.pdf#p.8>

to marry someone who is righteous as well. Righteous parents will understand their responsibilities regarding the upbringing of children and will aspire to bring up their children to be righteous.

Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him) in his book, 'Way of the Seekers' explained that, even before a child is born, we should be praying that they are righteous. He highlighted a saying of the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in which it is stated that husband and wife should say the following prayer when they physically come together. "Shield us, O Allah, against Satan and keep Satan away from whatever Thou might bestow upon us." He explained that "This prayer and this thought will act as a wall between the unborn child and the influences of Satan."¹⁹⁸

Thus, we can see the journey to the successful upbringing of children begins even before a child is conceived. Scientists have also agreed that a child is affected by outside influences even when it is in the womb.

Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him) explained that, even within this pre-natal stage of development, a mother's thoughts and emotions play a part in shaping the character of the child, so she should pay

¹⁹⁸Hazrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih II, *Way Of The Seekers*, p.48

particular attention to keeping her thoughts and emotions pure and clean.

At a child's birth, the reciting of the *Azan* in the child's ear is another proof of this fact. Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih I (may Allah be pleased with him) said that he would ensure that he recited the Holy Quran to his children from a very young age, whether they understood it or not, as they would still absorb and be influenced by its recitation.

The Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and Tarbiyyat of Children

It is clear that the primary responsibility for the moral training of children in Islam is placed upon the mother. Nature has made her the carrier of the child, and has instilled in her the love and compassion needed to nurture her child. She becomes the primary carer even before the child is born. We cannot overlook the natural bond which exists between mother and child. Although men play a very important role, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) entrusted women with this hugely important task and gave women the utmost status by saying:

In one sentence the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) elevated the status of mothers and gave their lives purpose and meaning.

There is no task greater than that given to women of reforming the next generation and thus, securing their future in this world and the next. Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him) elaborating on this further explained that, at best, men can reform one generation and make them righteous, however it is women who have the capacity to revolutionize entire future generations.¹⁹⁹

Within this *Hadith*, there are glad tidings of paradise for mothers, but there is also a warning. Just as a mother has the capacity to enter Paradise by bringing up her child to be a good citizen who gives precedence to his faith over this world, she also has the capacity to carry hell under her feet if she neglects her duty by bringing up immoral children. We are all familiar with the story of 'The thief and his mother'. In this story the mother turns a blind eye to the wrongdoings of her son. What starts off as lying and stealing ends up in his committing murder and facing death for his crimes. As a final wish, he asks to speak to his mother and as she draws near to hear his whisperings, he bites off her ear. When questioned as to why he did such a wicked thing he says, "would that she had admonished me from a young age, I would not find myself facing death for my crimes today!"

¹⁹⁹<https://www.alislam.org/library/books/Paradise-Under-Your-Feet.pdf> p.4

Thus, the responsibility laid upon the shoulders of mothers is not a small one and not one to be taken lightly.²⁰⁰

Childhood is the most important period in a person's life. It is the time when the foundations of an individual's fundamental characteristics are laid. It is for this reason the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) took great care in the manner in which he dealt with children. His is the most perfect example for us to emulate.

The Holy Prophet's (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) treatment of children was one that was based upon kindness, compassion and leniency. He demonstrated affection for them with both words and deeds. Most importantly he gave them respect. He said:

"Respect your children and cultivate in them the best of manners."²⁰¹

Respecting children is vital for their dignity, self-respect and high moral qualities. If a parent destroys a child's self-respect, that child will suffer from low self-esteem resulting in lifelong negative effects.

As Muslims, many of the manners and practices we have in common, have been taught to us by the Holy Prophet

²⁰⁰ Al Azhar le Zawatil Khimar-Al-Nusrat Khilafat Centenary Edition page 29

²⁰¹ <https://www.alislam.org/library/links/00000152.html>

(may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). These are instilled in us by way of example from our parents from a young age.

The Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also said:

“Every child is born true to nature. It is his parents who makes of him a Jew or a Christian or a Magian.”²⁰²

Hazrat Musleh Maud(may Allah be pleased with him) in explaining this *Hadith* says:

“The Hadith does not mean that when the child has grown up, his parents take him to a church to have him baptized as a Christian. The meaning of the Hadith is that a child, as a child, is at the mercy of his parents. He absorbs what he hears them say and does what he sees them do. The child is a great imitator. If the parents do not set before him a proper model to copy, he will go elsewhere to find a model which he can copy.”²⁰³

Therefore, it is clear that in order to bring children up with good moral training, parents have to be a living example of all that they preach. The Holy Prophet (may peace and

²⁰² Hazrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih II, *Way Of The Seekers*, p.49

²⁰³ Hazrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih II, *Way Of The Seekers*, p.49

blessings of Allah be upon him) was the perfect example for us in all walks of life. Underpinning all that he taught was compassion and kindness, this is what has lasting impact on hearts and it is through kindness that children need to be nurtured.

Taking a cursory look at the manner in which the Prophet of Allah (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) dealt with children, we find that he gave children a lot of his time and importance. He was often found playing with them. He would affectionately sit them on his lap and hug and kiss his children. He would let them ride his steed, and would feed them with his own hands. He never punished a child physically nor scolded or spoke to them harshly.²⁰⁴ He was known to have shortened the prayer as a child was crying²⁰⁵ and on another occasion lengthened the *Sajdah* (prostration) as his grandson was on his back and he didn't want to disturb him.²⁰⁶ He would teach children manners like how to eat properly and greet people, and most importantly taught them about the love of Allah and the importance of prayer.

The Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

²⁰⁴ Rashid Ahmad Chaudhry, *The Holy Prophet's Kindness to Children*, p.34-35, p.40

²⁰⁵ Source: Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 678, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 470

²⁰⁶ Source: Sunan al-Nasā'ī 1141

“Verily, the most beloved deeds to Allah are performed regularly, even if they are small.”²⁰⁷

This hadith gives a clear message, that goodness becomes a habit when oft repeated.

The Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) advised his companions to raise children with the best manners and to promote good conduct in their words and deeds. He would teach them good habits from a young age for example, Omar Ibn Abu Salama (may Allah be pleased with him) relates,

"I was a boy under the care of Allah's Messenger and my hand used to go around the dish while I was eating. So Allah's Messenger said to me, 'O boy! Mention the Name of Allah and eat with your right hand, and eat of the dish that is nearer to you.'"²⁰⁸

The Prophet of Allah (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), would engage children in social occasions in order to build their character and would encourage parents to bring their children to beneficial gatherings so that they would pick up etiquettes and draw from the wisdom of their elders. Through being in his blessed

²⁰⁷ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 5439

²⁰⁸ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 5376, In-book reference: Book 70, Hadith 4

company and that of his companions, they learnt good conduct, love of Allah and love for humanity.

As the Holy Quran so beautifully says:

‘Verily you have in the prophet of Allah an excellent model’ (33:22)²⁰⁹

His sayings and teachings are there for us to emulate.

Hazrat Masih Maud (may Allah be pleased with him) and Hazrat Amman Jan (may Allah be pleased with her)

We are so fortunate to have the exceptional parenting examples of the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) and Hazrat Amman Jan (may Allah be pleased with her) preserved in Jamaat literature. The anecdotes of their family life provide us with beautiful and insightful examples as to how we can bring up our children to truly be the ‘delight of our eyes.’

It is important to remember that children are entrusted to us by Allah and we have an obligation to bring them up with the best physical and moral training.

As has been stated before, it is obvious that parents need to be a living example of all that they teach their children. Thus, parents have to provide children with a living

²⁰⁹ <https://www.alislam.org/quran/app/33:22>

embodiment of all that they teach. It can be said without a doubt, that Hazrat Amman Jan (may Allah be pleased with her) and the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) provided their children with the finest example. They both had the same values, beliefs and moral outlook, neither one contradicting the other. They were in complete unison as to the manner in which they brought up their children. They both displayed immense respect for one another and this in turn, instilled respect and appreciation for both parents in the hearts of the children.

So let us delve into the life of the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) and learn from his excellent example. The Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) displayed love, kindness, respect and tolerance towards children. Despite having a colossal workload, which consisted of writing books, replying to numerous letters and attending to visitors, he still found time to tend to his children in the most tender of ways. Hazrat Maulvi Abdul Karim (may Allah be pleased with him), a noble companion of the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) recounts how on one occasion on a trip to Ludhianna, Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him), who was about three years old at the time, awoke in the middle of the night crying. He says:

“I happened to wake up once in the middle of the night to hear Mahmud crying and the Promised Messiah [peace be upon him] talking to him gently to divert his mind. The

Promised Messiah [peace be upon him] seemed to be carrying him in his arms, and pacing about to soothe him, but the child continued to cry. After some time, the Promised Messiah [as] said: 'Look how brightly that star shines Mahmud!' This arrested the child's attention evidently, for he quietened down for a moment but started crying again with a new basis for his petulance. 'I wish to go to that star!' he now wailed over and over again. But the loving patience of the Promised Messiah [as] was in no way ruffled by this impossible demand. Instead, he was rather amused by it, and I heard him saying softly to himself, 'I had tried to divert his attention, but he has discovered in that, a new reason to continue crying.' The child fell asleep only when he was too tired to cry any more, however, throughout the whole episode there never was a harsh tone in the voice of the Promised Messiah."²¹⁰

There is so much to learn from this seemingly small incident, by way of tenderness, love, patience and gentle speech. In this account, we see the important role of a father in tending to his child and the kindness of a husband to his wife by waking in the small hours of the night.

In the same vein, Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih IV (may Allah have mercy on him) states that his grandmother, Hazrat Amman Jaan (may Allah be pleased with her) used 'simple and yet impressive words' and that her speech 'was filled

²¹⁰ Majeibur Rahman, *Fazl-e-Umar*, p.17-18

with love and fragranced with truth'²¹¹ Hazrat Amman Jan (may Allah be pleased with her) found it almost impossible to admonish children if they misbehaved, such was the softness of her heart.

In the same way Allah, the exalted blessed the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) with an abundantly kind and affectionate heart making it difficult for him to lose patience with children. He had an immense amount of patience and forbearance. These are traits that make the best teachers - after all, what are parents but formative teachers.

The forbearance of the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) is illustrated beautifully in a story recounted by Hazrat Maulvi Abdul Kareem (may Allah be pleased with him).²¹² He recounts that when Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him) was about four or five years of age, he entered the room of his father with a troop of friends. The Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) was sitting very much absorbed in his writing. "He had a box of matches in his hands and he was followed by a troop of young friends. They played about in the room for some time, talking and laughing and quarrelling among themselves. Then a bright idea occurred to Mahmud to contrive a new diversion. He secured a quantity of papers (pages of the valuable

²¹¹ Munavara (Nabbo) Ghauri, *Hazrat Amman Jan – An Inspiration for Us All*, p.127

²¹² A close companion of the Promised Messiah (as)

manuscript of a work the Promised Messiah [as] had in hand), struck a match and set them ablaze.”²¹³

After ascertaining what had happened, the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) remarked smilingly,

“That’s all right. It does not matter. The Almighty God it seems intends to give me the power to write to much better effect than I had done previously so by this means he has destroyed what I had written.”²¹⁴

In the same way, Hazrat Amman Jan (may Allah be pleased with her) too rarely showed any anger towards children, in fact there are many accounts from her children and grandchildren who state that she was so kind-hearted that she rarely lost her temper and even in the event that she showed anger it was barely noticeable.

