

SEGREGATION IN ISLAM



SEPARATE VENUE
NOT VALUE

THE AHMADIYYA MUSLIM COMMUNITY

OUR FOUNDER



Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad- The Promised Messiah and Mahdi (peace be on him)

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was founded in 1889 by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1835-1908) of Qadian, India. He claimed to be the expected reformer of the latter days and the awaited one of the world's religions (the Messiah and Mahdi). His mission was to revive the peaceful teachings of Islam and engender in people's hearts the love of God and the duty to serve mankind. The Community is now established in 213 countries and it spearheads a global peace campaign to champion respect and human rights for all.

OUR LEADERSHIP

His Holiness Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (may Allah be his Helper) is the Community's fifth Khalifa. His Holiness encourages the development and progress of women at a time when it is often alleged that Islam does not grant equality between genders. In accordance with the teachings of Islam, he upholds the rights that Islam has given to women and highlights that Ahmadi Muslim women can have true freedom, true enlightenment and true liberty.



His Holiness, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (May Allah be his Helper)

THE AHMADIYYA MUSLIM WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION UK



The flag of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Women's Association, known as Lajna Imaillah (the maid servants of Allah)

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Women's Association was established in 1922 by the second successor to the Promised Messiah (peace be on him), His Holiness Hazrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad (may Allah be pleased with him). It is an empowered women's organisation whose main goal is to promote religious and secular education amongst women and to support those lacking in these areas and help them in the spirit of sisterhood.

THE PRINCIPLES OF SEGREGATION IN ISLAM

In accordance with Islamic teachings and the practise of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) men and women are instructed in the Holy Qur'an to observe a form of modesty.



The Holy Qur'an addresses instructions of modesty firstly to men:

"SAY TO THE BELIEVING MEN THAT THEY RESTRAIN THEIR EYES AND GUARD THEIR PRIVATE PARTS. THAT IS PURER FOR THEM. SURELY ALLAH IS WELL AWARE OF WHAT THEY DO"

[The Holy Qur'an, Chapter 24, Verse 31]

The Holy Qur'an then addresses women:

"AND SAY TO THE BELIEVING WOMEN THAT THEY RESTRAIN THEIR EYES AND GUARD THEIR PRIVATE PARTS, AND THAT THEY DISPLAY NOT THEIR BEAUTY AND EMBELLISHMENTS EXCEPT THAT WHICH IS APPARENT THEREOF, AND THAT THEY DRAW THEIR HEAD-COVERS OVER THEIR BOSOMS, AND THAT THEY DISPLAY NOT THEIR BEAUTY AND EMBELLISHMENTS THEREOF SAVE TO THEIR HUSBANDS..."

[The Holy Qur'an, Chapter 24, Verse 32]

The concept of Islamic segregation is based on a model of chastity incumbent on both men and women, that guides both to maintain boundaries of modesty and respect between one another. In some instances, these are physical boundaries, e.g. separate prayer areas, or meeting spaces. In all cases it is about the maintenance of modesty and decency in interactions between men and women.

"THE BOOK OF GOD DOES NOT AIM AT KEEPING WOMEN IN SECLUSION LIKE PRISONERS. THIS IS THE CONCEPT OF THOSE WHO ARE NOT ACQUAINTED WITH THE CORRECT PATTERN OF ISLAMIC WAYS. THE PURPOSE OF THESE REGULATIONS IS TO RESTRAIN MEN AND WOMEN FROM LETTING THEIR EYES TO ROVE FREELY AND FROM DISPLAYING THEIR GOOD LOOKS AND BEAUTIES, FOR THEREIN LIES THE GOOD OF MEN AND WOMEN."

[The Promised Messiah (peace be upon him), Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam, pg 48]

THE PURPOSE OF SEGREGATION IN ISLAM

It is often assumed in Western society that segregation of men and women in Islam is a means of secluding and excluding women. The truth is that, rather than being a restriction, segregation is a supreme right and protection afforded to muslim women.



The Holy Qur'an is clear that a woman has the same spiritual capacity as a man and that she can attain equal spiritual rewards by her own efforts.

“BUT WHOSO DOES GOOD WORKS, WHETHER MALE OR FEMALE, AND IS A BELIEVER, SUCH SHALL ENTER HEAVEN...”

[The Holy Qur'an, Chapter 4, Verse 125]

The purpose of segregation in Islam is to ensure that the highest standards of modesty, dignity and piety are observed amongst men and women.

“AN ISSUE DEBATED AND OFTEN CONDEMNED IN WESTERN SOCIETY, IS THE FACT THAT MEN AND WOMEN ARE KEPT AT A CERTAIN DISTANCE IN ISLAM. FOR EXAMPLE, A LOT IS MADE OF THE FACT THAT MUSLIM MEN AND WOMEN CHOOSE NOT TO SHAKE HANDS WITH PEOPLE OF THE OPPOSITE SEX, OR PREFER TO SIT AND WORSHIP SEPARATELY. YET, AS TIME GOES BY, EVEN THOSE WHO CRITICISE SUCH BELIEFS ARE COMING TO REALISE THE WISDOM THAT UNDERPINS OUR VALUES”.

