

SPECIAL CENTENARY ISSUE | 2021/22

AN-NUSRAT

LAJNA IMA'ILLAH UK MAGAZINE





“Women’s progress leads to the progress of a religion. Remember that no religion can progress until and unless its women progress.”

(extract from Hazrat Musleh Maudoodi’s Address to ladies Jalsa Salana Qadian 1922) <https://www.mta.tv/musleh-maood/introduction-lajna-Ima'illah-uk>

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

AN NUSRAT

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 (sa) 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, InshAllah.

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GUIDANCE FROM HOLY QUR'AN

إِنَّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَالْقَانِتِينَ وَالْقَانِتَاتِ وَالصَّادِقِينَ
وَالصَّادِقَاتِ وَالصَّابِرِينَ وَالصَّابِرَاتِ وَالْخَشِيعِينَ وَالْخَشِيعَاتِ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقِينَ
وَالْمُتَصَدِّقَاتِ وَالصَّابِئِينَ وَالصَّابِئَاتِ وَالْحَفِظِينَ وَالْحَفِظَاتِ وَالذَّاكِرِينَ اللَّهَ
كَثِيرًا وَالذَّاكِرَاتِ أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٣٦﴾

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

(The Holy Qur'an 33:36)

<https://www.alislam.org/Qur'an/app/33:36>

Choose Your Wife for Her Religious Piety

NARRATED BY HADRAT ABU HURAIRAH
(RA):

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ،
عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ
وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ تُنْكَحُ الْمَرْأَةُ لِأَرْبَعٍ
لِمَالِهَا وَلِحَسَبِهَا وَجَمَالِهَا
وَلِدِينِهَا، فَاطْفَرُ بِذَاتِ الدِّينِ،
تَرِبَتْ يَدَاكَ

The Prophet of Allah (sa) said: “In marrying a woman, a man’s choice of a spouse is determined by the consideration of her wealth, her family and her physical beauty and her religious piety, but you should make your life happy, prosperous, and successful [by choosing a spouse] on account of her religious piety; otherwise, your hands will ever remain in the dust.”

(Sahih Muslim, Book of Breastfeeding, Chapter: It is recommended to marry one who is religiously committed)

Explanatory Notes

The Holy Prophet (sa) has, in this Hadith, after stating the considerations that determine the selection of a wife, enjoined on Muslims that their choice of a spouse should be governed primarily by consideration of religious piety and moral endowments. As a consequence of this, he says, their family lives will be happy and full of bliss. Otherwise, they may enjoy a temporary and superficially pleasant break, but they cannot have true and abiding felicity. This saying of the Holy Prophet (sa) is pregnant with deep wisdom, for, not only has it opened a way to basing the home life of Muslims on the happiest foundations, but it has also made provision for the well-being and security of the coming generations. But it is a great pity that leaving aside other nations, even the majority of Muslims either totally ignore the aspect of piety and morality while choosing a wife, or give greater consideration to other aspects than to the religious angle. One would fall for her beauty and shut his eyes to other aspects; another would be wholly won over on account of her wealth, while what constitutes the lasting foundation of happy home life are piety and moral qualities of the wife.

There are innumerable instances of men marrying wives for their beauty and comeliness of looks, but when their beauty wanes with time, as all beauty must wane, or on the sight of a prettier woman the unprincipled husband turns away from her, it so happens that after daily contact with the wife, the husband discovers some unpleasant aspects of her habits, leave alone a life of felicity, for the husband the home becomes real hell. The same is true in the case of family lineage, on account of which the wife often betrays an air of superiority and an exaggerated sense of pride vis-à-vis her husband, and this is fatal to family bliss.

Wealth, of course, is a passing thing. One possesses it today and loses it on the morrow. And often, a wife's wealth becomes a curse for the husband rather than a source of happiness. Truly, therefore, as the Holy Prophet (sa) has observed, the real foundations of family happiness and married bliss are laid on a wife's religious piety and her good moral qualities. Very unlucky is the person who is after short-lived toys and gilded things in preference to solid qualities. The lasting good effect that a virtuous and good-natured wife exercises on children is a permanent gift which no sensible person who, in addition to his personal comfort, also has the welfare of his generations at heart, can afford to ignore. Clearly, the early upbringing of children is in the hands of the mother, for in a family, the child is naturally more attached to the mother, and is more free with her, and spends more of his time with her, while the father, on account of his various other duties, cannot devote much attention to the children. The early training of the children is thus mainly the responsibility of the mother. If, therefore, the mother is pious and of high character, the children will naturally be well-grounded in good morals. But if, on the contrary, a woman has neither piety nor morals, she can never succeed in imbuing the



children with good morals and virtuous habits. The truth is that such a wife usually does not appreciate the value and necessity of religion and good morals.

The Hadith under discussion, however, does not mean that, in selecting a spouse, all other considerations should be totally ignored. All that it means is that piety and moral excellence should be preferred. The Holy Prophet (sa) has, on other occasions, drawn attention to other considerations as well, for they too are, to a certain extent, instinctive urges of human nature. As for instance, in spite of strict instructions about the observation of seclusion in purdah by women, the Holy Prophet (sa) used to advise that one may have a glimpse of his wife-to-be so that after marriage he is not unhappy on account of her features and looks. On another occasion when a woman called on him to have his advice in regard to her marriage, the Holy Prophet (sa) said that he would not advise her to marry a certain individual because he was poor and badly off and would not be able to bear her expenses, nor could he advise her to marry a certain another individual, for he was very high-handed, but she could marry one who, in his opinion, was suited to her circumstances. On another occasion, he said to the companions that women of the Quraish were excellent in respect to their loyalty to their husbands and love for their children. And on another occasion, the Holy Prophet (sa) advised marriage with women who are prolific in bearing children, so that he could feel happy on the Day of Resurrection over the numerousness of his followers. In short, he has drawn attention to other aspects as well in their proper perspective and within their due limits. But what he stressed most was that preference should, in any case, be given to religious and moral aspects; otherwise, one is bound to have one's hands ever soiled with dust and owe it entirely to himself. This is the golden teaching, observance of which can turn the homes of Muslims into cradles of bliss and felicity. Would that they understood.

<https://www.alislam.org/library/books/Forty-Gems-of-Beauty.pdf>
p.76

An Admonition for Women

In the present era certain women have also become involved in somewhat peculiar innovations in the faith. They deeply frown on the Islamic teaching of multiple marriages, as if they no longer consider it a part of faith. They are unaware that the Law of God contains every remedy. If the injunction of multiple marriages did not exist in Islam, such cases which compel men to enter a second marriage would remain unaddressed by the Shariah. Suppose a woman becomes insane or leprous or falls victim to any other disease which forever renders her disable or if such a circumstance arises where, although she is deserving of compassion, she loses her capacities. As the husband is also worthy of compassion since he is unable to live a life of celibacy, it would be cruel, in such a case, to the faculties of a man to prohibit him from entering into a second marriage. In actuality, it is in view of these factors that the divine law of God has left this door open for men. Similarly, in pressing circumstances, God has also opened an avenue for women. If a husband becomes incapacitated, a woman may ask a judge to allow her a Khula, which is also a form of divorce. The divine law of God can be likened to a pharmacy. If the pharmacy is unable to dispense medicine for every kind of ailment, then it will not operate for long. So contemplate, is it not true that men are at times confronted with circumstances that compel them towards a second marriage? What use is a divine law that does not contain a solution for all situations? According to the Gospel the only ground for divorce is adultery and the hundreds of other factors that might create severe hostility between a man and woman are ignored. Ultimately, this shortcoming has proved unsustainable for the Christian people and now, in the United States, it has become necessary that a law pertaining to divorce be enacted. So, reflect, where does this law now leave the Gospel? O women, do not despair.

WRITINGS OF THE
PROMISED MESSIAH (PEACE BE UPON HIM)

The book that you have been given does not require man-made amendments like the Gospel. It safeguards the rights of men just as it safeguards the rights of women. If a woman is displeased by her husband's multiple marriages, she is at liberty to seek a divorce through the authorities. If the divine law of God was ever to be considered complete, it was imperative that God furnished therein provision for all the diverse circumstances that were to confront the Muslims. O ye women, do not criticize God Almighty when your husbands intend to enter a second marriage. Rather, pray that you are protected from trials and tribulations. Undoubtedly, a husband who marries two wives and does not treat them equitably is most cruel and shall be held accountable. But, you on your part must not disobey God and thereby invite His wrath upon yourselves. Everyone is answerable for their deeds. If you become pious in the sight of God Almighty, your husband will be made pious also. Although religious law permits multiple marriages for men in view of various exigencies, there also exists for you the law of divine decree. If the law established by the Shariah should test your resolve, then turn towards the law of divine decree through prayer. For the law of divine decree overpowers even the law of Shariah. Become righteous and do not entirely attach your heart to this world and its attractions. Forgo your national pride and do not ridicule or mock another woman. Do not demand such things of your husbands as are beyond their capacity. Seek to enter your grave in a state that you are pure and chaste. Do not show laxity in fulfilling the obligations of God such as the prayer and Zakat etc. Be faithful to your husbands with heart and soul for much of their honour rests in your hands. So, fulfil this duty with such excellence that God counts you among the virtuous and obedient. Do not be extravagant and do not be wasteful with your husband's wealth. Do not be dishonest, do not steal, do not incessantly complain and do not slander other men and women.

<https://www.alislam.org/library/books/Noahs-Ark-Kashti-Nuh.pdf> p.129-131



EDITORIAL

Assalamo Alaikum dear readers,

This special commemorative issue of An-Nusrat is a celebration of 100 years of Lajna Ima'illah. 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. Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II^{ra} 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.¹

In a speech to the ladies in 1924, Huzoor ^{ra} 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 empower and guide women, the establishment of Lajna is of crucial importance.”²

In order to fully understand the great strides that Lajna Ima'illah has made to fulfil this vision of Hazrat Musleh Maud^{ra}, we have compiled articles on key personalities who played a vital role in the history of Lajna Ima'illah and who should be remembered and be an inspiration for generations of Lajna members to come. The article on the History of the establishment of Lajna Ima'illah has been outlined in the article by sheds light on the initial stages of this auxiliary.

One of the foundation stones of the success of this organisation is obedience to Khilafat and in that respect we have included an article on this subject which highlights our bond to khilafat beautifully.

We have also included articles outlining the history of the different departments within Lajna Ima'illah UK which show the gradual development and key milestones that were reached in the last 100 years of Lajna Ima'illah and in particular with regards to Lajna Ima'illah UK.

We hope our readers are inspired and motivated on reading this Special issue which is in itself a tribute to Lajna Ima'illah who have compiled and written all the articles contained in this magazine.

May Allah Taalah enable all our members, past and present, to excel in both spiritual and secular knowledge and contribute to the success of Lajna Ima'illah always. Ameen

Qanita Qureshi

(EDITOR AN-NUSRAT ENGLISH)

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1. Bushra Bashir, Mohsinaat, p.77
2. (Extract from Hazrat Musleh Maud's address to Ladies 1924) <https://www.alislam.org/video/documentary-introduction-to-lajna-Ima'illah-uk/>

An-Nusrat Special Edition

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MIRZA MASROOR AHMAD
HEAD OF THE AHMADIYYA COMMUNITY
IN ISLAM

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

نَحْمَدُهٗ وَنُصَلِّيْ عَلٰی رَسُوْلِهٖ الْكَرِیْمِ
وَ عَلٰی عَبْدِهٖ الْمَسِيْحِ الْمَوْعُوْدِ
خدا کے فضل اور رحم کے ساتھ
هو الناصر

Islamabad, UK
HM – 31-10-2022

Dear Sadr Sahiba Lajna Imaillah UK,

اَلسَّلَامُ عَلَیْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللّٰهِ وَبَرَکَاتُهٗ

I have received your letter requesting to send a message for the Centenary Edition of the An-Nusrat magazine of Lajna Imaillah UK.

On the occasion of the Lajna Centenary, my message for the readers of the magazine is of encouragement and as a reminder to ponder and stay dedicated to uphold the principles for which the organisation of Lajna Imaillah was established by the second Khalifa of the Promised Messiah (as), Hadhrat Musleh Mau'ud (ra) in 1922.

The organization of Lajna Imaillah has a significant and unique place in the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at as it was formed with the purpose of educating and training women and girls so they could play a vital role in the propagation of Islam and become torchbearers of peace and morality in the society. Among its various objectives, one key aim is to place a particular emphasis upon the education and the moral upbringing of children and future generations, so that they can be equipped with the knowledge and skills they need to make a revolutionary impact in the world. Service to humanity and promoting unity and brotherhood among members and the society at large is fundamental to the aims and objectives of Lajna Imaillah. It is essential to overlook one another's faults when working together and strive for reformation with patience and resolve, rather than increasing discord by false motives and indignation. It is important that in order to strengthen this concept and for it to eternally endure in the minds and hearts of the members, a consolidated effort be made to promote and enforce the foundations of our faith as set out by the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet of Islam (sa). It is incumbent

upon every Ahmadi woman that she endeavours to reflect upon these fundamentals so that she can understand and fully embrace the meaning of being a true Ahmadi. Self-reflection and self-evaluation is an important part to achieve this purpose and unless we take the necessary steps to inculcate these values in ourselves, we will not be able to play our due role in society. We must always remember that the success and progress of Lajna Imaillah lies in our ability to collectively work together to promote the Islamic values of love, peace and harmony, whilst ensuring that we fulfil the rights of worship towards our Creator and the rights towards our fellow human beings. Only then, will we be able to accomplish what we are meant to do and Lajna Imaillah will become a source of pride for the Jama'at.

This magazine of Lajna Imaillah will be beneficial and truly meaningful when it incorporates these values and principles. It should serve as a reminder for us to ponder over the objectives of Lajna Imaillah and to stay focused on the path, which will lead to the success of this organisation. The magazine should also act as a forum where Lajna can share their experiences and knowledge of religious, secular and contemporary subjects, so that they can learn from one another and continue to grow in the understanding of Islam.

In conclusion, I pray that Allah the Almighty grants Lajna Imaillah the ability to accomplish all that it has set out to do and that He continues to guide and support us in our efforts to achieve these noble objectives in an excellent manner. *Amin*

Wassalam

Yours sincerely,



MIRZA MASROOR AHMAD

Khalifatul-Masih V

Copy PS Office

Address delivered by Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba) to Lajna at the

National Lajna Ima'illah Ijtema UK on 3rd October 2010

After reciting *Tashahhud*, *Ta'awwuz* and *Surah Fatihah*, Huzur^(aba) said:

“As soon as the Holy Prophet Muhammad^(sa) claimed to be a prophet, the *kuffar* (disbelievers) of Makkah at first derided and ridiculed him. Then, when the *kuffar* saw that one by one, he was gathering their people in his fold, and that having taken his *Bai'at*, the disadvantaged and the slaves among them were worshipping the One God instead of their idols, the *kuffar* began hatching every possible scheme to stop the message and the work of the Holy Prophet (sa). They exceeded in their cruelty and oppression on his followers. None among the followers of the Holy Prophet (sa), neither man nor woman, remained safe from these vicious *kuffar*.