Within everyday life, both Hazrat Amman Jan (may Allah be pleased with her) and the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) did not let any opportunity pass by in which they could polish the character, manners and morals of their children. Hazrat Mirza Muhammad Ismail Baig (may Allah be pleased with him) mentions the following incident:

“One day accompanied by his companions as the Promised Messiah [as] went for a walk, they passed by a fallen Acacia

²¹³ Majeibur Rahman, *Fazl-e-Umar*, p.19

²¹⁴ Majeibur Rahman, *Fazl-e-Umar*, p.19

tree. Some companions cut thin branches and made toothbrushes. Someone gave a toothbrush to Hadhrat Sahibzada Mirza Mahmud Ahmad who was very young and was accompanying them. In his childish way he said to Huzur, 'Father, take this toothbrush.' With a smile Huzur said, 'my child first tell me with whose permission were these toothbrushes obtained?' Hearing this everyone threw away their brushes."²¹⁵

On the face of it, one may think, what was wrong with taking some twigs from a fallen tree? But if one delves deeper into the subtle nuances of this story, one can understand the very important lesson that a Prophet was teaching his son. He applied a very strict moral code here in a very loving manner, posed a question to him in a gentle manner and let him figure out the rest. He did not apply this strict moral code on others who had innocently taken the twigs but disliked this for himself. Such was the high moral training and conduct of the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him).

Despite the loving and kind nature of the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) and Hazrat Amman Jan (may Allah be pleased with her), they did not neglect the religious training of their children. Great attention was given to this. This too was achieved firstly by their own

²¹⁵ Majeibur Rahman, *Fazl-e-Umar*, p.24

perfect example, and secondly with gentle, affectionate words coupled with expressing good expectations. For example, it is not enough to say to children that they must not lie when you yourself lie. Hazrat Amman Jan (may Allah be pleased with her) said that instilling honesty in a child is one of the most important aspects of moral training. She insisted that her children should never lie despite fearing the worst repercussions. She developed a faith in them by saying “my children never lie”. In turn, the children felt proud in the trust that their mother had in them and thus wished dearly to live up to her high expectations. Hazrat Amma Jaan (may Allah be pleased with her) sealed this training by telling her children that lying was a form of *shirk*.²¹⁶ Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih IV (may Allah have mercy on him) said that his grandmother developed in them a repulsion for deceit.²¹⁷

Summarising the manner in which Hazrat Amman Jan (may Allah be pleased with her) brought up her children, Hazrat Nawab Mubarak Begum Sahiba (may Allah be pleased with her) says:

“By showing the child that you always have full trust in him, to inculcate a sense of honour and respect for the trust of the parents was her main principle of training. Aversion to lies, a sense of honour and self-respect used to be her first

²¹⁶ Associating partners with Allah

²¹⁷ Munavara (Nabbo) Ghauri, *Hazrat Amman Jan – An Inspiration for Us All*, p.128

lesson. She always told us that you should cultivate this habit in the children that they should obey you, thereafter even if they behave with childish mischief there is no fear. Hadhrat Ummul Momineen [ra] would always say that my children do not tell lies. It was this trust that saved us from lies rather it made us averse to lies... And I remember that respect for my mother would increase further in my heart. Another principle for the training of children that she used to state was that you should do your utmost to train the first child, then seeing this example others will automatically be good.”²¹⁸

Often parents admonish children without giving care to who is present. On the contrary, the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) would advise his children about righteous conduct, but then would not constantly criticise and snub them. If he did need to explain something to them he would be gentle in his approach and would do so privately, rather than in public, so as to maintain the child’s dignity.

The Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) never scolded, showed annoyance or raised a hand to his children. He was greatly agitated when he heard of people who hit their children. He was told once of a man who beat his children regularly. He sent for the man and said,

²¹⁸ Majeibur Rahman, *Fazl-e-Umar*, p.30-31

“...Children should be guided by good example and they should not be punished physically. Fathers who beat their children were putting themselves alongside God and so were guilty of a kind of polytheism, believing they shared His attributes of being a true and absolute guide. Those who pushed their children unwillingly in a certain direction, believing they were masters of their children’s destinies, were guilty of the same sin.”²¹⁹

The Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) and Hazrat Amman Jan (may Allah be pleased with her) never considered their children to be ignorant. They dealt with them with the same honesty, trust and sincerity that they in turn expected from them. A small example of trust can be seen in the following anecdote.

When Mian Mahmud was a young child, he put broken pieces of earthenware in the pocket of the waistcoat of the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him). Completely forgetting that they were there, the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) mentioned to his attendant that recently he had been feeling some pain in his ribs. The attendant passed his hand over that area only to discover the broken pieces of earthenware. The Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) smiled and said, “Now I remember, Mahmud put this in my pocket and asked me not to take it out as he would play with it later.” The Promised Messiah

²¹⁹ Majeibur Rahman, *Fazl-e-Umar*, p.26

(peace be upon him) left the pieces of earthenware in his pocket in keeping with the trust that his son had requested of him. Whereas many would have thrown what seem like insignificant pieces of rubble away, the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) saw these as a trust that his son had vouchsafed to him.²²⁰

Hazrat Nawab Mubaraka Begum Sahiba (may Allah be pleased with her)²²¹ relates that her father had great confidence in his children and never doubted them. As a result the children felt too ashamed to do anything against his will. There was a mutual trust and respect that flowed from father to child and the children did not wish to disappoint their father or betray his trust.

It is related by Hazrat Nawab Mubaraka Begum Sahiba (may Allah be pleased with her) that her father would listen to them attentively giving them the same courtesy as he did to elders of the community.²²² This respect imbues a confidence and self-worth in a child that has a lifelong and deep impact on them.