[His Holiness Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (may Allah be his Helper), 24 February 2018]

Men and women are separated and given their own spaces in Mosques and at religious gatherings so that they are more comfortable and can find benefit from the spiritual atmosphere.

His Holiness Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (may Allah be his Helper) has explained that separate venues for men and women do not mean that they have separate values.

“SEPARATE VENUE, NOT VALUE. SEPARATE HALLS OR MARQUEES FOR WOMEN AND MEN, BUT THE VALUES ARE THE SAME AND THE SEPARATE PLACE HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THEIR TEACHINGS, THEIR SKILL, THEIR POTENTIAL”

[His Holiness Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (may Allah be his Helper) 12 January 2020]

SEGREGATION IN PRACTICE

Gatherings and events of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community are always organised and hosted independently by the men's and women's respective auxiliary associations. His Holiness, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (may Allah be his Helper) has explained why gender segregation is a positive experience for the women of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community.



“OUR WOMEN FEEL THAT, ACCORDING TO OUR TEACHING, IF THEY HOLD THEIR MEETINGS SEPARATELY AND WITHOUT THE UMBRELLA OR SHADOW OF MEN, THEY CAN DO BETTER.”

[His Holiness Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (may Allah be his Helper) 12 January 2020]

His Holiness (may Allah be his Helper), further elaborated upon the beautiful wisdom behind the Islamic principle of segregation:

“WE BELIEVE THAT WOMEN CAN FLOURISH BETTER WITHOUT THE SHADE OF MEN. SO IF THEY ARE SEPARATE, THEY ARE FREE TO GROW. YOU SEE, IF YOU PLANT A SMALL TREE UNDER A BIG TREE, IT CANNOT GROW...”

[His Holiness Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (may Allah be his Helper) 2019, Germany]

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS OF THE AHMADIYYA MUSLIM COMMUNITY

Jamia Ahmadiyya, which originated in 1906, is an institute for male students specialising in religious education with a focus on languages and theology.

Similarly, the Aisha Academy is an educational institute of learning for female students specialising in religious and spiritual knowledge.

AUXILIARY ORGANISATIONS OF THE AHMADIYYA MUSLIM COMMUNITY

There are separate organisations for men, women, young girls and young boys within the Community which all seek to promote the moral and spiritual training of members.

Each of the auxiliaries strive to raise awareness of the great responsibility to serve one's faith, while focussing on their duties towards mankind.

THE BENEFITS OF SEGREGATION

Every year, women play an essential role in both the planning and execution of the annual International Convention of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, known as Jalsa Salana. The event hosts around 40,000 participants and is separated to form a men's and women's side. Women organise and take the lead in their own space at the Convention, making decisions to manage more than 60 departments. From serving food to administering first aid, manning cameras, translating speeches and providing security; segregation empowers women and gives them the freedom to thrive in their own space.



"A NON-AHMADI LADY, OUIDA NESBETH FROM JAMAICA, ATTENDED JALSA. SHE IS A HIGHLY EDUCATED WOMAN AND IS AN ACCOUNTANT. THE LADY REALLY LIKED THAT MEN AND WOMEN WERE SEATED IN SEPARATE SECTIONS. WITH THIS ARRANGEMENT, PEOPLE'S ATTENTION IS NOT DIVERTED. SHE HERSELF ADMITTED THAT IN MIXED GATHERINGS MEN TEND TO STARE. SINCE MEN AND WOMEN WERE IN SEPARATE AREAS, ATTENTION WAS NOT DISTRACTED AND EVERYONE WAS ABLE TO CONCENTRATE ON ISLAM AND PRAYERS."

[His Holiness Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (May Allah be his Helper) 10 August 2018]

"IN JALSA UK, AN ENGLISH LADY SAID THAT FIRST I USED TO THINK THAT BY SEGREGATING WOMEN, IT WAS UNFAIR ON WOMEN BUT SPENDING THE WHOLE DAY WITH WOMEN MADE ME CONCLUDE THAT WOMEN'S FREEDOM IS BEING UPHELD A LOT BETTER LIKE THIS. WOMEN HAVE THEIR OWN WAY OF DOING THINGS AND ARE DOING IT THEMSELVES WITHOUT MEN INTERFERING. SHE SAID THAT...AFTER A SHORT WHILE, I FELT MORE LIBERATED IN THIS ATMOSPHERE."

[His Holiness Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (may Allah be his Helper), 6 June 2015, Germany]

"SONIA DELESALLE A REPORTER FOR THE FRENCH NEWSPAPER LIBÉRATION STATED THE FOLLOWING AFTER ATTENDING THE 2017 UK ANNUAL CONVENTION: 'WHEN I CAME I WAS QUITE CONCERNED THAT MEN AND WOMEN HAD BEEN SEGREGATED. HOWEVER, WHEN I VISITED THE VENUE, I NOTICED THAT, IN THE WOMEN'S AREA, IT WAS MEN WHO PREPARED THE FOOD FOR THEM. LATER, I SPENT SOME TIME IN THE WOMEN'S SECTION AND REALISED THAT, BECAUSE OF THEIR SEPARATE PREPARATIONS, THEY HAD MORE FREEDOM AND, ABOVE ALL, THEY WERE COMPLETELY INDEPENDENT AND DID EVERYTHING ACCORDING TO THEIR DECISIONS.'"