Islamic history relates the incident of a person whose legs were tied to two camels, which were made to run in opposite directions, tearing the body apart. This person was indeed a woman. Even though she was faced with a dreadful end, that determined woman – that woman who had pledged to always

remain steadfast on *Tauheed* (the Oneness of God) – bore the torment of her body being ripped apart, rather than be disloyal to her God.

In Makkah, we come across another incidence of cruelty when the entire family of Hazrat Yaasir^(ra) was being persecuted. On one such day when this family was being persecuted, the Holy Prophet (sa) happened to pass by. He saw that they were tied up with ropes and were being viciously beaten, so the Holy Prophet (sa) said, “O family of Yaasir, have patience! Allah the Exalted has made a house for you in Paradise; a house is being built for you in Paradise”.¹ During this episode of brutality, Hazrat Yaasir^(ra) was martyred, and Hazrat Sumayyah, his wife, was tortured into a terrible state. She was semi-unconscious; yet even in such a state, Abu Jahl struck a spear in her and martyred her most cruelly. Having taken a passport to the pleasure of Allah the Exalted, which Allah the Exalted had given them through His beloved Prophet (sa), both of them left this world and attained eternal life. Today, even fourteen hundred years later, their

sacrifices shine most resplendently in the history of Islam. Whenever you look into the history of Islam, their sacrifice will be mentioned.

Women are weak by nature, yet Islam has produced such women who have continued to offer sacrifices shoulder to shoulder with men. They have left behind such exemplary models for the stability and strength of *Tauheed*, which shall forever be a source of fortifying our faith for times to come.

Now see, it was during the Makkan period of the life of the Holy Prophet (sa) when the events of *Sha'ab-e-abi Taalib* took place. The Holy Prophet (sa), Hazrat Khadijah^(ra), his extended family and his followers spent two and half years giving continuous sacrifices. They endured constant hunger and thirst, and their children would cry with the pangs of hunger. Although the mothers were worried and agitated at the state of their children; and although they were sorrowful at seeing their children approach death due to hunger, they still could not even think of being disloyal to and turning away from that wealth of *Tauheed* and that living God they had attained. If the men were the embodiment of steadfastness and resolve, women did not lag behind them. Thus it was the spirit of sacrifice and strength of faith that Islam produced equally in both men and women.

Then at the command of Allah the Exalted, the migration to Madinah took place and another phase in the expansion of Islam began. Even there the enemies of Islam followed the

Muslims, and with an army, attacked Madinah. It was then that God Almighty gave the Holy Prophet (sa) permission to defend himself in order to stop the persecution of the enemies; commanding him that now was time to retaliate forcefully, because if the oppression was not stopped at that point, the tyranny would have escalated and continued to fuel fires against all other religions. And the perpetrators of this cruelty would have continued to raise the sword against those teachings that lay emphasis on the worship of the One God. Therefore, with the permission of Allah the Exalted, the Holy Prophet (sa) marshalled against the attackers of Madinah and stood up against them.

The first battle was fought at the grounds of Badr and subsequently, whenever the enemy found the opportunity, they fanned the flames of war against the Muslims. Despite the Muslims being smaller in numbers and short of weaponry, they continued to fight the enemy. During these battles, which were purely an affair for men, Muslim women played a full role. The courageous women fulfilled their duty, and fulfilled it superbly. The duties mostly undertaken by them were looking after the Muslim men who were fighting, supplying them with drinking water, tending to the wounds of the injured, moving the injured and the martyred from the battlefield and picking up and passing on arrows to the soldiers to use. Now, a woman, who is apparently seen as weak, can only accomplish this by keeping her wits intact and overcoming her weaknesses. Otherwise it is entirely impossible for her to accomplish this task. This is not all, in fact, I will relate some other incidents; and a particular

incident that I have selected for now is most significant – it shows that women, like men, also fought with the sword.

It was also the task of women to keep the army supplied with food, and to help men in digging graves for the martyrs. The women also played a great role in raising the spirits of the army. However, they did not accomplish this like the women of the *kuffar*, who sang songs and incited the men's passions in improper ways, but they did so by calling on their sense of honour for their faith and by vying with them to walk in the face of death.

Thus, women have a distinguished status in the history of Islam. When war was imposed on them, Muslim women fulfilled their roles fully in the conditions of war; otherwise, this was not the purpose of their lives. These were the female Companions of the Holy Prophet (sa) who, according to the prevalent conditions of the time, gave excellent advice to the *Nizaam-e-Jama'at* (system of the community) then established. The female Companions also accomplished academic feats. They set high standards of worship and they trained their children in such a way as to instil the realisation in them that they have to sacrifice their life, wealth, time and honour for the sake of their faith and their nation; and have to always be prepared for this sacrifice. Hence, their fearlessness and bravery was not the result of a warring or ignorant mentality, but they took these steps for the fulfilment of their duties and to achieve their objective. They were conscious of the fact that they had to discharge their obligations.

If today, after the appointment of the Promised Messiah^(as), the *jihad* of the sword has been abrogated, then instead the *jihad* of the pen has been announced by him. Along with the *jihad* of the pen, these days there is the electronic media. There are various sources through which Islam and Ahmadiyyat is attacked. Attacks are being launched on the person of the Holy Prophet (sa), on the Holy Qur'an and on the Being of Allah the Exalted. Today the number of these attacks has increased from before. While there is a need for men to use their energy and capabilities to repel these attacks, women too need to employ all their energy and capabilities for this.

The Internet, Facebook and other websites should not be accessed only for enjoyment, passing time and fun, but rather with heartfelt compassion and zeal, like the women of early Islam did, who understood their responsibility and tried to undertake their obligations and even put their lives at stake for the objective.

Now is the time to put one's life at stake. It is the time to utilise all of one's capabilities to obliterate and bring to naught every attack of the opponent. Girls and educated women should present themselves to the administration of the Jama'at for this.

As said earlier, I will present some examples of women who took part in *jihad*. I have chosen one well-known example, which I will present before you here so you know how these women stood persistently in defence of Islam. You have heard examples of sacrifice of

life for the establishment of *Tauheed*. But there are also such examples of what was done for the defence of Islam; defence of the religion that establishes the Oneness of God and for the protection of the Holy Prophet (sa) with one's life. How these people, these women, protected the Holy Prophet (sa) by putting their lives on the line and stood by him, resolute and staunch.

First of all, I will present the example of Hazrat Umme Ammaarah^(ra). Hazrat Umme Ammaarah^(ra) was among those early fortunate women of Madinah who went to Makkah and took part in *Bai'at-e-Aqabah Saaniah* (Second Oath of Allegiance at Aqabah). This fortunate convoy consisted of 72 men and 2 women, one of whom was Umme Ammaarah Nusaibah^(ra) binte Ka'ab and the other was Umme Asmaa binte Umar bin Adiy^(ra). Hazrat Umme Ammaarah^(ra) relates the incident of her *Bai'at*: "When *Bai'at* was taken from the men, my husband submitted, 'O Prophet of God, these two ladies are also here to take *Bai'at*.' He replied, 'Alright, their *Bai'at* will also be accepted on the same conditions as was taken by the men'. As women's *Bai'at* is not taken holding their hands, their *Bai'at* has been accepted." ²

Among her achievements are that apart from supplying drinking water to and dressing wounds of the injured during the battle of Uhud, she also demonstrated such skilled swordsmanship that astonished the world. The Holy Prophet (sa) said, "At that time whenever I looked, to my right or to my left, I found Umme Ammaarah continuously fighting to defend me." ³

Hazrat Umme Ammaarah^(ra) relates, "A very critical time came during the battle of Uhud when, due to the haste of Muslims, the tables were turned in the battle and Muslims had to retreat. I stood beside the Holy Prophet (sa) along with my husband and both sons, Abdullah and Habib, in order to protect him and we started repelling all the attacks that came from every direction at this critical time. In particular, the Holy Prophet (sa) was being targeted. I had a sword in one hand and a shield in the other. Had the enemy not been on horseback, we would not have let even a single one of them escape alive. An enemy on horseback attacked me with his sword but I defended with my shield and the enemy could not do anything. As he turned around, taking advantage, I promptly struck the back of his horse. The forceful strike cut the back of the horse and it fell along with its rider. Seeing this, the Holy Prophet (sa) said in a powerful voice, 'Abdullah bin Umme Ammaarah! Give a hand to Umme Ammaarah, your mother'. He came to me and with my help we finished that opponent off." ⁴

Similarly, her son relates an incident from the battle of Uhud, "When the enemy attacked forcefully, the *Mujahedeen* (Muslims fighters) dispersed. I, along with my mother came closer to the Holy Prophet (sa) and we would fend off the attacks whenever they came from any direction." Hazrat Umme Ammaarah^(ra)'s shoulder was injured by a sword blow and was bleeding. The Holy Prophet (sa) instructed her son to dress her shoulder wound and also said "your entire family is great; may Allah shower His mercy on you." He also prayed, "O Allah! Make this family my

companions in Paradise.” The family was overjoyed at hearing this and engaged in the battle with even more passion and enthusiasm in the protection of the Holy Prophet (sa).⁵

During the battle, Hazrat Umme Ammaarah^(ra) noticed that her son’s hand was badly injured. She wrapped it and then said, “Go, my son, show courage and attack the enemy once again. Do not slow down because of these wounds.” The Holy Prophet (sa) once again highly praised her courage.⁶

Hazrat Umme Ammaarah^(ra) was standing with the Holy Prophet (sa) with her sword in her hand when the idolater who had wounded her son came in view. The Holy Prophet (sa) said, “The one who injured your son is here again.” As soon as she saw him, Hazrat Umme Ammaarah^(ra) swung at him with her sword, his leg was cut and as he fell down the rest of the *Mujahedeen* took hold of him. The Holy Prophet (sa) once again praised her at this juncture.⁷

Hazrat Umar^(ra) said that “I have myself heard the Holy Prophet (sa) say that, ‘when I looked to my left and my right during the Battle of Uhud, I saw Umme Ammaarah^(ra) fighting to defend me.’”⁸ Hazrat Umme Ammaarah^(ra) sustained almost twelve wounds on her body. Her shoulder wound was the deepest and had to be treated for almost a year. The person who had struck her shoulder had delivered a very dangerous blow, and she fell unconscious because of it. However, when she regained consciousness, the first question she asked was “How is the Holy Prophet (sa)?” She neither asked about her sons

nor her husband. When she was told that the Holy Prophet (sa) was safe and sound, her spontaneous response was to thank God Almighty.⁹

In addition to the Battle of Hunain and the Victory of Makkah, Hazrat Umme Ammaarah^(ra) also participated in the battle against Musaylimah Kazzab. Besides this, she participated in the battle of Yamama. While fighting during this battle, one of her hands was cut and she received eleven wounds on her body. Her son was martyred in this battle. Hazrat Umme Ammaarah^(ra) also had the privilege to be participate in the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah, and participated in the *Bai’at-e-Rizwaan* that was taken prior to this. The Holy Prophet (sa) said that Allah the Exalted proclaimed that all the people who participated in *Bai’at-e-Rizwaan* would go to Paradise.

She relates, “We left Madinah in the leadership of the Holy Prophet (sa) in order to perform the *Umrah*. We were stopped at a place called Hudaibiyyah, near Makkah. The Quraish did not want Muslims to enter Makkah. Hazrat Usman bin Affan^(ra) was sent as an envoy to Makkah. There was a delay in his return and rumour circulated that he had been martyred. The Holy Prophet (sa) sat under the shade of a tree and started to take the *Bai’at*. He said that Allah the Exalted had commanded him to take the *Bai’at*. Since the journey had been undertaken with the intention of performing the *Umrah*, most people did not have any weapons.” Hazrat Umme Ammaarah^(ra) relates, “they grabbed hold of whatever weapon they had. I got hold of a stick. I also had a knife which I tied around my waist, so that if any

enemy were to attack, I could fight them.”¹⁰

Hazrat Umme Ammaarah^(ra) also demonstrated great bravery and valour in the battle of Hunain. She relates, “A person from the Banu Hawazin (a tribe) entered the battlefield on camelback waving a flag. As soon as the opportunity arose, I struck the back of the camel most forcefully. The camel stumbled and fell along with its rider. I struck the falling rider so powerfully that he could not get up.”¹¹

The Holy Prophet (sa) sent her son as his representative to Musaylimah Kazzab. Totally violating diplomatic etiquette, Musaylimah Kazzab had him tied to a pillar, and after putting him through vulgar interrogation; he cut off one body part after another and martyred him. When Umme Ammaarah^(ra) heard the news of her son’s martyrdom, she bore the grief with supreme patience and steadfastness. On this, the Holy Prophet (sa) prayed profusely for her. When Musaylimah Kazzab was murdered, Umme Ammaarah^(ra)’s own arm was cut, but she was not as distressed over her arm being cut as she was happy over Musaylimah Kazzab being hell-bound.

Once, during the Khilafat of Hazrat Umar bin Khattaab^(ra), some very fine shawls were brought to him. One of these shawls was large and of very good quality. It was suggested to Hazrat Umar^(ra) that this shawl should be given to Safiyyah binte Abi Ubaid^(ra), the wife of Abdullah bin Umar^(ra), who was his daughter-in-law. He replied, “This shawl will be given to the lady who is much

better than Safiyyah. I have heard praise of that woman from the blessed lips of the Holy Prophet (sa).” Following this, the shawl was presented to Hazrat Umme Ammaarah^(ra).¹²

Hazrat Umme Ammaarah^(ra) did not just take part in battles, but she promptly came to Madinah after her *Bai’at* and also did a great deal of work for *tabligh* (the propagation of the faith) and towards *Tarbiyyat* (moral training and education) and performed a major role in this.

Thus, Umme Ammaarah^(ra) is someone who displayed amazing examples of courage and bravery – who, at an extremely dangerous state during battle, when only a few Muslims had remained around the Holy Prophet (sa), performed a remarkable role along with her husband and sons.

If amongst men, the example of Hazrat Talha^(ra) is given when he related that “On the day of the battle of Uhud, I stopped each arrow aimed toward the Holy Prophet (sa) with my hand and would not let myself utter the slightest cry in pain, lest it caused my hand to shake, thereby allowing an arrow to reach the Holy Prophet (sa)” – then among women, and representing women, Hazrat Umme Ammaarah^(ra) fulfilled the duty of protecting the Holy Prophet (sa) as well. She decided that on that day her biggest objective was to protect the Holy Prophet (sa), “If my sons are martyred, if my husband is martyred, if I have to sacrifice my own life, I will make these sacrifices, but I have to protect the Holy Prophet (sa) at all cost.”

Today, though we do not have the physical presence of the Holy Prophet (sa), the spirit of Holy Prophet (sa) and the teachings of Islam are still alive. Therefore, it is the job of every woman today to become Umme Ammaarah^(ra) and respond to every allegation made against the person of the Holy Prophet (sa) and Islam and thus try to fulfil her obligations towards the defence of his person and Islam.

I have given one example of Hazrat Umme Ammaarah^(ra). In Islam, during the life of the Holy Prophet (sa), and afterwards, there were women who presented themselves for every sacrifice for the cause of faith. At many stages of the battle of Qadisiyyah women also played a huge role.