Another essential characteristic that both parents instilled in their children was fortitude, patience and courage in the face of adversity. They did this through their own personal

²²⁰ Majeebur Rahman, *Fazl-e-Umar*, p.24

²²¹ Daughter of the Promised Messiah

²²² Munavara Ghauri, *Hazrat Amman Jan – An Inspiration for Us All*, p.129

example, by completely submitting to the will of Allah in the face of hardship. They both bore the loss of children and Hazrat Amman Jan (peace be upon him) became a widow at a young age and faced many trials during her life. Yet she bore all these trials with grace, dignity and fortitude. Their example no doubt was character building.

The children were not overindulged and were taught to live within their means. They were taught not to be wasteful and to help others in need. Hazrat Amman Jan (may Allah be pleased with her) trained the children from a young age to be helpful in daily chores so as to dispel any element of laziness from their character. The children were involved in Jamaat activities from a very young age and thus, grew up to be active and dedicated servants of the Jamaat.

The most effective and important means for training children for the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) and Hazrat Amma Jaan (may Allah be pleased with her) was, without a doubt, prayer. The Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) offered fervent prayers even before his children were conceived and continued to do so throughout his life. He gave precedence to prayer over every other means. Likewise, prayer was continuously on the lips of Hazrat Amman Jan (may Allah be pleased with her). Her every action was coated in prayer. The children too were requested by their parents to pray for themselves, in doing so, they acquired the habit of prayer

and this also encouraged their own relationship with the Divine. All other means of training children were sought only because they were tools provided by Allah and they were utilised according to His Will.

Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II (may Allah be pleased with him) epitomised the exemplary moral training of his parents. The oath that he took whilst standing next to the blessed body of his noble father when he passed away, is a manifestation of that love and sacrifice that he learned under the guidance of his great father and mother. He said:

“My Lord, believing You to be Omnipresent and Omniscient I make a solemn pledge that even if the entire Jamaat were to forsake Ahmadiyyat I will convey the message that You have revealed through the Promised Messiah [as] to each and every corner of the world.”²²³

Hazrat Nawab Mubarak Begum Sahiba²²⁴

The children of the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) were exemplary parents themselves. They continued the training that was vouchsafed to them through their blessed parents. Hazrat Nawab Mubarak Begum Sahiba (may Allah be pleased with her) was exemplary in the way she brought up her own children and she cared deeply for

²²³ <https://www.alislam.org/library/books/Fazl-e-Umar.pdf> p.99

²²⁴ Daughter of the Promised Messiah (Peace and blessings be upon him)

the moral training of Ahmadi children. She had a profound understanding of how to bring children up in the best manner and had an innate understanding of the psychology of children. She stated that whatever teaching is embedded in a child from a young age, becomes a part of their nature.²²⁵

Once, whilst addressing young Ahmadi children, she told them that supplication to Allah was not solely the right of adults. They too, despite their young age, should pray to Allah. She went on to say that everyone has the right to benefit from this blessing, therefore she advised them to get into the habit of supplicating to Allah for both worldly and spiritual blessings. She said pray that Allah protects you from every deception and unrest and saves you from the traps of Satan. Pray that you remain truthful and pious and keep the company of the truthful. Finally, pray that you remain devoted to Khilafat and that Allah alone is your guide and He be your guide always.²²⁶

On another occasion, whilst addressing children, she advised them to protect themselves from bad company. She told them that a good way to tell if the way you act and the company you keep is undesirable, is if you cannot say

²²⁵ Seerut-o-sawane Hazrat Nawab Mubarak Begum Sahiba-page 345-446)

²²⁶ Bushra Bashir, *Mohsinaat*, p.229

and do those things in front of your parents and elders; then that is a sin and is poisonous.²²⁷

At night, before sleeping, she would tell her children remarkable true stories based on Islamic teachings and would teach them little aspects of faith. She would go over anything that she had taught them during the day and in doing so, would consolidate and embed the teaching. She would encourage the habit of using the Islamic greeting of '*salam*' throughout the course of the day. She would tell them about the lives and circumstances of the Prophets of Allah. She would keep a watchful eye on their habits, such as the manners of eating, and would gently correct where need be. When she saw an inappropriate habit that became habitual, she again would lovingly reprimand. When *Salat* became *faraz (obligatory)* on a child, she would remind them not only to say their prayers but also to recite the Holy Quran and oversee that they had done so. She would select books for them to read and would protect them from the habit of backbiting and telling tales.

Hazrat Nawab Mubarak Begum Sahiba (may Allah be pleased with her) was a true reflection of the blessed moral training of her parents.

²²⁷ Bushra Bashir, *Mohsinaat*, p.230

Hazrat Sayyeda Umme Tahir (may Allah be pleased with her) ²²⁸

Hazrat Khaliatul-Masih IV (may Allah have mercy on him) says that his mother was unable to give her children much time due to her extensive duties, however, he says her expectations of them were so high that it seemed as if she was watching them twenty-four hours a day. He remembers that she would get very annoyed with them if they did anything wrong and would sometimes even raise a hand if they became absurdly stubborn as children do. She would impart advice in such a way that it became deeply embedded in one's heart and she would often refer to the example of the Prophet Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). On one occasion, when Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih IV (may Allah have mercy on him) was returning with his mother from *Bahishti Makbara*, a gentleman passed them by and neither party said *salam* to each other. Huzoor's (may Allah have mercy on him) mother was deeply disappointed with him and said, "Don't you even have the manners to say *salam* to a passer-by?" Huzoor (may Allah have mercy on him) replied that the person had not said *salam* to him, to which his mother replied "what does that have to do with you? The