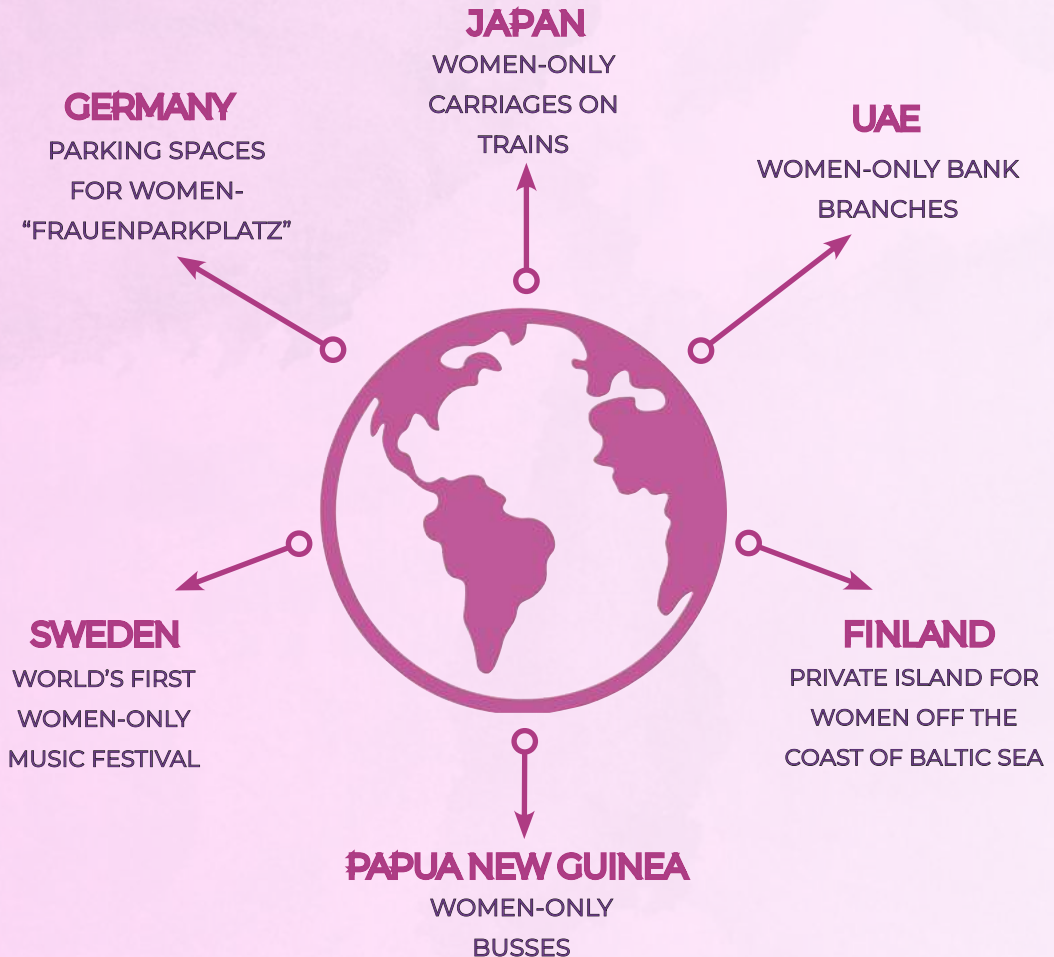
[His Holiness Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (may Allah be his Helper), Friday Sermon, 4 August 2017]

SEGREGATION AROUND THE WORLD

“THOSE OBJECTING TO THE ISLAMIC TEACHINGS THEMSELVES HAVE STARTED ACKNOWLEDGING NOW THAT AT SOME VENUES SEGREGATION OF MEN AND WOMEN IS A BETTER OPTION. IN SOME PLACES, SEPARATE ORGANISATIONS FOR WOMEN AND MEN ARE BEING TALKED ABOUT. SECULAR SOCIETY IS REALISING AS WELL THAT WOMEN AND MEN HAVE SEPARATE IDENTITIES AND IT IS BETTER IF THEY ARE SEPARATE. THOSE WHO LAID THE BLAME OF SEGREGATION ON US AND MADE OBJECTIONS HAVE NOW STARTED ADMITTING THAT SEGREGATION IS NEEDED IN SOME CIRCUMSTANCES.”

[His Holiness, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (May Allah be his Helper) 29 July 2017]

There are many examples of segregation already in existence around the globe. Female-only gyms, locker rooms, ride-sharing apps and women-only office spaces are becoming more and more popular as a means to safeguard and protect women.



“LET IT BE CRYSTAL CLEAR THAT IN NO RESPECT IS A WOMAN’S STATUS LESS THAN THAT OF A MAN”

[His Holiness Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (may Allah be his Helper), Worldwide Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, 25 February 2017]




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