Hence today, when Islam is under attack in every part of the world, and unfortunately even those who call themselves Muslims are fuelling these attacks because of their animosity for the Imam of the Age, we do not need just one Umme Ammaarah^(ra), rather, thousands of Umme Ammaarah's are needed to defend and protect the person of the Holy Prophet (sa) and Islam!

The young generation of today is proficient in the use of new electronic means of communication. Thus I also say this to the youth; come forward and engage in this *jihad*! Set aside your personal desires. Those who are *Waaqifat-e-Nau* (girls of the *Waqfe Nau* scheme) should try and fulfil their obligation of being *Waqfe Nau*. Those who were not *Waaqifat-e-Nau* should deliver their responsibilities of being an

Ahmadi and a true Muslim. Learn the faith and spread it. Set your personal desires completely aside.

Even today, the objections of the enemies are nothing new. These are the very same old objections that have been always been raised. They only present them by changing the wording. And all of these objections have been answered by the Promised Messiah^(as). Therefore, our girls and women should read the books of the Promised Messiah^(as) or extracts for which English translation is available. Those who cannot read Urdu should read in English. Apart from this, try to seek additional knowledge and respond to the allegations that are raised today against Islam and the Holy Prophet (sa). Poise yourself against the enemy like an unsheathed sword.

Now, I give you an example, of Hazrat Umme Salmah Asmaa^(ra); she was a participant in the *Bai'at-e-Rizwaan*. As I have explained, this was the pledge that was taken before the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah in response to the rumours about the martyrdom of Hazrat Usman^(ra). The name of this pledge signifies that Allah the Exalted was pleased with the people who participated in it for they had taken a new covenant for the sake of Allah the Exalted.

Hazrat Umme Salmah^(ra) had these special qualities: she was very patient, tolerant, had the highest level of faith and trust in Allah and she was a lady enhanced in *Taqwa* and fear of Allah. She was an embodiment of knowledge and wisdom. She was most courageous and brave. She had a most distinguished

standing in eloquence and articulacy and was known with the title of '*Khatibatun-Nisaa*' amongst women, meaning, 'the best of female speakers'. She also took part in wars; and in the battle of Yarmouk she killed nine Romans with just her stick. Her manner of speaking was very careful and measured; her language was very sweet; whoever listened to her speak could not remain unimpressed.

Once she came to pay a visit to the Holy Prophet (sa). This is a well-known incident that is related in Hadith in which she asked about the status of women. She arrived and said, "Today, I have come before you as a representative of women. Allah the Exalted has sent you as a Prophet for both women and men. We, women, have also had the honour of believing in you and following you. Our responsibilities are confined to our homes. We are continuously absorbed in serving our husbands. Our other responsibilities include the upbringing of our children and looking after our homes. Men have the opportunity to take part in Friday Prayers, congregational Prayers, funeral Prayers and *jihad*. And because of these good acts they surpass us in reaping blessings. When they leave for *jihad*, we look after their property and possessions. O Prophet of Allah! Are we also an equal partner to them in attaining reward for their good deeds?"

The Holy Prophet (sa) liked her manner of speech very much and said to the Companions, "Can anyone represent women better than this?" The Companions replied, "We have never heard such an eloquent speech before."

The Holy Prophet (sa) addressed her and said, "Go and convey my message to the women whom you represent. Your good conduct towards your husbands, keeping their happiness in view and following them is so much liked by Allah the Exalted that He gives such eminent women the same reward and blessings as He has mentioned for men."¹³

So these were also those fortunate men who followed the path of *Taqwa* and gave precedence to the pleasure of Allah the Exalted, and fulfilled their duties owed to their wives and children. Hazrat Asmaa^(ra) returned happily with this message and passed this response on to the women.

Hence, this is the attitude of wives who adhere to *Taqwa*. They faithfully fulfil their responsibilities, perform their obligations with sincerity and focus in the best possible manner on the upbringing of their children. The task of the girls is to pay attention to their religious education along with their secular education. Do not just remain focused on fashion. There are women and girls present whose desire is to somehow please God the Exalted and be counted among those women who have been granted the high status by Allah Almighty that He is pleased with them.

Then there is an incident of Hazrat Umme Waraqah bint Abdullah^(ra). She was one of the *Ansaar* (a tribe) women. She was a *hafiz* of the Holy Qur'an (one who has memorised the entire Holy Qur'an); she was a scholar and a wise thinker. Her knowledge and wisdom was of a high level. She was devout in the

worship of God, and had a high status in righteousness and *Taqwa*. Her worship of God was so renowned that it was said that she used to spend most part of the night in worship. She would recite the Holy Qur'an with beautiful diction. She had a very deep ability to reflect, analyse and contemplate the verses of the Holy Qur'an.

It is written about Hazrat Umme Waraqah Ansaariyyah^(ra), that when the announcement to leave for the battle of Badr was made, she came to see the Holy Prophet (sa) and said "O Prophet of Allah! Grant me permission to participate in battle. I will perform the duty of dressing the wounds of the injured and of providing water to the thirsty. It is my heartfelt desire that Allah the Exalted grants me a martyr's death."

When the Holy Prophet (sa) saw this passion, desire and enthusiasm, he said, "Stay at your home. God will grant you the status of martyrdom right there." With this message, Hazrat Umme Waraqah^(ra) returned home happily. It used to happen at times that the Holy Prophet (sa) would visit her home with his Companions saying, "Let us go to the home of the living martyr today." However, the words of the Holy Prophet (sa) were fulfilled in that Hazrat Umme Waraqah^(ra) had two slaves, one male and one female. She had said to these slaves that upon her death, they would be freed. The two slaves colluded and wondered, "To what age and how long would she live to and how long will it be before we obtain our freedom?" So one night they took the opportunity and martyred her. Thus, the words of the

Holy Prophet (sa) about her being martyred at her home were also fulfilled. Anyway, those two slaves were later caught.¹⁴

Then there is Hazrat Fatimah bint Khattab^(ra), who became the source of guidance for her brother and became the reason of him accepting Islam. Despite the harshness of her brother and being badly hurt by his hands, she did not move an inch from the beautiful teachings of Islam. In the end, it was her brother who had to give in, and after listening to the beautiful teachings of the Holy Qur'an, he also joined the fold of Islam. This was the sister of Hazrat Umar^(ra).

In short, there are innumerable incidents of these female Companions who made history in terms of their love of religion, love of Allah and love of the Prophet (sa) of Allah the Exalted. They vied with each other to excel in the worship of God as well as fully participated in physical *jihad*. They also participated in financial sacrifices enthusiastically as well as set high examples of courage and resolve having sacrificed their husbands and children. They also fully participated in *tabligh* of religion as well as played a full role in learning and teaching religious issues.

It was Hazrat 'A'ishah^(ra) alone who attained that status that she was hailed as one who could teach half of religion.

In short, Muslim women have a role to play in every field. And these women filled their children's hearts with love of

religion with such intensity that they were prepared to give every sacrifice.

Thus, today women who have joined the Muslims of the latter-days must also set the same example. Then alone will they have fulfilled their pledge; then alone will they have honoured their dues. Those women who received *Tarbiyyat* (moral training and education) directly from the Promised Messiah^(as) also tried to attain standards of sacrifice and worship of God. We have many of their examples before us as well.

Therefore, we should be mindful that keeping these examples in view, we have to appoint guides and targets for ourselves. We should realise that in this regard we need to make a greater effort than before in the current age. With the grace of Allah the Exalted, this spirit is still alive today, but reminders are needed to draw attention to it so that a majority of us become those who give sacrifices and worship God and enhance the standard of our *Taqwa*.

May it never be that our children forget this spirit, swayed by the worldly current and by the idle practices and vulgarity of the times. This is why the organisation of *Lajna Ima'illah* was established, so that under the auspices of this organisation, women could facilitate their spiritual as well as moral development and continue to make efforts to develop a living connection with Allah the Exalted; so that not only would they be just prepared to give every sacrifice for the establishment of *Tauheed*, rather, they would, in fact, continue to give sacrifices and would

also keep on infusing this spirit in the next generation.

This enthusiasm and passion has indeed increased due to the current persecution in Pakistan, but for the outside countries, it should not be of temporary nature. Pakistani Ahmadis are not alone in facing persecution; many other countries like Indonesia, Bangladesh and some Arab countries face very adverse conditions. Ahmadis there are strengthening in their belief due to these adverse conditions and are trying to demonstrate models of sincerity more than ever. They have developed religious strength and a special connection with their faith. However, those living elsewhere should also make full efforts to continue to enhance their connection of sincerity and loyalty.

I have mentioned before that I am receiving letters on this subject continuously, that due to the adverse situation in Pakistan, women are stopped from coming to the mosques and the organisation of Lajna has kept a low profile in terms of their activities, which have been restricted a great deal. These women ask “Is a woman’s life more precious than the life of a man? Does a woman not have the right to be martyred? We should be given permission to conduct our activities freely. And we are not worried – if we have to lose our life – so be it.” In fact, they write that, “men probably have greater significance than us as they earn the livelihood for the family.” In any case, women have great importance as well. It is the women who are the trainers and educators of the next generation.

We should remember, and I also give message to those women, that it is also very important to proceed sensibly. A woman's honour, chastity and sanctity are extremely important and it is the task of men to safeguard them. This is the reason we are taking these precautions.

However, when the need arises, women should not be frightened. Then they should display those models that the early Muslims and female Companions displayed! Even in this age, we find some similar examples. I receive letters saying "We too will become 'Khaulah' and demonstrate her model," and that "we too will become 'Umme Ammaarah' and demonstrate her model." May Allah always keep this enthusiasm alive. However, it is essential to abide by the

precautions that are being taken.

Here where you live in freedom you should utilise your freedom in a manner that every woman and every girl should feel that "Today the responsibility of defending Islam and the Holy Prophet (sa) is mine and only mine," and that "I have to try my very best, using all my capabilities and strengths, to duly fulfil the responsibility of providing this safeguard. I have to increase in knowledge and spirituality, and I will not rest in peace until I establish the flag of Islam all over the world."

May Allah enable all of us to do this."

(Huzur^(aba) concluded his address with silent prayers)

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Speech by *Sadr Lajna UK*

on the occasion of Majlis-e-Shura UK 2022

Bismillahi Rahmani Raheem

Assalamo Alaikum my dear sisters,

We have come to the conclusion of our blessed Majlis-e-Shura where we truly discussed matters with mutual consultation, Alhamdulillah.

We also know that Shura gives us an opportunity to remember the blessings of Allah the Almighty on His Jamaat. Lajna Ima'illah UK has been the recipient of these in abundance too, Alhamdulillah.

I strongly believe that after Allah's Mercy and Grace that He bestows on us, it is down to the hard work of local Sadrs, local amla members, Shura delegates, and of course all lajna members that we see a collective result. It is very much faith inspiring. We can devise plans, syllabus, and give targets to you. It is easy for us to do, but you are the ones who have to deliver. And you do that within your limited resources, and you continue to motivate and engage your members. Of course there is always room for improvement and by no means are we perfect, far from it ; but Alhamdulillah it is an honour to serve Lajna Ima'illah UK.

Alhamdulillah, Lajna year 21-22 was a very blessed year indeed, as we saw some post-COVID normality in our lives and Lajna work. Our mosques opened up for salat and we held many face-to-face events this year.

I would like to thank all National Amla and their teams for their tireless work throughout the year. Their support to me and to you is immense and for that I am extremely grateful. I would also like to thank Regional Sadrs for always giving me valuable support and advice.

On this occasion of Shura, I would like to give an update on 'Aisha Maternity Hospital' as well. Alhamdulillah, Lajna members have donated generously towards this scheme. I wish I had a complete hospital by now, but due to COVID and supply issues of material we are behind our schedule. At the moment only the basement has been completed, and the work has started on the ground floor.

Alhamdulillah, Lajna Ima'illah UK has thrived over the last decades under the guidance of Khilafat. I don't think we can ever fully comprehend the blessing that we have and we can never pay its rightful due either. But one way of trying towards it is to always pray fervently for our beloved Khalifa (aba), and another way is to listen to him and pay full attention to his words and act upon them. We all feel inspired by Huzoor-e-Anwar's (aba) Friday sermons, and his addresses, and his virtual classes, and other Q&A's. But if the inspiration is only to provide us warmth in our hearts and tears in our eyes, but does not lead to any positive change in ourselves, our conduct, or our deeds,



then we have not understood the status of Khilafat, nor have we fulfilled our responsibility towards it.

In his recent address to Lajna Ima'illah UK Ijtema, Huzoor-e-Anwar (aba), while addressing us in the same space as us, gave us a huge responsibility. Yes, as a nizam we would work on it InshAllah as you heard in the Shura proposal too, but this revolution cannot be brought if individual effort is not there. It is the combination of collective and individual that makes any of our efforts more fruitful. And we do so under this beautiful umbrella of Lajna Ima'illah, where we help each other and strive together to reach that goal.

May Allah enable us to bring that spiritual revolution in this world, and may Lajna Ima'illah UK be at the forefront when this happens, InshAllah.

It is very important to revisit the aims and objectives of Lajna Ima'illah. I hope and pray that Shura delegates have not just enjoyed the beauty of these posters but they have actually read all these aims and objectives too. I feel we should memorize them. I feel we can never repeat them enough. So please bear with me while I go over the aims and objectives that Hazrat Musleh Maud (ra) gave Lajna Ima'illah at its foundation.

RULES & REGULATIONS OF LAJNA IMA'ILLAH SILSILA ALIYA AHMADIYYA

THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Instructions of Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II (ra) : The aims and objectives of Lajna Ima'illah as laid down by Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II (ra)

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.

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.

THROUGH THE EFFORTS OF OUR WOMEN

Similarly, 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 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 Qur'an, The Holy Prophet (sa) 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 (sa), 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."

As I said yesterday, the year 1922 holds another significance in the history of the jamaat, and that is that Majlis-e-Shura was formally established within the jamaat.

Hazrat Musleh Maud (ra) put forward its guidelines and how to conduct it in detail in the first meeting that was held in 1922. The history of Shura is also very significant and important as this blessed institute has evolved under the guidance of Khulafa-e-Ahmadiyyat.

We always feel so inspired by the fact that in 1922, the time when many women in the so-called Western world didn't have a voice or were fighting for their rights to be established, the women's auxilliary was the first to be founded. But I wanted to share the interesting story about women's participation in Majlis-e-Shura, and that is jamaat's Majlis-e-Shura, not lajna's.

In 1928, so only 6 years after Shura was established in our jamaat, a proposal was tabled regarding the establishment of a women's hostel in Qadian. The sub-committee accepted the proposal but said it should only be opened if there were enough financial resources and female staff. Upon listening to this discussion, Hazrat Musleh Maud (ra) said that the matter under discussion

only concerned women and they deserve to be heard on this issue. In that Shura women were present, but behind the screen they could only listen to the proceedings of the Shura and they couldn't speak. Hazrat Musleh Maud (ra) invited them to speak on this issue. After consultation amongst themselves, two women spoke, and the first one was one of the 14 founding members of Lajna Ima'illah, Ustani Maimoona Sofia Begum Sahiba, and she said :

“Assalamo Alaikum. On behalf of my sister ladies I wish to say that we are willing to pay the expenses for establishing the school. Secondly, we are willing to work for the school in any way we can. You can freely entrust to us any task, and we will do it willingly.....”