²²⁸ Mother of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV (May Allah be his Helper) and wife of Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him)

Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was the first to say *salam* to everyone.”²²⁹

She paid great attention to manners and loathed greed and selfish behaviour. She would be angered if she ever heard anyone backbiting and did not tolerate the slightest verbal disrespect to elders. She was strict in ensuring that prayer was observed dutifully. She would give her *chanda* on time and instilled this habit in her children by taking a certain amount from their allowance. In doing so, she inculcated the habit of paying *chanda* in them. By showing immense regard for the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) she instilled the same respect in her children by way of example. She inspired her children to show great compassion for the poor and needy. She was very firm with her children and never overindulged them. Whilst on her deathbed, she addressed her son saying:

“Tahir, I am deeply aware that I could not look after you and I wasn’t able to give you the love that you deserved, in fact, I was always tough on you. This was purely for your *tarbiyyat* and good upbringing, however it still hurts me deeply”²³⁰

There are countless examples of great mothers in our community, who have in turn left a legacy of truly righteous children. If we look at Dr Abdus Salam or Hazrat

²²⁹ Bushra Bashir, *Mohsinaat*, p.231

²³⁰ Bushra Bashir, *Mohsinaat*, p.233

Chaudhry Zafrullah Khan, both paid homage to their mothers as great role models and teachers. Mothers have to set a good example and should always remember that when Allah Almighty assigned this very crucial task to them, He also bestowed on them the opportunity to improve and reform themselves. When a mother strives to overcome her weaknesses, change her behaviour and habits, and makes progress in her spiritual life, she is also embarking on the journey that will save her children. As mothers bringing up children to uphold Islamic values in the UK today, we face many challenges.

In an address to Lajna Ima'illah, Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih V (aba) outlined the following guidance for meeting the challenges of raising children in today's environment:

“In my recent tour I spoke about these Islamic values at a function in Germany and upon hearing my words a local German lady said she was extremely delighted to hear that these were Islamic principles and values. She said there was no doubt that such values were the keys to peace both in a person's home and in the wider society. She said these were the very values she wished to instill in her children. However, unfortunately in school sometimes they taught things contrary to this in the name of freedom. All of you who are part of Lajna Ima'illah, who claim to be the servants of Allah, must therefore understand your responsibilities towards your children! You must establish the very highest standards and values within your homes.

You must act according to Allah's commands. This is of particular importance considering you are living in a society where it is easy for our children to be misled or misguided. Sometimes children can pick up wrong things or habits from their schools or outside. And so, you must give ample time to your children. You must explain to them what is right and what is wrong. You must instil within them those values that are to be cherished and protected. You must explain Islamic teachings to them and tell them that these are the five commands of Allah and it was to re-establish these values that Allah sent the Promised Messiah (as).

In terms of their school education, of course you should encourage your children to learn and to attain the highest standards. However, if in the name of freedom, the schools ever teach things that are contrary to Islam then you should explain clearly to your children what your values and beliefs are. This is a great responsibility laid before you, because one day the world's reformation will be the task of your children. Certainly, Allah has given the task of the reformation of the world to the Jama'at of the Promised Messiah (as) and so we must pay heed to this great responsibility. Only then will we be able to protect our societies and to guide others towards the true teachings of Islam. Only then will we be able to save our children and future generations."

Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him)

In his book 'Way of the Seekers', Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him) devoted a whole chapter on advice on the moral training of children. This advice is invaluable and is testimony to his passion in guiding his community to pay particular attention to the *Tarbiyyat* of children. Every member of Lajna, when she embarks on the journey to motherhood, should be aware of these guidelines.

Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II (May Allah be pleased with him) advised:

“Allah states that a characteristic of a true believer lies in: ‘And those who say, ‘Our Lord, grant us of our wives and children the delight of our eyes, and make us a model for the righteous.’

Allah has endowed every human being's nature with the desire for greatness. He declares that ‘I am aware of your nature and I also desire you to achieve greatness’, but the way to achieve this greatness is that you keep on praying that Allah enables you to become an Imam (leader). In this, a true believer has been told that he should not be satisfied with petty achievements; instead, he should desire to become a leader and Imam. But who's Imam? An Imam of the righteous, but not of the unrighteous. You might be

thinking how can everyone become a leader or an Imam? So, let me tell you that *both men and women* can have a part in it. If a man strives and helps to make his wife knowledgeable and successful, when she follows him he will be the Imam (leader) and she will be the [Ma'moom] (follower). Similarly, if the wife trains her children properly then she will be the Imam (leader) and her children will be the *Ma'moom* (followers). Whatever good deeds your children perform will be attributed to you. You will be sleeping in your grave but when your children will say their morning prayers, the angels will be recording that this pious woman performed her morning prayer. You will be sleeping in your grave and the angels will be recording that this pious woman performed her Zuhr prayer. You will be sleeping in your grave and the angels will be recording that this pious woman performed her Asr prayer. When it is quiet all around and the stars are twinkling and people are sleeping, if you have trained your children to perform Tahajjud prayers, then angels will be recording that she performed the Tahajjud prayers. What an incredible and grand rank you can achieve!"²³¹

The vision that Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him) had when he laid out the aims and objectives for

²³¹ Lajna Ima'illah USA , Paradise Under Your Feet - Mother's Handbook, p.14,15
(Address to Lajna Ima'illah at Jalsa Salana Qadian by Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II (ra),
December 27, 1939)

the women in his community laid huge stress on the *Tarbiyyat* of children. As Lajna Ima'illah, our role as mothers is crucial. We cannot ever underestimate this and we can never show any sign of weakness or neglect when it comes to the upbringing of our children; the future generation of Islam and Ahmadiyyat.