The daughter of Molvi Zulfiqar Ali Khan Sahib also spoke in its favour.

Then Hazrat Musleh Maud (ra) asked if the hostel should be built straight away, or as the sub-committee has recommended to wait until all the essential items were procured. Ustani Maimoona Sofia Begum Sahiba stood up once again and said :

“On behalf of the sisters, I wish to say we are willing to make the financial contributions but we can wait until competent teachers are available from outside or are trained here.”

I find this very moving that while making history, in speaking in the

jamaat Majlis-e-Shura for the very first time those women did not shy away from financial sacrifice, even though the task at hand was so huge.

Hazrat Musleh Maud (ra) didn't accept their suggestion that only women should pay towards this. He said that it would generate the feeling that men are not doing or wish to do anything for women. He said men should contribute for this project and tell the women that we are prepared to do the utmost for their education.

In this closing address to this Majlis-e-Shura in 1928, Hazrat Musleh Maud (ra) asked Majlis-e-Mushawarat to have this proposal in the agenda of next year's Shura, that women should have representation in Majlis-e-Shura. He said that this did not stem from the Shura discussion earlier but he had already thought about it. He wanted eminent scholars in the jamaat to discuss women's representation in Majlis-e-Shura. He said:

“When Islam has given men and women equal rights in certain issues why should they not be consulted in important issues as well.”

So, between that Shura in 1928 and the next one of 1929, lajna members wrote articles in various jamaat newspapers putting their point across that they want to contribute towards its. And they gave in writing their wish to be included. After listening to the discussion of the sub-committee, Hazrat Musleh Maud (ra) invited women to say something again.

This has been very beautifully narrated by Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV (rh) in a



Shura in 1982. He said:

“He invited the women to speak but no one spoke, then he felt that perhaps men would not like to hear the voice of their own women, so he said women of his own family may speak if they wished. Still silence reigned. He then said, look you are making history for all times to come, if you shy away from exercising your right while men are speaking in your favour you will prove that you are not competent for this task.

Then Ustani Maimoona Sofia Begum Sahiba spoke again in favour of women’s representation.”

The purpose of telling this important part of our history to our Lajna, and especially our younger generation, is that they feel empowered by the fact that Islam has established concrete rights for them. The Holy Prophet (sa) was the champion of women’s rights and following his footsteps the Promised Messiah (as) and his Khulafa have always established the rights of women, and fought to establish them.

I would like to end the Shura with the quote of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih el Khamis (aba) whilst speaking to Shura delegates:

“I ask you again to revive your sensitivities towards your responsibilities. Understand what I am saying. Spend your time during the Shura whether you are in a session or free, seeking help of God. When you return to your jamaat there should be a visible transformation in you. Remember that neither your cleverness nor your wit or knowledge is going to make Ahmadiyyat prevail or bring about revolution. If there is going to be a change in the world it will be through prayers and following the righteous path which will absorb the blessings and favour of Allah.”



The Aims and Objectives of **Lajna Ima'illah**

The aims and objectives of Lajna Ima'illah as laid down by Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II (ra) 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 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:

1. Women should strive together to enhance their knowledge and spread the knowledge they have attained to others.
2. A body be established for this purpose so that this work can be carried out systematically.
3. Certain rules and regulations are formulated to run this body which should be binding on all the members.
4. The rules and regulations should conform to Islam as interpreted by Silsila Aliya Ahmadiyya and be contributory to its progress and strength.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. You shall endeavour to be constantly active in promoting unity among the Jamaat as enjoined upon every Muslim by the Holy Qur'an, The Holy Prophet (sa) and the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) and you should always be prepared to offer every sacrifice for this cause.
9. 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.
10. 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 (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.
11. 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

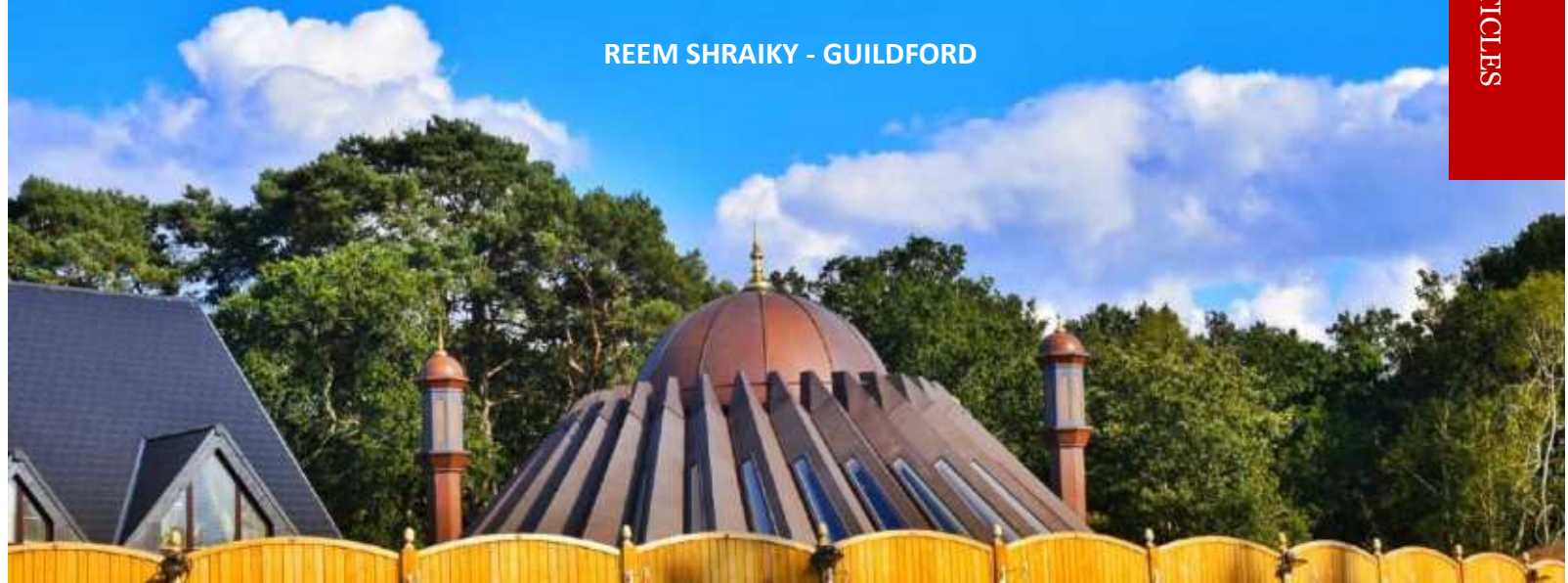
should resentment and anger be allowed to create differences and divisions amongst you.

12. 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.
13. 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.
14. 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.
15. 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.
16. 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.
17. 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."¹

[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)

Love & Obedience to Khilafat

REEM SHRAIKY - GUILDFORD



Perhaps most of the readers of my pieces were born under the light of Khilafat; I do not know how many of them appreciated this blessing from day one, or how many appreciated it only upon reaching a certain stage in their lives! What I am sure about is that the one who was born in darkness cannot help but to look with envy at those born in the light! Life in the light is not the same as living in darkness.

Thus, do not fixate your eyes on the world and its material, thinking that happiness lies in its lap!

Furthermore, since Khilafat takes the place of Prophethood and the Caliph is the rope of Allah which we should hold fast to, then all our duties towards the Prophet (sa) are likewise due towards the Khalifa (caliph). Islam taught us that we must obey the Caliphs in the same manner we obey the Prophet (sa).

The Holy Prophet (sa) said:

‘Whoever among you lives will see great conflict. I urge you to adhere to what you know of my sunnah and the sunnah of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, and cling stubbornly to it. And you must obey, even if your leader is a slave. For the true believer is like a camel with a ring in its nose; wherever it is driven, it complies.’¹

Obedience is the basis of Islam and in fact, Allah Himself has declared that He has not sent a Messenger 'but that he should be obeyed'. ²

Allah the Almighty has explained that obedience to the Prophet (sa) is obedience to Him, and that swearing allegiance to the Prophet (sa) is indeed swearing allegiance to Allah.

'Whoso obeys the Messenger obeys Allah indeed' ³

'Verily, those who swear allegiance to thee indeed swear allegiance to Allah. The hand of Allah is over their hands'. ⁴

'Swearing allegiance' in Arabic is *bai'at*, which derives from the word *bai'* which means 'to sell'; this term is mentioned in the verse of the Holy Qur'an which states:

'Surely, Allah has purchased of the believers their persons and their property in return for the Garden they shall have' ⁵

Therefore, by swearing allegiance the believer 'sells' the world and all that is in it and 'buys' the hereafter. In other words, it means he or she will dedicate his or her whole life for God Almighty by being obedient to His messenger and His Caliphs.

Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) said: "To take *bai'at* means handing over your life to Almighty Allah'. ⁶

The Holy Prophet (sa) said: "The one who dies without having sworn allegiance will die the death of the one belonging to the time of Ignorance." ⁷

Once, the first Caliph of Promised Messiah (peace be upon him), Hazrat Hakim Maulvi Nooruddin (ra), was asked 'what has the pledge of allegiance for the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) added to you when you were righteous before?' (i.e. he was already righteous before accepting Ahmadiyyat). He said: 'I benefited a lot, most importantly, I was seeing the Holy Prophet (sa) and blessing be upon him) in dreams before, but now I am seeing him upon awakening too!"

Thus, if the very first Caliph of the Ahmadiyya Khilafat, the righteous scholar, saint, and friend of Allah needed the pledge of allegiance, then how about us ordinary and sinful ones? How much do we need this pledge? How much do we need the *Muzakki* (purifier) who takes us towards the Heavens of this world and the Hereafter, who guides us towards the right path and teaches us the Book and wisdom?

‘He it is Who has raised among the Unlettered *people* a Messenger from among themselves who recites unto them His Signs, and purifies them, and teaches them the Book and wisdom, although they had been, before, in manifest misguidance’⁸

In his special message addressed to Ahmadiis on 11th May 2003, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (aba), the worldwide head of Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, said:

‘Keep a link of love, sincerity and devotion with Khilafat, make your zeal for obedience to Khilafat everlasting. Develop the fervour of your love for it to such an extent that all other relationships appear trivial compared to it. All blessings are in loyalty to the Imam and this alone is a shield for you against all trouble and strife. Hence Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II (ra) said:

“Just as only that branch is fruit-bearing that is attached to a tree and a severed branch that is cut off from a tree cannot bear fruit, similarly only that person can serve the Community beneficially who is devoted to the Imam. One who does not keep a bond with the Imam, despite having all the knowledge of the world, cannot be of any useful help.”

So, if you aim to progress and be triumphant over the world, then my advice to you and my message for you is to maintain a bond with Khilafat and to firmly hold onto this cord of Allah. All our advancements are inherently dependent on a bond with Khilafat. May Allah help and support you and may He enable you to be inspired to a supreme sense of sincerity and devotion with the Khilafat e Ahmadiyya.’

Thus, we must examine ourselves; are we at this level of obedience? Is our relationship with the Khalifa stronger than our relationship with our fathers and brothers? Are we ready to sacrifice ourselves, our children, and our wealth for the sake of khilafat? How much time do we allocate every day to serve it?

If our answers to these questions are "no", "not much" ... etc., then we must do more to fulfil the expectations of the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) and his caliphs from us,

which are summarized in the following words of the second Khalifa (ra):

‘My advice to you is that no matter what level of reason and intelligence you reach, you will not benefit the religion by working with your plans and minds. You will not win the victory of Allah and His help, unless your plans and minds are subordinate to the caliphate, and you tread in the steps of your Imam. Thus, if you want the help and support of Allah, know that there is no way for obtaining this until your standing, sitting, walking, speech and silence become bound to me.’⁹



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Lajna Ima'illah

A women led organisation for women

BY SAIHA MAAZ

The inception and establishment of Lajna Ima'illah is a testimony to the brilliance and wisdom of Hazrat Musleh Maud (ra). It was a Divinely inspired appreciation of the role of women in the progress of Islam that led him to create an auxiliary for women decades before one was set up for men. Huzoor (ra) recognised the pivotal yet neglected place of women within the religious spectrum and carved it out through this innovative scheme. He stated in regard to the establishment of the organisation, 'Henceforth the successful progress of the Community is also dependent on efforts by women.'¹

This was a revolutionary statement; on the one hand it shook the unaware from their dreamy slumber and awakened them to their responsibilities on the other hand it challenged the prevalent cultural constructs.

The vision of Hazrat Musleh Maud (ra) put women in the driving seat of their intellectual and spiritual growth. Women were given control over thinking, planning, and implementing ideas of their own. They were provided with the much-needed support and confidence to lead with a different approach and facilitate social change. A platform to organise themselves without threat of ridicule or reproach.

The founding principles of Lajna Ima'illah focused on autonomy; women leading women and working together, empowering each other. It provided women with a platform to hone their skills, build confidence and realise their full potential in a safe space. From public speaking to entrepreneurship, from encouraging academic excellence to promoting the Islamic way of life. Overnight, women became mentors for each other.

Huzoor (ra) stated at the time of founding the organisation, “Women should strive together to enhance their knowledge and spread the knowledge they have attained to others.”²

It was a truly unique approach for women to come together to increase their knowledge and spread it. To uphold the spirit of unity under the unique spiritual guidance of Khilafat. To consider all women as sisters, regardless of social standing. To serve Islam and humanity in practical ways and to help those brothers and sisters who were in need.

This agenda empowered women and gave them a purpose. What the world witnessed as a result was truly remarkable, that women working together and having a safe and secure platform to truly express themselves is a mighty force. It enabled women to generate true and meaningful societal shift from the grass root level while creating harmony and balance within societies.

The profound words of the prophecy of Hazrat Musleh Maud resonate in my mind every time I think of the origin and progress of Lajna Ima'illah. The prophecy states:

“He will be extremely intelligent and understanding and will be meek of heart and will be filled with secular and spiritual knowledge.... He will advance rapidly and will be the means of procuring the release of those held in bondage.”³

The novel concept of reformation of women by women themselves was a blessed approach that revealed Hazrat

Musleh Maud's (ra) deep understanding of human psychology.

It was his insight into human psychology and the Islamic principles that paved the way towards this eminent organisation. Through the establishment of Lajna Ima'illah, he practically established the Islamic concept that men and women have been created in different forms for different but complementary purposes. This stressed a difference in role and nature but not a difference in status. Male approach to reformation and leadership naturally tends to be forceful however women do not respond well to force or harsh criticism. For women the reformation that comes from within themselves is what they respond best to.

Hazrat Abu Huraira (ra) narrates that the Holy Prophet (sa) said:

“Treat women well, for a woman is created from the rib (that is, she is bowed like the rib). The most curved part of the rib is its upper portion. If you try to straighten it, you will break it. If you leave it as it is, you will continue to avail of its benefits. Treat women with kindness and listen to my advice in this matter.”⁴

Thus, the Holy Prophet (sa) explained that a woman is by nature like the rib bone, meaning that she performs her function in the scheme of things by virtue of the very qualities in which she differs from man and that it would be foolish on the part of man to attempt to cast her into his own mould. Her charm lies in being

what she is and not in becoming an image of man.

His Holiness Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (aba) explained this concept further in an address to women saying that the angle of the rib, or the curvature, is the reason for its strength, and the most delicate part of the body is protected by it i.e., the heart, and some other organs. Man takes advantage of Allah's creation. You can see it in buildings and bridges, wherever they have to make them strong, they give them curvature. If you want to get benefit from the strong character of women, then do not try to change them according to your liking. Otherwise, they will be no good for you. It is proven that women are given a virtue of sacrifice. If you treat them well, they will always be ready to sacrifice themselves for your desires. You cannot gain any benefit by being tough or harsh, but with love and kindness.⁵

Huzoor (aba) further expounded that women should be engaged in the service of Islam in the manner that they are created and that best suits their nature. The Holy Prophet (sa) likened women to glass which falls to pieces if harshly treated, whose physical constitution is delicate, and who is given such feelings by God that she needs to be treated with gentleness and kindness. She is like the rib bone. Benefit from her nature as it is. ⁶

When we look at the latest research in this field, we find these ideas reinforced. Research suggests that single gender environment promotes freer thinking among students and prepares them to take on non-stereotypical roles. It levels the playing field for girls, and they perform better. This structure can reinforce the traditional roles of gender in

society. Even when we promote gender equality in society, there are specific ways that women are better than men and vice-versa. Instead of trying to normalize these differences by dragging individual strengths toward weaknesses, the single-gender classroom environment can help students implement their best attributes in ways that are equitable, healthy, and cooperative.

Since there are fewer options to feel scared or embarrassed in front of the opposite sex, there are more opportunities to experience a more positive and relaxed learning environment. Overall, students educated in single-sex schools have more confidence than their co-ed peers and perform better academically. In addition, these students tend to not feel the pressures of gender roles and learn to pursue areas that interest them no matter what is considered socially acceptable for their biological sex. It boosts a positive self-image thus enhancing self-esteem and wellbeing. ⁷

As for leadership of women, Alice Eagly, a scholar on the topic of women's leadership, found that women make better leaders because they tend to be more transformational leaders – meaning that they seek to develop others and listen more effectively, in addition to generally thinking more outside-the-box than their male counterparts.⁸

A research led by north western university revealed that female leaders understand the importance of investing their time in development of others. They look for opportunities to boost other women's confidence and encourage them to go for it. They celebrate women's accomplishments and have close

connections with other women, who can share experiences and learn from each other.

The study found that most successful women surround themselves with other women. Thus, female-dominated inner circles are key to women gaining leadership roles.

“In this context, such an inner circle can provide trustworthy, gender-relevant information about job cultures and social support, which are very important to women in male-dominated settings,” said Yang Yang, a research assistant professor at Northwestern’s Kellogg School of Management and a member of the Northwestern Institute on Complex Systems (NICO).⁹

Thus, the creation of Lajna Ima’illah as a women led organisation of women and for women was indeed a truly innovative and progressive idea steeped in Islamic principles and human nature. Lajna Ima’illah showed to the world that women can in fact understand and address the needs of other women in a better way. Women can reach other women more effectively. Women work better in segregation and respond positively to the confidence entrusted to them. They can create unity through inclusivity and their leadership can practically make the world a better place to be a woman.

As stated by His Holiness (aba) in 2019, “My philosophy is that if women work outside the shade of men, they flourish”.¹⁰

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Hazrat Sayyeda Mehmooda Begum Sahiba (ra)

Also known as Umme Nasir
Blessed wife of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II (ra)

Hazrat Sayyeda Mahmooda Begum Sahiba^(ra) was the first wife of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II^(ra) and the only wife whose marriage occurred in the lifetime of the Promised Messiah^(as).

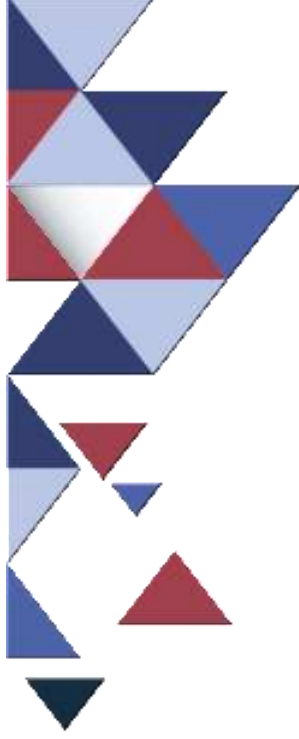
Not only was she the wife of a Khalifa and the daughter of a Sahabi, she was also a sahabia herself and the mother of a Khalifa—her eldest son, Hazrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad^(ra). In addition, she was the maternal grandmother of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V^(aba) through her daughter, Sayyeda Nasira Begum Sahiba.¹

Parentage and Birth

Hazrat Sayyeda Mehmooda Begum Sahiba^(ra) was born in 1891. At birth her parents named her Rasheeda. Her father's name was Hazrat Dr Khalifa Rashiduddin Sahib^(ra) and her mother's name was Respected Umda Begum^(ra). In those days there were no schools for girls in the whole of India. So, she was educated at home in basic academic studies and the Holy Qur'an.

Her paternal grandfather was a renowned scholar of his time, Khalifa Hameeduddin sahib. He was the Imam of the famous Shahi Mosque of Lahore and he was the founder of the '*Islamiyya School*' and formed an organisation called the '*Anjuman Hamayate Islam*' to serve Islam. He had memorized the Holy Qur'an (Hafiz) and one of his daughters and a paternal aunt had also memorized the Holy Qur'an. Hazrat Khalifa Rashiduddin sahib^(ra) was brought up in an extremely pious household and had also attained further higher education. By the grace of Allah he accepted The Promised Messiah^(as) and is included in those blessed sahaba that are called '*Auwaleen*' (the first), meaning those who accepted the Promised Messiah^(as) very early on after his claim.

One day Hazrat Khalifa Rashiduddin Sahib^(ra) took his daughter Rasheeda with him to Qadian to meet the Promised Messiah^(as). She was seven years old at the time and when she first saw such an esteemed person who was the Prophet of God she did not raise her gaze again towards him due to her honour and respect for him. Some while later the Promised Messiah^(as) wrote a letter to her father stating that he wished for his eldest son Mehmood (Hazrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mehmood Ahmad Sahib^(ra)) to marry Rasheeda. He also wrote,



‘pray for this and as they are both very young, we should agree to this match and they can get married later’.²

Marriage

She was married to Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-din Mehmood Ahmad ^(ra) in 1902. She was honoured by the fact that Promised Messiah ^(as) himself proposed the match. The first marriage of Hazrat Musleh Maud ^(ra) was to Hazrat Sayyeda Umme Nasir ^(ra) in the lifetime of the Promised Messiah ^(as). Although the choice of the daughter-in-law was his, he clarified in the letter he wrote initiating the union to Hazrat Dr Khalifa Rashid Uddin ^(ra) that,

“Mahmud seems happy with the engagement.”

This letter was written over a hundred years ago in 1902. By the common practice and standards of the time, it seems strange to take into consideration the feelings of the children. However, because the Promised Messiah ^(as) came to rectify the culture and traditions, he proved by his actions the importance of acknowledging the feelings of the children when choosing a spouse for them.³

When the bride was wed and brought home, Hazrat Amma Jaan (the Promised Messiah’s wife) named her “Mehmooda” and since then she was known by that name.

The Promised Messiah ^(as) had a very special loving attitude towards her. Every so often when she did not desire to have the usual ‘paratha’ breakfast in the morning, she would go to the Promised Messiah ^(as) and quietly stand close by while he would be engaged in writing. The Promised Messiah ^(as) would immediately hand over the keys to his trunk (storage box) to her that contained delicious edible items such as biscuits and ‘mithaae’ (Indian sweets). These items would generally come from outside Qadian. She would collect the keys and enjoy what she desired to eat. Additionally, whenever she required anything, she would make a request to the Promised Messiah ^(as) without any hesitation, and he would fulfil her request with pleasure.

Hazrat Umme Nasir ^(ra) narrates that she was only 12 years old when she came as a daughter in law to Hazrat Amma Jaan’s ^(ra) house. Because of her young age, she had the blessing and reward to being raised tenderly as a daughter under Hazrat Amma Jaan’s ^(ra) care.

She reminisces that when she arrived Hazrat Amma Jaan ^(ra) let her sleep with her for three days, realising that she was a young girl who would be sad to leave her house and apprehensive in a new household. Hazrat Umme Nasir ^(ra) also relates that Hazrat Amma Jaan ^(ra) loved her more than her own mother.

She was the first daughter in law in the home of the Promised Messiah ^(as) and was included in the revelation of the Promised Messiah ^(as)

‘The blessed ladies’

Hazrat Sayyeda Mehmooda Begum Sahiba^(ra) due to her son “*Nasir*” was known as “*Ummi Nasir*”. Apart from this when her children began to call her “*Ummi Jaan*” then everyone began to refer to her as “*Ummi Jaan*” also. The ladies and children of the Jamaat then also began to address as such.⁴

Achievements

Almighty Allah blessed her with the opportunity to benefit from the company of the Promised Messiah^(as) 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 ^(ra) herself asked Mahmooda Begum Sahiba ^(ra) 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 Sadr Lajna for a period of 36 long years. She retained this office till 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 Qur'an to children; check their memorisation of namaaz and would impart knowledge and moral training to them.⁵

The home of Hazrat Umme Nasir ^(ra) became like a teaching institute where she used to teach the Holy Qur'an and give lectures on the books of the Promised Messiah ^(as). 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 ^(as) himself that was further enhanced by Hazrat Musleh Maud ^(ra). Her children were reared in an excellent manner and became exemplary pillars of the community.⁶

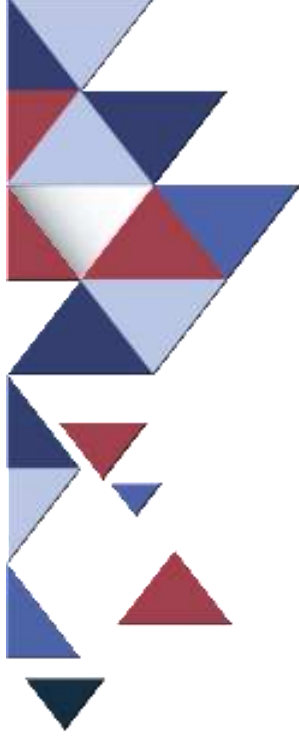
Sayyeda Umme Nasir ^(ra) was exceptionally good natured and exhibited great patience on the subsequent marriages of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II ^(ra). She was his sincere and faithful helper and made great sacrifices for him. She was held in great esteem by him and he often spoke of her sacrifices and gratitude.

Whatever instruction was given by the Khalifatul Masih, she would first act upon it and then instruct the members of the Lajna to act upon it. She would spend all her pocket money towards contributions and donations to the Jamaat.⁷

Hazrat Umme Nasir^(ra) was instrumental in the founding of Al-Fazl newspaper which is now read by thousands of Urdu speaking people around the world six days a week. An English spin-off, Al-Fazl International, goes out to thousands more. Through it, Ahmadis worldwide can read original content, excerpts from the writings and speeches of the Promised Messiah ^(as) and his successors, and explanations of Hadith and the Holy Qur'an. The paper-especially in the period before MTA has been instrumental in distributing Jamaat news. In 1913, Hazrat Musleh Maud ^(ra) proposed starting a publication to bring unity to the small Jamaat. There was no money to fund such a publication. Syeda Mahmooda Begum ^(ra) offered two "qarre" or gold bangles so they could be sold for funds to start Al Fazl. The 475 Rupees for the bangles, combined with some other donations, led to the publication of the long running newspaper. ⁸

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 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.⁹

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

'As God had incited Hazrat Khadija (ra) to help the Holy Prophet (sa) 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?'¹⁰

Hazrat Mirza Bashir Ahmad ^(ra) wrote on her death,



"Sayyeda Umme Nasir^(ra) was very sociable, cheerful and affectionate in her treatment to everyone. She was the light of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II's house and at the centre of women's attraction after the death of Hazrat Ummul Momineen ^(ra). She was harmless by nature, she never hurt anyone throughout her life. She was the very image of innocence and she ranked high in piety and righteousness. Probably, most people do not know that she donated all her pocket money and was among the earliest of Moosis (Those who volunteer to donate for the propagation of Islam at least one tenth of their income during their lifetime and one tenth of their effects and property after death.)"¹¹

Sayyeda Umme Nasir ^(ra) was not educated at any school or college, but she was well versed in theology. She taught the Holy Qur'an to hundreds of girls. She

also taught them Arabic and the books written by the Promised Messiah (as). During the first nineteen years her contribution to Tehrike Jadid was Rs 2733. In addition, she would regularly give her entire allowance from Hazrat Musleh Maud (ra) to chanda. On the Jalsa (annual gathering) she used to supervise all the arrangements for women. She was one of the Sahabiyyat (companions of the Promised Messiah (as)) who spun cotton yarn for the flag of Jamaat e Ahmadiyya in 1939.

In 1953 when Hazrat Musleh Maud (ra) called upon the women to make some income by hand labour and donate it for the propagation of Islam she made medicines and donated all the income from its sale to this fund.

Hazrat Sayyeda Umme Nasir (ra) was one of the signs of God and two prophecies,

‘You shall see your second generation’ and ‘We give you happy tiding of a boy who shall be your grandson’ were fulfilled in her person. The Promised grandson is our beloved Khalifa, Hazrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad (ra).

She was a loving person with a friendly and sociable demeanour. The women of the Jamaat would find comfort after meeting her. Almighty Allah blessed her with such progeny whose hearts are aglow with the light of faith.

Sayyeda Umme Nasir(ra) died in Murree in 1958. The funeral prayers were led by Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II (ra) and she was buried in Bahishti Maqbarah beside Hazrat Ummal Momineen (ra) on the westernside.¹² Thus she was blessed in life and blessed after death.

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Hazrat Sayyedah Amatul Hai Begum (ra) had the unique honour of being the daughter of one Khalifa of the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him)- Hazrat Hakim Maulvi Noor-ud-Din, who was Hazrat Khalifatul Masih I (ra), and the wife of another - Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II (ra).

At 21 years, she suggested to Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II (ra) to establish an organisation to enhance the religious knowledge of women, enabling them to serve their faith and become literate. Hazrat Amatul Hai Begum's (ra) idea was both forward-thinking and inspired. Consequently, the organisation established in 1922 by Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad^{ra} was *Lajna Ima'illah* (meaning 'the handmaids of Allah'), an auxiliary group of the *Ahmadiyya Muslim Association*. Its fundamental purpose was 'to fulfil the objectives of our creation' and to 'spend our lives, so as to attain Allah's pleasure.' Furthermore, it aimed to guide women to educate and morally uplift their children as well as themselves.

Hazrat Amatul Hai Begum (ra) enjoyed intellectual pursuits like her father - Hazrat Hakim Maulvi Noor-ud-Din (ra), who at one stage had established a school for Qur'anic Studies and also became the eminent court physician to the Maharaja of Kashmir. His love and devotion for the Holy Qur'an was inherited by this virtuous daughter. As Khalifa, Hazrat Hakim Maulvi Nur-ud Din (ra) would deliver *Dars* (explanatory classes of the Holy Qur'an) at home for ladies and Hazrat Amatul Hai (ra) would regularly attend these.