Chapter 6

TABLIGH

- i. **Women should strive together to enhance their knowledge and spread the knowledge they have attained to others.**

And who is better in speech than he who invites *men* to Allah and does good works and says, 'I am surely of those who submit?'

And good and evil are not alike. Repel *evil* with that which is best. And lo, he between whom and thyself was enmity *will* become as though he were a warm friend.

But none is granted it save those who are steadfast; and none is granted it save those who possess a large share of good.²³²(41:34-36)

Preaching is a sacred obligation assigned by God Almighty to His Prophets. When we read accounts of the Prophets, we find that their every living moment is spent in fulfilling this sacred obligation. Once a Prophet is vouchsafed with the duty of spreading the message of God, they face every trial and tribulation, but their devotion to God and the

²³² <https://www.alislam.org/quran/app/41:34>

truth is their guiding light. They gain strength from the love and support given to them by the Divine at every step they take.

When we take a look at the lives of the Prophets as mentioned in the Holy Quran, we are astounded by their example. Looking deeper still, we realise it was their true faith in the eternal promise of God and His help that caused them to succeed in their mission.

**‘...Most surely, I will prevail, I and My messengers...’
(58:22)²³³**

Consider the example of the Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) who with his handful of humble followers, was ridiculed by his countrymen. However, they remained firm, built a magnificent ark at the instruction of Allah the Almighty and were saved by Him from the Great Deluge.

The Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) faced Nimrod in a debate about the Greatness of God and left him bemused and speechless. Nimrod’s only recourse was to throw the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) into a burning fire, however by the Grace of Allah the Almighty, the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) emerged unscathed.

²³³ <https://www.alislam.org/quran/app/58:22>

The Prophet Joseph (peace be upon him) faced one trial after another, from being thrown into a well by his jealous brothers, to ending up in prison under false accusations by the women of the Egyptian court, only to be elevated to a high position in the same court.

The account of Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) leaves one in awe as to the grace bestowed upon him by his Creator. His destiny was to one day confront the Pharaoh and convey the message of Allah to him. How was a humble man of Jewish descent ever to seek an audience with the Pharaoh? Allah the Almighty had designed for him to be brought up in the house of Pharaoh - this opened so many avenues for him. Not only did he convey the message, but with the grace of Allah, he defeated the magicians summoned by Pharaoh to overwhelm him. The Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) ultimately led the Jewish people out of Egypt as Pharaoh and his army drowned. The worldly powers of this despotic monarch were no match in the face of Divine help.

Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) was put on the cross for spreading the message of God, however by the grace of Allah he was saved and brought down alive and continued to spread the message to the children of Israel.

Finally, there is the best of all example of our beloved Prophet Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), whose efforts in preaching the word of God was met with an abundance of Divine support through every

trial and tribulation. The examples are so plentiful, that it is difficult to know which to recount.

The devotion and example of the handful of fervent followers of the Prophet Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is unparalleled in history. The accounts of their bravery and sacrifice alone can fill countless pages in the history books.

The Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and his followers faced severe persecution at the hands of their family and countrymen, but Allah the Almighty did not leave them alone. They had to face every physical and mental hardship: boycotts, conspiracies, migration and battles. Yet, against all odds, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), with the help of Allah, triumphed, restoring Mecca to the worship of the one true God and winning the hearts of the Arabian people.

These very brief examples show that, without *Tabligh*, faith is incomplete. The Prophets of God spent their every moment spreading the word of Allah. From one individual, they become an army of devoted followers who, in turn, continued to spread the message of Allah, and with their effort came the help of Allah in abundance. Thus, one must remember that success in *Tabligh* i.e. calling people to Allah, can never be achieved without the assistance of Allah. This is clear from the study of the lives of all Prophets

- sincere effort on the part of man is required before assistance can come.

The examples of the Prophets demonstrate how important it is to call people to Allah. Preaching goes hand in hand with prophethood, it cannot be separated. In turn, the followers of Prophets continued in the same vein. To engage in *Tabligh* is an ongoing process that keeps one's faith alive. It is an obligation for believers. We read in the Holy Quran on the blessings of calling to Allah:

'Call unto the way of thy Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation and argue with them in a way that is best. Surely, thy Lord knows best who has strayed from His way; and He knows those who are rightly guided.'
(16:126)

With the advent of the Promised Messiah (may peace be upon him), the renaissance of Islam and a new era of *Tabligh* began. The Promised Messiah (may peace be upon him) spent every moment of his life calling people to the true Islam through his writings and debates. A small number of people accepted his message and, like the followers of the Prophets before him, engaged in *Tabligh* fervently. Through *Tabligh*, this community continued to grow with the help of Allah and overcame many trials and tribulations and continues to do so. As promised by Allah, His message will prevail. The Promised Messiah (may peace be upon him) said with reference to the Quranic verse above, that if it were possible, he would go door to

door like a *fakir* to spread the message of God Almighty²³⁴. It was this spirit that inspired his followers and is very much alive and active in the Ahmadiyya Jamaat.

There are so many accounts of the sacrifices made by the followers of the Promised Messiah (may peace be upon him) but for our purposes we will concentrate on the efforts made by the Lajna Ima'illah.

From the very inception of Ahmadiyyat, women have fought side by side with men in the battle of *Tabligh*. Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him) was instrumental in mobilising women for this purpose. By creating the Lajna Ima'illah, his purpose was to educate women and thus, empower them to be active in all aspects of Jamaat activities. During the time of each Khilafat, every medium and technology of the time was utilised and harnessed for the purpose of *Tabligh*.