Indeed, two days before his passing, Hazrat Hakim Maulvi Noor-ud-Din (ra) advised his beloved daughter, then only 13, to learn the Holy Qur'an, to teach it to others and to tell Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad (ra) to continue the 'Dars' for women, should he be elected as the next Khalifa. The young Amatul Hai (ra) was to dutifully deliver this message to Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II (ra) despite her raw grief at her father's loss. It demonstrated her own intrinsic love for the Holy Qur'an and her desire to see the ladies of the Community progress.

Hazrat Amatul Hai Begum (ra) was an academic at heart with an incredibly strong faith in Allah Almighty. This is apparent if one reads the advice she desired to express at the tender age of five. Unable to write, she requested an elder to pen something for her:

Allah is one. Allah is sinless. Allah is The Gracious and The Merciful. He is the Master of everyone. One should learn the Holy Qur'an. One should follow the Holy Qur'an. Do not steal. Do not ask of anyone except Allah. Do not be envious. Ask after the poor and continue to behave righteously towards them... brothers and sisters should not fight.'

Hazrat Amatul Hai Begum (ra) had little interest in fashion, preferring poetry. Inquisitive by nature, she also inherited her father's love of medicine and enjoyed writing articles on various aspects of Islam. She married Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II (ra) in May 1914 in a simple fashion and the marriage was to prove an extremely happy one.

Hazrat Amatul Hai Begum (ra) was to become the first General Secretary of *Lajna Ima'illah* at its inception, a tremendous role requiring great administrative skills. Her passion for her faith and learning meant that she opened up her home to educate women. Her house was to become one of four centres of learning in those formative years of *Lajna Ima'illah*. The classes she held revolved around the study of the Holy Qur'an, the sayings of the Holy Prophet (sa) and the books of the Promised Messiah - Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (peace be upon him). Indeed, it was a project of great female empowerment, especially if we consider that the literacy rate for girls in India was still only 6% by 1947.

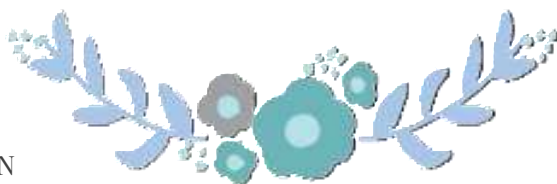
Hazrat Amatul Hai Begum (ra) was to motivate and inspire women to fundraise for essential community needs. In 1923 at the Annual Convention, she spoke to ladies of the Community on the importance of financial sacrifices and for raising money for the building of a female ward in Noor hospital, Qadian. Her passion and oratory were so effective that 150 women made pledges there and then to donate. On another occasion, she inspired the ladies of her Community by speeches and writings to raise funds for the construction of a mosque in Berlin.

This virtuous lady also demonstrated constant compassion for the poor and needy. She regularly organised dinners for orphans and widows through *Lajna Ima'illah*. It is recorded that upon her passing, many individuals amongst the vulnerable in society wept as if they had lost a mother.

In our ever-increasing consumer societies, it is hard to fathom that there were such women in a not so bygone an era, who thought little of personal possessions like Hazrat Amatul Hai Begum (ra). She often gave away the gifts she received to the needy. She also hospitably and humbly received all who visited her.

In terms of public speaking, Hazrat Amatul Hai Begum (ra) could inspire and excite a captive audience. In 1914, at the tender age of 13, she made her first speech at an Annual Convention (*Jalsa Salana*) addressing 400 ladies. She then suggested that ladies of *Lajna Ima'illah* host a parallel programme of events independent of the men to allow them to fully benefit from the occasion. This materialised for the first time in 1917 and now continues as an intrinsic part of every Annual Convention the Community hosts worldwide.

This pious lady did not neglect her own young children whilst she continued to serve others. Instilling a faith in God in them was a priority for Hazrat Amatul Hai Begum (ra). Her eldest daughter, Amatul Qayoom Sahiba, related that even when she was too young to know the words of the Islamic Prayers, her mother would gently stand her beside her at prayer times. She would kindly advise her to utter 'Bismillah' (i.e. In the Name of Allah) and simply follow those praying in front of her. She never wasted an opportunity to teach her young daughters something, be it a poem from Durre Sameen, Arabic words or small prayers.



Hazrat Amatul Hai Begum (ra) passed away at the young age of 23 in 1924, soon after the birth of her son. Yet, she achieved much more than many twice her age in a relatively short life. Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II (ra) established an Education Institute for Women in 1925 in her memory. *Lajna Ima'illah* itself established a library in her name in Qadian in 1927. After the Partition of India, this library was to be reestablished at the Community's Headquarters in Pakistan in 1950.

In Hazrat Amatul Hai Begum's (ra) final days, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II (ra) was to affirm to his beloved wife that she had been a very faithful servant of God. Indeed, her loss must have been all the more acute as the couple had seemed soulmates in the true sense of the word. Once, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II (ra) had observed:

'The Holy Prophet^{sa} said that souls can be connected and united to each other, i.e. some have a special connection to others, and I believe that my soul and the soul of Amatul Hai were closely attached.'

May Allah Almighty continue to elevate the soul of Hazrat Amatul Hai Begum (ra) in Paradise and help us as Lajna members to fulfil her noble vision for Lajna Ima'illah. Insh'Allah.



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IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE GRACIOUS, EVER MERCIFUL

The First Lajna Ima'illah UK Children's magazine

TAYYABA AHMED, HARTLEPOOL

وَالنَّشْرَاتِ نَشْرًا
فَالْفُرْقَاتِ فَرْقًا
فَالْمُلْقَاتِ ذِكْرًا

Translation:

*“And by those who spread the truth, a good spreading,
And then they distinguish fully between good and evil.
Then they carry the exhortation far and wide”*

(THE QUR'AN, CH 77, V 4-6)¹

Mrs Sajida Hameed Khan née Sajida Mubashira Khan

The late Mrs Sajida Mubashira Khan of Hartlepool (1947-1994), my mother, was a lady of many wonderful qualities by the Grace and Mercy of Allah. She will be remembered first and foremost, due to her successful preaching to many ladies in the small North Eastern town of Hartlepool. During her lifetime around seventeen English ladies accepted Ahmadiyyat as a result of her preaching efforts. With the added efforts of my father, Dr Hameed A. Khan, a lovely new majlis (local branch) was thus

formed, primarily of indigenous English Ahmadi Muslims, by the Grace of Allah.

The blessings of Khilafat e Ahmadiyya on this small Jamaat in Hartlepool were manifold and amongst them were the numerous visits of three blessed Caliphs of Ahmadiyyat, Hazrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad (may Allah have mercy on him), Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad (may Allah have mercy on him) and Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (aba).

The Inspiration for a Children's Magazine

What is less well known about her perhaps, are the efforts she made for the education of children, particularly girls. Pre April 1984, the Lajna Ima'illah and I am sure the UK Jama'at as a whole, did not have the blessed guidance, training and knowledge that was bestowed on it after the auspicious arrival of Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih IV (may Allah have mercy on him). Therefore, when it came to beginning the first Lajna UK publication for Nasirat-ul-Ahmadiyya (girls aged 7-15 years) she has described it very simply as below¹;

"It all started about three years ago when I was sitting at home watching my little girl Nabbo reading some English stories. I thought that it was such a tragedy that I could go to the supermarket and buy as many storybooks and comics for her as I liked but it was impossible to buy a magazine such as 'Tashhizul-Azhan'.² (this is estimated to be around 1980 – Ed)

"My mind started wondering and finally I thought that we must have a magazine of our own. But then who would start the magazine? ... When my husband came home from work, I told him of my intentions. After laughing, he paid no attention to my original idea whatsoever. I was disappointed but decided to ask the opinion of some of the other members of the Jamaat and I mentioned my idea to the Imam of the London Mosque, Sheikh Mubarak Ahmad Sahib. Sheikh Sahib showed a lot of interest and promised to put a small advert in the Ahmadiyya Bulletin, asking the opinion of other members of the Community. He was the first person to encourage me and recognise the need for such a magazine for children and young ladies. For as long as I live, I shall be grateful to him and as long as this magazine continues, it will be indebted to the former Imam of the London Mosque.

There was little response to the advert and I received less than a dozen letters. However, the letters I did receive seemed to appreciate the proposal. I received a letter from Daud Summers along with the first donation (a five pound cheque). The five pound cheque seemed like a five thousand dollar bill! Not long after, Sheikh Mubarak Ahmad Sahib, Imam of the London Mosque, also gave me his permission to start the magazine."

Kaukab Magazine

From these humble beginnings, the first magazine for Nasirat-ul-Ahmadiyya published by Lajna Ima'illah UK, (and appreciated by Lajna and Nasirat in other countries) was born. A kind and generous offer of help came from the late Anwar Kahlon sahib to help with printing and with this the work began. My mother assembled a simple team of local Ahmadi ladies, mostly converts such as Ms Pamela Elder, a co-editor, and Mrs Ronnie Rowsell, who did many aspects of work such as typesetting etc, for the magazine. In Sajida Hameed Khan Sahiba's own words we read the following;

*"I immediately started to get ready for the first publication. I asked the Imam of the London Mosque and the President of Lajna U.K. to send their messages for the first issue. I did not want to ask Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV (may Allah have mercy on him) for a message as I thought that he would be too busy to be burdened with such small tasks. I telephoned some of my friends to ask them if they would like to contribute and I even asked my children if they would like to write something simple for **Kaukab**. My English Ahmadi friend and co-editor, Pamela Elder, gave me moral support and promised to check the manuscripts for any grammatical errors or spelling mistakes. Sheikh Mubarak Ahmad Sahib had sent me a long message for **Kaukab**, full of appreciation for the project and full of admiration for me...*

*On the first day of Jalsa Salana U.K., 1983, Mrs Kahlon handed me 150 copies of the first issue of **Kaukab**. I was very pleased that the first issue had arrived but also sceptical that children might not find the presentation very attractive. However, I knew that God was giving me this extraordinary help. I had not spent a penny and the first issue was ready. I thought that 25p per copy would be a fair price for the first issue. Only 48 copies were sold and I received £12. I opened an account with the bank in the name of 'Lajna Kaukab' and put the money in the account together with the £5 I had received from Daud Summers.*

*As soon as the first issue had been distributed, there was a response from the Jamaat. Many friends and acquaintances met me and said that they liked the material but that they wanted the presentation of the magazine improved. I knew what they meant, for I also wanted the presentation of the magazine improved. I wanted it to be excellent rather than simply practical. I designed some attractive covers myself – silky white cardboard with **Kaukab** written on them and had them printed.*

The attention of Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih IV (may Allah have Mercy on him)

Many people reading this will be those that have served the Jama'at under the blessings of our Khilafat e Ahmadiyya and will have seen the help of Allah in such work many times. The same was true for Sajida Hameed Khan Sahiba. When she began this work, prayers and patience and the blessings of Khilafat e Ahmadiyya were evident. She describes the events that unfolded;


“The second issue was also printed by Mr Kahlon with the new covers. Few people bought it. However, many liked it more than the first issue. My mind was working like a computer, trying to work out the cost of future issues if I got them printed by a proper printer. The outlook was dismal. Most people refused to buy it at 25 pence per copy. What would they say if the price went up to £1? I decided to close down the magazine. I thought that although it was for the benefit of our children, the parents of our children were not realising the benefits of buying it... I packed some more copies of the second issue and posted them to a few more important people in our Community including Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV (may Allah have mercy on him) and Hazrat Maryam Siddiqua Begum (may Allah have mercy on her), President of Central Lajna.

I started to think again. I wanted a beautiful title page with a mosque, flowers and children on it. However, the cost of such a cover would be astronomical. When I had finished my late evening Prayer, I sat down and had a long conversation with God:

‘This magazine will benefit children, children who do not know anything about You. But the magazine should be more attractive for them so that they read it. Help me if you think that it is going to help them and withdraw Your help if You think that it is going to be a useless venture, a waste of money.’

I am sure that He (i.e. God) already knew all of the things I spoke of but I felt better after telling Him.

*It was December 1983, when my husband had gone to attend an Annual Gathering (Jalsa Salana) of the Ahmadiyya Community in Rabwah and I was feeling rather lonely. I telephoned my husband and he told me that Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV (may Allah have mercy upon him) had kindly mentioned my name and my magazine in his second day speech at the Annual Gathering in Rabwah. He had said, **‘Our little girl, Sajida Hameed, has started an excellent magazine for children called *Kaukab from Hartlepool.***’ I was overwhelmed with emotions of joy, gratefulness to God and thankfulness to Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV (may*



showing me the way in the dark night, when I had lost the way. Now, I knew what to do. I could not shut the magazine down after the appreciation shown by Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV (may Allah have mercy upon him).

Suddenly, it seemed as though people had started to show an interest. My husband returned from *Rabwah* and offered to pay the cost of the covers for the next issue... I accepted his offer gracefully. Then we got beautiful covers printed, featuring a mosque, children and flowers.

Kaukab was ready and it was beautiful!”

Was it a Lajna UK publication?

It is interesting to question how this seemingly semi- independent venture was linked to Lajna Ima'illah UK at the time. The question is answered when our current Imam of the London Mosque arrived in the UK to take over after the late respected Sheikh Mubarak Ahmad sahib was posted to the United States. My mother explains,

“In the meantime, Sheikh Mubarak Ahmad Sahib went to America and Maulana-Ata-Ul-Mujeeb took charge of the London Mission. One day, the new Imam spoke to me on the phone and asked why I wrote ‘Lajna U.K.’ on the front cover of the magazine. I then informed him that I was in charge of the printing and publishing department of Lajna U.K. The new Imam seemed surprised and said that he had not been informed. How could anyone inform him? I had hardly informed anyone since I had been assigned the duty by the former Imam of the London Mosque. Somehow it now seemed the right moment to clear my position and show that I was not taking advantage of the name of Lajna.”

*During the U.K. Ijtema of Nasirat in 1984, a meeting was called of all the office holders. I also attended the meeting being in charge of the Publications Department. I explained the problems of **Kaukab** to the rest of the committee. They were mainly of two kinds; lack of material and a lack of money. I asked for the help of Lajna U.K. on both accounts. Because the magazine belonged to them, they were obliged to help me. All along I knew that help would come only if God helped me and He did. During the meeting, I replied to all sorts of objections. For example, that the English was not up to standard. To this I replied that no article could be published in the magazine unless it was checked by me and one of my English friends. If I came across an article in better English then I would be obliged to publish it. However, so far I had not. Some people asked me if the whole thing was merely a family affair. To this I replied that if more material was sent from the whole of the Community then less would be involved from my family. Some objected that the cost of the magazine was too high. To this I replied*

that I was happy to reduce the cost of the magazine if anyone knew of a printer who would print them for less than £1. Until then the price had to be the same or be subsidised by Lajna U.K.

God softened the hearts of the committee members and later Mrs Salam, President of Lajna U.K. and Mrs Suraya Sadiq presented me with a cheque for £500. It was a real morale booster, therefore I decided to publish four issues of *Kaukab* each year. It seemed to me that I had suddenly gained more responsibility and I did not want to take a chance with Lajna money. Since it has become a quarterly magazine instead of a monthly one, its standard has improved and it has become more regular.