In his address to women in Lahore in 1915, Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him) drew the attention of Ahmadi women to gaining religious knowledge. Whilst addressing the women, he told them that it was their duty to engage in *Tabligh* with other women, by teaching them the faith. He told them to invite them to Jalsas, to deliver speeches and write articles for women in magazines and newspapers. He advised that all women should focus on their learning of the Holy Quran and Hadith and to pay

²³⁴Bushra Bashir, *Mohsinaat*, p.139

more attention to their faith rather than worldly preoccupation.²³⁵

Thus, even before Lajna Ima'illah was established, the seed of comradery and sacrifice was being sewn. Women were becoming mobilised and would gather together from place to place to partake in *Tabligh* activities.

In the same period, missionaries of the Jamaat were sent abroad to spread the message of Ahmadiyyat. In 1927, Huzoor (may Allah be pleased with him) explained to Ahmadi women that rather than thinking of going abroad to engage in *Tabligh*, they should focus their efforts on the women of lower means who worked in their homes and around them, by influencing them with their good example and values and by being charitable towards them. Before long, Huzoor (may Allah be pleased with him) said these women would join Ahmadiyyat in large numbers.²³⁶

By 1946, the first training class was held in the house of Hazrat Ume Tahir (may Allah be pleased with her). A small number of women attended. They were taught *Shahdat al Quran*²³⁷ and were given guidance on *Tabligh*. On the 18th March 1966, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih III (may Allah have Mercy on him) initiated the *Waqfe Arzi* scheme. This was a scheme in which working professionals would dedicate two to four weeks of their time in the service of their faith

²³⁵Bushra Bashir, *Mohsinaat*, p.140

²³⁶Bushra Bashir, *Mohsinaat*, pp. 141-142

²³⁷ Bushra Bashir, *Mohsinaat*, p.142

and would have an opportunity to engage in *Tabligh* also. With the same zeal as men, women too took part in this scheme. Married women accompanied their husbands and taught the Holy Quran to other women, whilst at the same time seeking out opportunities for *Tabligh*. Those who were not married concentrated their efforts in their hometowns and villages, by holding classes and engaging in *Tabligh*. It is clear that these pioneer Ahmadi women were all missionaries at heart. They had a driving passion to spread the message of Ahmadiyyat and they did not fail to avail of every opportunity to spread the true faith.

When the *Nusrat Jahan* scheme was launched, men participated with fervour and devotion. It is true to say that the wife of a missionary is in fact a missionary herself. She stands by his side through adversities and successes, supporting him in every situation, and does all of this with a cheerful demeanour.

Hazrat Khalilfa-tul Masih IV (may Allah have mercy on him) related a dream he had when he was a student. In the dream, he saw himself as one of the special arrows of Lajna Ima'illah which had been set aside for a particular time. He explained that the dream meant, by the Grace of Allah, that the Lajna Ima'illah would be his strength during his Khilafat and help him in all his schemes.²³⁸

During the time of Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih IV (may Allah have mercy on him), the efforts of *Tabligh* took on a new

²³⁸ Bushra Bashir, *Mohsinaat*, p. 149

zeal. He encouraged each and every member to become a 'Dai-e-Allah', a caller towards Allah. He said for him, there was no greater gift than people, young or old, man, women or child, who write to him requesting prayers and say that by the Grace of God they had become a 'Dai-e-Allah'.²³⁹

Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih IV (may Allah have mercy on him) continually encouraged the Lajna Ima'illah to increase their efforts in *Tabligh*. During Jalsas in different countries, he would inspire women by recounting the amazing *Tabligh* efforts of Ahmadi women in different parts of the world and how they had been fruitful in their endeavours. He enthused women not to fall behind in this field and encouraged them to be at the forefront of *Tabligh* efforts. He said, even if men were falling behind in their efforts, women should take the helm. *Tabligh*, he argued, required a full transformation in oneself. If a woman was a living breathing example of the beauty of Islam, then sometimes this was enough to turn people's hearts to Islam.²⁴⁰

Huzoor (may Allah have mercy on him) also advised women that they should organise *Seeratun Nabi Jalsa* as these had a very positive outcome on *Tabligh* efforts all over the world. The Lajna Ima'illah organisations across the world organised Jalsas and these proved to be very effective in spreading the message of Ahmadiyyat.

²³⁹ Bushra Bashir, *Mohsinaat*, pp.143-144

²⁴⁰ Bushra Bashir, *Mohsinaat*, p. 145

Harnessing the technologies of the time, women would utilise interesting tapes and videos of Jalsas etc in their *Tabligh* efforts. These had a deep impact on all who watched and listened to them.

In 1998, Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih IV (may Allah have mercy on him) paid women the highest compliment by saying that Ahmadi women could change the future. He said that they had taken the lead in many fields of practical life, such as *Tabligh*, serving humanity, and hospitality, and he added that they were serving in these fields with immense zeal.

In the same address, Huzoor (may Allah have mercy on him) gave the example of the Lajna in Ghana, whose tireless and genuine hospitality opened the way for *Tabligh* on a large scale. They established a school for religious education, where ladies and girls would travel from various areas to learn aspects of their faith and then would return to their various areas to impart what they had learnt to others.

Huzoor (may Allah have mercy on him) continued to relate how the Lajna of Ghana were exemplary for the Lajna in Europe, in that they collated a list of Lajna members who used to be Ahmadi but had drifted away. They actively sought them out and gave them the message of

Ahmadiyyat again and thus, brought them back as active members once again.²⁴¹

In the same year, in Indonesia, the *Tabligh* efforts of the Indonesian Lajna to a certain village were hindered as there was no road to get there. To solve this, they did something remarkable: they built a 3km long road so that they could reach that village. Their efforts proved to be very fruitful by the Grace of Allah as 500 people converted to Ahmadiyyat.²⁴²

In modern times, Ahmadi women all over the world engage in *Tabligh* activities. They organise forums, debates and engage with local communities, inviting ladies to various events. They research and write books and articles for magazines. They are active in spreading the message of Ahmadiyyat on social media. They are an integral part of Voice of Islam radio. They are involved members of the MTA team, producing their own programs and documentaries. They have truly embraced the vision that Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him) had for them and *insha'allah* will continue to make huge advances in the field of *Tabligh*.