Meanwhile, the President of Central Lajna Ima'illah wrote to me and asked if **Kaukab** was still being published. I replied in the affirmative but added that as it had to be sent to the London Mosque for approval and printing, sometimes it could take weeks before it was sent back to me. She very kindly suggested that I find a local printer and hoped that would solve the problem and that **Kaukab** would become regular.

At the Annual gathering of the Ahmadiyya Community (Jalsa Salana U.K.) in 1985, I went to London with the latest issue of **Kaukab**. The first day I took 100 copies and went to the Jalsa (Annual Gathering) with the intention of selling them. I was praying to God saying,

'Your Name is blessed but in this issue not only has Your Name been published but there is a whole article about You. This is a coincidence that this is the first time also that I am selling Kaukab personally instead of posting it from Hartlepool, so please God, make this task easy for Me.'

God listened to my humble prayers. When I reached 'Islamabad', I met American representatives of Lajna who asked me how they could buy *Kaukab*. I told one that I had 100 copies available. The lady bought them all and gave me sixty dollars cash.

God always helps me when I need His help the most. My belief in God was strengthened. Soon, all the rest of the copies were sold as well. I came back to Hartlepool thinking that at last **Kaukab** was being printed, distributed and appreciated. It was on the road to success."

Today, when we have such amazing blessings as the current online 'Ayesha' magazine for

Nasirat-ul -Ahmadiyya and not only this, a whole beautiful website dedicated to the tastes and requirements of Nasirat, we cannot even imagine the struggles of our ‘foremothers’ in taking the first steps in developing a publication for Nasirat. May Allah elevate the status of Sajida Hameed Khan Sahiba in Paradise and all those who helped her. May He enable us all to participate in the progress and blessings of Ahmadiyyat, the true Islam, to the best of our abilities. Ameen.

References:

1. <https://www.alislam.org/Qur'an/app/77:4>
2. All quotations by Mrs Sajida Hameed Khan are taken from an original copy of '**Kaukab**' printed in the 1980's and reprinted later in An Nusrat magazine.
3. A magazine begun in 1906 for Ahmadi children which reflected the objectives of the organisation of the same name founded by Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad (ra), for the religious and moral training of Ahmadi youngsters with a view to helping them to propagate Islam.

Serving as National Sadr Lajna Im'ailah UK

Nazira Rehman

2011-2017

I have been brought up with the belief that Allah is the Almighty and to serve khilafat is the purpose of my life. All my life I have seen love and devotion to khilafat through my parents; my father, Bashir Ahmad Orchard – a missionary and my mother, Qanita Orchard, serving as Sadr Lajna Scotland for many years. Hence, by the Grace of Allah I have always been ready to serve our community whenever asked in any capacity needed.

After the elections in 2011, Huzoor Anwar (aba) approved my name as Sadr Lajna Ima'illah UK. As a Jamaat, we are truly blessed to have Huzoor-e-Anwar's guidance at all times, however as national Sadr UK, I had the honour to have many official mulaqats with Huzoor (aba) for advice and guidance on Lajna matters.

I remember once Huzoor (aba) guiding me on the importance of creating a personal relationship with all Lajna and Nasirat, to understand their problems and show empathy, whilst keeping them attached to Jamaat.

By the grace of Allah, Hazrat Musleh Maud (ra) gave detailed instructions in the Lajna Constitution to ensure

that all Lajna were included in this spiritual and educational journey. The eighteen departments fulfil this need, including guiding the local and regional Sadrs and I am always amazed at the dedication of each departmental secretary and Sadr who fulfil the requirements to her best ability (may Allah bless their efforts). In this article I will share some blessed moments (not necessarily in chronological order).

Alhamdulillah, I and the national Amila were able to visit all Majalis from time to time. In addition to Talim and Tarbiyyat presentations, other issues relevant to the ladies and girls of that area were addressed e.g., having Q&A sessions, supporting those who had moved to this country due to asylum and felt alone, or those struggling with motherhood, or had personal household issues. It was only through the guidance of Huzoor-e-Aqdas that we were able to keep privacy and build a trust, with the older Nasirat, younger Lajna and Lajna members, where they had an opportunity to discuss anything of concern. All Lajna were also introduced to the online help desk where any questions could be asked with discretion – this turned out to be useful for many.

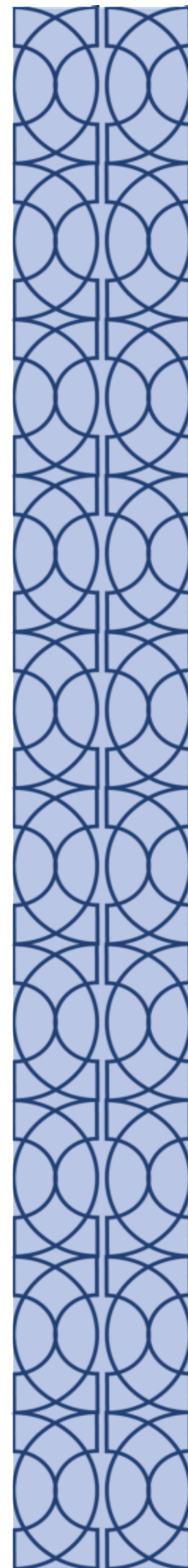
Our Lajna are always at the forefront of financial sacrifice. Lajna raised £75,000 to build a model village in Africa (IAAAE). Additionally, Lajna always surpassed their promises for Terik e Jadid and Waqfe Jadid schemes; such was the financial dedication of Lajna UK. Alhamdulillah, there were many occasions for Lajna to defend and promote Islam and women's rights by writing articles in papers and on twitter, also by giving interviews to newspapers, radio and TV channels and physically expressing their support. The Lajna Twitter account was also utilized to highlight Jalsa proceedings and local activities. In March 2017 following the ECJ Hijab ruling, the social media team responded by writing letters to the press and articles for the Lajna blog. Letters were written to the Prime Minister to thank her for her support for a woman's right to dress the way she wants. Following the Westminster attack, two articles were posted on the Lajna blog reacting to the attack and eleven Lajna and two Nasirat attended a vigil on Westminster Bridge.


By the grace of Allah, it was possible to extend the Lajna guest house, which was necessary as the UK is the Markaz, so there were always guests visiting beloved Huzoor (aba). Lajna UK have been incredibly fortunate to be able to serve Huzoor (aba) with their continuous duties of security, khidmat-e-khalq and discipline. I truly learnt from beloved Huzoor's (aba) own work ethic and hospitality. I will always be astounded by Huzoor-e-Anwar's (aba) attention to detail when it came to taking care of his guests and despite his own very busy schedule, Huzoor (aba) himself would check all facilities were provided for them and their favourite foods were available. Huzoor (aba) went into such minute details and even ensured that the Qibla direction was marked.

Continuing the yearly calendar, with Huzoor-e-Anwar's guidance, some changes were made – In 2012, the Lajna Ijtema was revamped with speech competitions being compulsory in local and regional levels and there were only presentations on the theme of that Ijtema at National level. The Nasirat had a games area and visited the exhibition.

The Nasirat department is very close to my heart, as I was National Nasirat Secretary for over 10 years so attending their events and promoting campaigns for them such as the camps and updating the Nasirat website was always a great pleasure.

Lajna Ima'illah UK celebrated many landmark dates during that period. Firstly abiding by our pledge to be loyal to our nation, we celebrated The Queen's Diamond Jubilee with the nation in 2012. Lajna raised £50,000 for The Queen's Charities. A letter to her Majesty, congratulating her on behalf of all





the Lajna was written. Secondly, during 2013-14 Lajna continued celebrating the 125th anniversary of Ahmadiyyat, which concluded with Lajna Ima'allah UK presenting beloved Huzoor (aba) with a gift of £25,000 at the Ijtema. To celebrate Lajna Ima'illah UK's Diamond Jubilee in October 2017, preparations started long before with the History Research Committee collecting the stories of Lajna UK's origins and the ladies' efforts to establish and ensure progress. Exhibitions were held locally and regionally and at Jalsa. This was an education for the youth to see the efforts of their elders.

The annual Lajna Peace conference is always a golden opportunity for guests to see Lajna at its best. The event has grown every year and the guest speakers vary from professors, humanitarians, politicians and other faith leaders.

In addition, attention was put on the shurah topics, such as:

- Parenting workshops, to guide mothers on the upbringing of children in a healthy and righteous environment.
- Mother-in-law workshops to guide and support women and to openly discuss marital issues and adapting to the changes that take place after a marriage.
- Centenary celebrations

Different programs were also organised:

- In 2012, The Hiking club which scaled peaks in England, Wales and in 2013, 30 Lajna climbed Ben Nevis in Scotland - the highest mountain in the UK. This turned out to be a great way for mothers and daughters to bond.
- The self-defence classes
- Marathon Walks
- The European Volley Ball tournament started in 2015. The teams participating were Holland Germany, France, Belgium and the two home teams GB and UK. This was an amazing experience for all involved, deepening our love of Khilafat and each other.
- In 2017, to further our relationships with our international sisters a coach tour to Netherlands was organised. It was indeed an adventure and again through the blessings of khilafat were able to reside at Nunspeet complex with gracious Sadr Lajna Netherland as our host.
- The Ishaat department were kept busy publishing 17 books, mainly focusing on literature for Nasirat and An Nusrat magazine quarterly.
- Trade and Industry organised skill classes, including computer training. Meena Bazaars have always been very popular with healthy and fun regional competitions for fundraising purposes.
- Poetry competitions were introduced. In addition, a Contemporary Issues lecture marquee and the Bake-Off cake competition were introduced allowing women and girls to learn from different methods.
- 3-5-day Nasirat/ Lajna camps were arranged in Islamabad, Scotland and Birmingham, which were a source of fun, learning new skills, of spiritual

growth and strengthening bonds of sisterhood. We received positive feedback from the participants. Interestingly, just recently, 10 years later, a young lady shared that when she went to the camp she was very rebellious, uncertain of her next steps in life and presented the organisers with challenges which could have sent her home. However the organisers supported her and listened to her and never gave up on her. She told us how much that meant to her and that now she was a mother of 2 and an active member of the Jamaat, Alhamdulillah.

- ‘Love from Lajna’ campaign distributed 485 hampers to 93 women’s shelters.

We are truly blessed to have Huzoor (aba), who guide us and helps us focus on being good, forgiving and God-fearing people. Huzoor’s guidance on different occasions, addresses and Friday Sermons are filled with beautiful gems of wisdom. Khilafat has enabled us to be one huge family who always look out for each other. May Allah accept all our humble efforts to fulfil the responsibilities as desired by Khalifatul Masih and forgive all our short comings. Ameen.



Roles and Responsibilities of Lajna Ima'illah

By Amtul Carmichael (Birmingham)

Major landmarks in our life provide an opportunity to reflect on the importance, value, utility, or the futility of being part of a certain setup. Anniversaries are one of these important landmarks. Anniversaries provide a chance to reflect and ponder on how a particular event has shaped our individual and collective identity. This reflective learning helps our self-awareness and facilitates a clear vision for the future.

Lajna Ima'illah was founded by Hazrat Musleh Maud^{ra} in 1922 as a support network of mentoring and coaching to help Ahmadi women excel in their academic and spiritual endeavours. The Divinely inspired foresight of Hazrat Musleh Maud^{ra} helped him recognise that sometimes, women can find it challenging to safeguard themselves against certain negative social influences. This poses a threat to their personal, moral, and spiritual development. Hazrat Musleh Maud^{ra} desired that Ahmadi women should achieve their full potential, so he nurtured Lajna Ima'illah; so that we can thrive and attain the objectives of our lives. Being a member of Lajna Ima'illah helps us grasp, consolidate, and refine our personal concept of the Unity of Allah, our Master and Creator.

One hundred years of Lajna Ima'illah is an opportunity for us Ahmadi women to reflect on our privileges and responsibilities. The literal meaning of our organisation, Lajna Ima'illah is

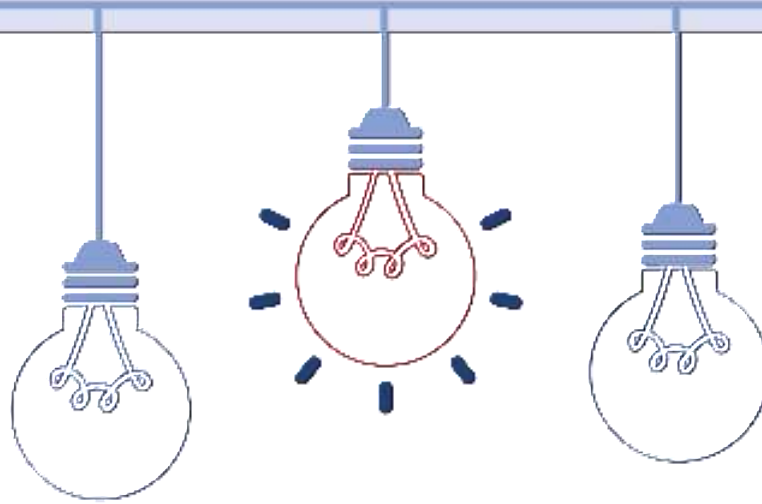
“women who serve God.”

This is an empowering title, which is designed to galvanise and advance us. The title Lajna Ima'illah makes us appreciate that as a part of this organisation, whatever we do, is for the sake of God only. The only legitimate driver of our actions is to recognise our Creator and pursue an unbreakable bond with Him.

Oscar Wilde says,

“Women are meant to be loved, not to be understood.”

Could this be true? Women are undoubtedly complex creatures of God, who have the noble task of facilitating life on earth. As an Ahmadi Muslim woman, I believe that Our Creator, our Beloved God loves us and understands us women. This is why God has granted us the faculties and potential to master many domains of life on earth. We have been empowered and enabled to serve as successful professionals, prominent leaders and above all motivating engines of family and social lives.



Being the member of Lajna Ima'illah is an extreme privilege that liberates us from the burdens of this world, while offering a powerful motivation for great deeds. A strong belief in an All-Powerful God emboldens us to become courageous, independent, and self-sufficient. An understanding that by becoming **“women who serve God”**, we are liberated from the pressure of the society and are freed from the shackles of social media. By becoming women who serve God, we rise above the desire to ‘keep up with the Joneses’ and are unchained from a relentless pursuit of personal glory. This feeling of liberation nurtures a profound sense of personal worth, enhances our self-esteem, and cultivates strength of character. This enables us to achieve our objective of becoming the best physical, moral, emotional, social, and spiritual versions of ourselves. This is the ultimate success.

The title Lajna Ima'illah, **“women who serve God”** makes us Ahmadi women comprehend that whatever we do is judged by our Creator, Who can assess all our intentions and actions. We cannot hide anything from our God, Who has access to the innermost secrets of our hearts. This is a powerful driver to be honest to the core, and true to the cause in every quest. The conviction that we are wholly accountable to Allah the Exalted for all

our deeds and intentions is a powerful liberating force from seeking solace in false and unreliable worldly props. The title Lajna Ima'illah confers an understanding to Ahmadi women that if we put our trust in means other than God, such as people, power, and resources, this will render us weak. This will impair our capacity to accomplish our full potential and will diminish our sense of fulfilment. In the end, worldly support lets us down because it has no real power. Explaining the philosophical basis of this concept, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II^{ra} states that belief in Divine Unity is a seed out of which grow all virtues, and lack of which lies at the root of all sins.