Most importantly, Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih V (may Allah strengthen his hand) reminded mothers that they can engage in *Tabligh* while they are at home bringing up their children. In an address to the Lajna in Tanzania in 2005,

²⁴¹ Bushra Bashir, *Mohsinaat*, p.151

²⁴² Bushra Bashir, *Mohsinaat*, p.152

when talking about the role of women in engaging in *Jihad*, Huzoor (may Allah strengthen his hand) said:

“This is a very grave responsibility on an Ahmadi Muslim woman and as such each one of you should pay great attention to this responsibility. You are somewhat fortunate in this day and age that there is a Jihad or a struggle for tabligh (preaching), tarbiyat (religious training) and promoting the doing of good deeds in which women can participate just like the men. You would earn a higher reward from Allah in that you trained the children of your husband in a good way and discharged the obligations of the household. Now you can participate in two Jihads: the training of your children and undertaking Tabligh.

So, every Ahmadi should vie with others in taking part in this Jihad. You should pay greater personal attention towards worship and in spreading good deeds in society. Train your children in such a way that apart from an inclination towards performing good deeds there should be nothing else and everyone who observes them should exclaim how well-mannered the children of Ahmadi women are; that they possess such high moral values and pay no attention towards the impure things of the world. When you try to promote such values in society, your heart will be content and pacified. You will be pleased that Allah is pleased with you.”²⁴³

²⁴³ Address to Lajna Ima'illah (ladies' Auxiliary Organisation) of Tanzania (alislam.org) - 10th May 2005

“In this era our women must propagate Islam and especially when it comes to women’s issues it is much more effective for women to respond than for any man to do so on their behalf. Every woman should pay careful attention to this and seek to gain knowledge of their faith so that they can refute the allegations directed at Islam.”²⁴⁴

On 27 November 2021, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad held a virtual online meeting with members of the National Amila of Lajna Imaillah India Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (may Allah be his Helper) said:

“When you are doing outreach (Tabligh) work, initially speak to your contacts more generally and show them your good character so that they become your friends. The Holy Quran has given the metaphor that you should attach birds to yourselves and make them fond of you and train them in such a way that they become fond of you and run towards you. So similarly, with such people you should create a sincere mutual bond and when that is achieved, they will listen to you. Then when they find out that you are an Ahmadi Muslim then they will realise [the truth] themselves. Some will leave you but others will continue to remain in contact with you and will be positively affected by you. You cannot forcefully deliver the message to anyone and neither can you force anyone to become an Ahmadi Muslim. Therefore, whoever is to come to us

²⁴⁴ (Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V, may Allah be his helper, Concluding Address, Lajna Imaillah National Ijtema, September 2017)

should do so with sincerity and loyalty and for this we have to continuously make an effort.”²⁴⁵

It is important to remember that in order to serve one’s faith, one does not need to have to be an academic or have vast knowledge. In this regard, Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih IV (may Allah have mercy on him) gave the example of the mother of Hazrat Chaudhry Zafrulla Khan’s mother. On the face of it, she was an uneducated woman, but her simple sincere words won the hearts of many women who converted to Ahmadiyyat. Once, a lady asked her how she had such an impact on people. To this she replied “Firstly, I fear Allah and secondly, I love Allah.”²⁴⁶

Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him) was acutely aware that the women in his community needed to play a huge role in the spread of Ahmadiyyat, the true Islam. In the aims and objectives for Lajna Ima’illah, the words “*enhance their knowledge*” and “*spread their knowledge*” highlighted one aspect in his vision and aim of educating women, to arm women with the various aspects of knowledge and education needed to carry out effective *Tabligh*. He reminded them that, in order to be successful, the Lajna Ima’illah had to win over hearts before anything else. To do this, they must become living examples of the true teachings of Islam through self-reformation.

²⁴⁵ <https://www.pressahmadiyya.com/press-releases/2021/12/lajna-imaillah-india-national-amila-have-honour-of-virtual-meeting-with-world-head-of-ahmadiyya-muslim-community/>

²⁴⁶ Bushra Bashir, *Mohsinaat*, p.153

Concluding Remarks

In the year 1922 when women throughout the world had little or no rights, Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him) re-established the rights that Islam had given to women, by setting up an organisation that would empower them for years to come.

He realised that this auxiliary organisation was crucial for bringing about the revival and spread of Islam, and that it was women who would also play a key role in this renaissance. His aim was to mobilise them, educate them and train them for a greater purpose, as well as free them from the shackles of the societal and cultural restrictions, which placed huge unislamic constraints on them.

The aims and objectives of Lajna Ima'illah, which were laid out by Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him), intended to give women greater autonomy and to bring them together as leaders and empower one another; to increase their knowledge and spread it; to work at ever improving their morals and spirituality; to be fully aware of the responsibilities of the sound upbringing of their children; to bring unity amongst all women irrespective of social standing; to uphold the spirit of unity under the unique spiritual guidance of Khilafat, to serve Islam and help their brothers and sisters in need, and to attain all this through prayer.

From a handful of ladies who were the torch-bearers of this auxiliary organisation, Lajna Ima'illah has now spread across the world with thousands of members.

At the centenary of this organisation, it is crucial that we remember the sacrifices of those who strived tirelessly to bring us to where we are today, and that we remind ourselves of the aims and objectives of this organisation. Hazrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him) gave us this gift so that we continue to strive for excellence as Ahmadi Muslim women and inspire generations to come.

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