Lajna Ima'illah provides a framework for women living, studying, and working in the modern age; a framework for self-improvement that promotes physical, mental, emotional, and social wellbeing. Being the true Lajna Ima'illah, provides a rightful appreciation that the key to our success is with our God. This saves us from resorting to or being coerced into inappropriate behaviours and practices. This realisation also liberates modern women from a desire of social climbing and resorting to flattery, over-praising, and obsequiousness.

Being Lajna Ima'illah places a great responsibility on us to demonstrate to the world that the beautiful teachings of

Islam are not only practical and workable in the modern society; but are indispensable for women's physical, mental, social, and moral wellbeing. These teachings provide us with vital guidance to negotiate many of life's challenges. Only the comprehensive teachings of Islam can help us make the correct choices between personal-development, homemaking, and professional responsibilities. With our practical example, we can demonstrate to the world that the teachings of Islam provide us with a crucial framework in which we can have it all; personal development, academic success, prosperity, enduring fulfilment, and happiness without compromising our safety, mental health, or wellbeing. This is because as true Lajna Ima'illah, we appreciate the purpose of our creation. The ultimate objective of our creation is that we reach our full potential by recognising and worshipping our Creator and Master, our God. As Lajna Ima'illah, we need to incorporate the worship of God in all our intentions and actions with an overarching aim of excelling in spirituality. This will help us to recognise the True God and win His pleasure.

Lajna Ima'illah has been playing a vital role for the last one hundred years to help women overcome challenges of life by taking refuge behind the shield of the Imam of the age and Khalifa of the

time. Khilafat is an incredibly distinctive system of leadership, whereby through Divine guidance alone, every follower is uniquely connected to Khilafat. Obedience to their spiritual leader empowers women to overcome the challenges posed by modern life. The spiritual leader of the time provides advice and guidance to his followers regarding contemporary challenges and societal issues. Lajna Ima'illah offers the environment and conduit to enact this guidance and advice.

The pious and positive role models of Muslim women are a guiding light for us. The first person who accepted Islam was a woman— Hazrat Khadija (ra), the first person who attained the honour of martyrdom was a woman – Hadhrat Sumayyah bint Khayyat (ra) and the first valiant warrior to stand up to the enemies during the Battle of Uhud was a woman - Hadhrat Umme Ammara (ra). This demonstrates to Lajna Ima'illah that women can reach the height of spiritual attainment by following in the footsteps of the most loyal, ardent, and committed Muslim women. May Allah the Exalted enable us to act on His commandments and meet the objective of our creation. Ameen

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Pistachio, cardamom & rose cake

SAJEDA ZAFFAR
WANDSWORTH TOWN

Method

- Line a 10" round baking pan.
- In a large bowl, cream together the margarine and sugar until combined.
- Add the eggs and whisk everything together.
- Add the flour and beat together until fully combined. Scrape the sides as needed.
- Finally, add the chopped pistachios and ground cardamom and fold into the mixture using a spatula.
- Pour mixture into the lined pan and smooth out.
- Place in the centre of oven and bake for 45-50 minutes until golden brown and cooked throughout.
- While the cake cools, make the rosewater drizzle by mixing together the icing sugar, rosewater and the milk.
- Once the cake is cooled down slightly, remove it from the pan and place it on a serving tray.
- Prick holes across the surface using a fork, then pour the drizzle over the cake and smooth out.
- Sprinkle the rose petals on top for decoration.

Ingredients

1. Margarine - 225g
2. Granulated sugar - 225g
3. Eggs - 3
4. Self-raising flour - 225g
5. Pistachio chopped - 50g
6. Ground cardamom - 1tsp
7. Icing sugar - 1/3 cup
8. Rose water - 1/2 tblsp
9. Milk - 1 tsp
10. Dried rose petals for decoration



Talim

RUBINA NASSER - SECRETARY TALIM UK

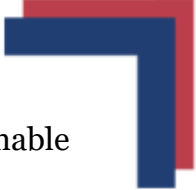
“O my Lord, Increase me in Knowledge” (The Holy Qur’an 20:115)

The prayer taught in the Holy Qu’ran, “O my Lord, Increase me in Knowledge”¹ and the Hadith of the Holy Prophet (sa) that, “It is the duty of every Muslim man and every Muslim woman to acquire knowledge”², bear testimony to the fact that Islam is the one religion that has enjoined its followers to gain and excel in all areas of knowledge.

It is a well-known fact that in the nineteenth century (the time of the Promised Messiah^{as}) the morale and education amongst the Muslims in India and of women in particular, were at their lowest ebb. This immensely concerned the Promised Messiah^{as} and his Khulafa who took every opportunity to educate Ahmadi women and instill the love of knowledge in them. During the time of the Promised Messiah^{as}, a small group of women were trained in Qur’anic and religious knowledge under the guidance of the Promised Messiah^{as} and Hazrat Amman Jan. Later, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih I^{ra} continued with Darsul Qur’an and Darsul Hadith for the ladies of the Jama’at.

In 1914, Hazrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad^{ra} was elected to the office of Khalifatul Masih II. Huzoor had much concern regarding the education of Ahmadi women; he wanted his wives to be educators. With this regard the name of Hazrat Amatul Hai Begum Sahiba^{ra} will always be enshrined in the history of Lajna Ima’illah as a beacon of knowledge for she took on this role with much sincerity and dedication. Later, Huzoor married Hazrat Sayyeda Sara Begum Sahiba to continue to fulfil this purpose.

Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II^{ra} recognised that women held a unique role in the community and much of its progress depended upon them. Huzoor appreciated that women were equal members of the community and their roles should not only be limited to domestic chores; rather, they could be instrumental in the progress of the community. Huzoor proposed the establishment of Lajna



Ima'illah in order to empower women and give them a platform which would enable them to realise their potential and achieve their objectives.

On the 25th December 1922, Huzoor^{ra} laid the structure of Lajna Ima'illah and put forth seventeen criteria. In this first meeting of Lajna Ima'illah, Huzoor asked whether all the fourteen founding members unanimously agreed to it. Whilst each and every one of those criteria is important, it is worth mentioning criteria (i), (v) and (vi), because they pertain specifically to Ta'lim. ³

(i) Women should strive together to enhance their knowledge and spread 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.

On the 29th January 1923, the second meeting of Lajna Ima'illah was convened. At this meeting Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II^{ra} reiterated the purpose of establishing this institution. Huzoor stated:



“I expound on the three important purposes of this institution.

(1) Collective learning of knowledge

(2) Teaching it to others, and

(3) Concentrating on reforming children”.



These directives from Huzoor^{ra} were then used to formulate the Constitution of this organisation and directives for the Ta'lim Department were laid down in Paragraphs 86 to 89 of the Lajna Constitution, which state:⁴

86. It shall be the duty of Secretary Ta'lim to take every possible measure to spread religious and secular education among Lajna.

87. Secretary Ta'lim shall prepare a programme for the education of illiterate women and children in the Jama'at so that each woman and child can read and write. Secretary Ta'lim shall also give reminders on the importance of education of boys.

88. Secretary Ta'lim shall draw the attention of Majlis towards the following:

i – Teaching of reading of the Holy Qur'an

ii – Teaching of translation of the Holy Qur'an

iii – Memorisation of Salat along with its translation.

iv – Reading of books written by Hazrat Masih Maud^{as}

89. Secretary Ta'lim shall be responsible for making arrangements for preparing and





conducting examinations of Ahmadi ladies according to the syllabus prescribed by Lajna Ima'illah.

Having looked at the rationale behind the establishment of Lajna Ima'illah, I will now very briefly sketch out the development of Lajna Ima'illah in the United Kingdom.

Although there were Ahmadi ladies both from the Indian sub-continent as well as new converts residing in the UK, it was only towards the end of 1949 that Lajna Ima'illah was first started in London. Kulsoom Bajwa Sahiba served as the first Sadr Lajna until her return to Pakistan in 1950. During this time meetings were held once a month at the London Mission house in which various lectures and commentaries of the Holy Qur'an were delivered to enhance the religious knowledge of its members. ⁵

After a gap of almost seven years, Lajna Ima'illah was re-established in London and their first meeting was convened on the 31st August 1957. With a UK Tajneed of 35 to 40, Lajna strived to gain religious knowledge along with other important activities such as Tabligh and Khidmat e Khalq.⁶

By 1960, Lajna UK had grown in number and became much more established and organised under the leadership of Mrs Amtul Hafeez Salam Sahiba. An extract from the Lajna annual reports archives, highlights the work of the Ta'lim department during that period.

'Lajna London has improved this year. First and foremost, essential for any Lajna is its administration, and then comes the task of education and training. This year's annual report brought the good news that among other things religious education and training of children as well as adults was also carried on.'⁷

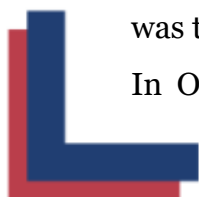
For a long time, the work of the Ta'lim and Tarbiyyat departments were amalgamated under one secretary. From 1972 onwards, the Annual Reports began reporting the work of the Ta'lim department separately and efforts were made to extend the knowledge of Holy Qur'an and other religious knowledge amongst Ahmadi ladies and Nasirat.

Following on from here, looking at the history of United Kingdom, Lajna Ima'illah continued to grow and flourish under the guidance of Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih IV^{ra} and the work of the Ta'lim department became more and more organised with a set syllabus and Ta'lim test each year.

It is a promise from Allah the Almighty that the Jama'at will progress, and we see each era of Khilafat bringing amazing progress in leaps and bounds. Since 2003, Lajna UK has been very fortunate to work under the direct guidance of our beloved Imam Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba). In an Amila Mulaqat with Huzoor e Aqdas in 2008, beloved Huzoor directed that Ta'lim tests should be conducted three times during the year.

In 2005, Academic awards were introduced at Jalsa Salana. The Ta'lim department was fully involved in the selection procedure, compilation of lists and facilitating the giving of awards by Huzoor e Aqdas on the occasion of the ladies Jalsa session on the Saturday of Jalsa Salana. This tradition continued until 2019 when this responsibility was transferred to the Umoore Talibaat department.

In October 2011, my humble self was assigned the task of serving as the National



Ta'lim Secretary. It was a huge task and I was by no means equipped with my meagre knowledge and experience to take on such a pivotal role. However, as is the Jama'at's tradition not to decline a responsibility, I had no option but to gratefully accept. I immediately turned to prayers and wrote to my beloved Huzoor e Aqdas, requesting his prayers for me to be able to fulfil the new responsibility in the best possible ways.

The primary responsibility of the department has been to put together a programme of study in the form of syllabus and prescribe a book of the Promised Messiah (as) each year. A separate syllabus for the 15-18 year old Lajna was also introduced in 2019 for the ease of transition from Nasirat into Lajna. Three separate syllabi for each year group were put together. This syllabus is broadly based on the Waqfe Nau syllabus for the 15 to 21 year olds. Its core components include a section from the Holy Qur'an, Hadith, a book of the Promised Messiah (as) and a section on the history of Islam and Ahmadiyyat. Since 2018, upon request from some Lajna members, the department was able to offer an additional Advanced Religious Studies course for its members. The aim of this course is to enable members to enhance and gain additional knowledge in the field of religious education. This is an optional self-study course but supplemented with lectures and seminars from eminent Jama'at scholars. Tests are conducted based on each syllabus at the end of the year.

In order to encourage Lajna to read Jama'at literature, in 2011 the department introduced "20 Minutes A Day Reading Campaign". Alhamdulillah this was taken up by most Majalis and according to the annual report, a large number of Lajna members participated in this campaign. This campaign lasted for three years.

To facilitate the work of secretaries, monthly lesson plans with clear learning objectives were introduced and have continued to the present time. These have proved to be beneficial both for individual members and the secretaries.

Regular Ta'lim and Tarbiyyat classes in conjunction with the Tarbiyyat department have been conducted each year. Topics from the Holy Qur'an, Ahadith, Malfuzat and the books of the Promised Messiah^{as} have been the focus of these classes. In recent years Lajna have been encouraged to research and study the Holy Qur'an in depth. These classes have proved to be useful catalyst in the sharing and gaining of knowledge.

A National Ijtema is held each year. The department puts together a syllabus for each year's Ijtema and since 2013, Ijtemas have been thematic for both Lajna and Nasirat. Prior to the National Ijtema, Local and Regional Ijtemas are conducted. Each Region prepares a presentation based on that year's theme. Besides this, there are also various other competitions such as Tilawat, Nazm, Hifze Qur'an, Quiz, Speech etc. Lajna Ima'illah UK is very blessed as in most years our beloved Imam, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba) has graced the occasion and addressed Lajna with valuable guidance and advice.

Each year a refresher course is held to train new and existing secretaries on the work of the department. Due to the pandemic, this course has been offered virtually for the past two years. The refresher course is a good opportunity for local secretaries to come together and understand their responsibilities.

The teaching and learning of the Holy Qur'an has been the focal point of the department. Many secretaries continue to hold separate classes dedicated to the Holy Qur'an, holding different classes for Lajna who are at varying stages in their standard of pronunciation and knowledge. Translation of the Holy Qur'an is also being covered in Tarjumat ul Qur'an classes, with some focussing on split word translation, as well as gaining a deeper understanding by going through the commentary. This year Sadr Sahiba launched the 'Qur'an Quest': a new initiative to encourage members of Lajna and Nasirat to learn and read the Commentary of the Holy Qur'an and derive benefit from it. Similarly, learning Salat with correct pronunciation and meaning continues to be a focus for Lajna each year.

By the grace of Allah, at the end of 2019, Sadr Sahiba launched the Lajna Centenary Reading Challenge. This encouraged many Lajna to sign up to read all the books of the Promised Messiah (as) in either English or Urdu before September 2022. This scheme's purpose is to develop a good understanding of Islam Ahmadiyyat through the books of the Promised Messiah^{as}.

The work of Ta'lim is never exhaustive as the learning process can never cease. The department endeavours to fulfil the requirements of the Lajna constitution and instil the love of learning in all its members. May Allah the Almighty help us to achieve the goals and the vision that Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II^{ra} had for Lajna when founding this blessed institution and may we be able to meet the expectations of our beloved Imam, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba). Ameen.

References:

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2. Sunan Ibn Majah 224
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4. The Lajna Constitution; Paragraphs 86 to 89
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TARBIYYAT

Lajna Ima'illah UK

In the name of Allah, most Gracious ever Merciful

MICHELLE REHMAN (SECRETARY TARBIYYAT UK)

It is awe-inspiring that through Allah's Grace and wisdom, Hazrat Musleh Maud (ra) established the organisation of Lajna Ima'illah as the first auxiliary organisation on December 25th, 1922.

In this very action the Promised Son (peace be upon him) cemented the structure required to systematically promote the role of women in securing religious education and moral training in the community.

To assist in understanding why this is important we can consider the words of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba) in his address at the Waqfe Nau Ijtema, for girls, 2015. He said,

“Islam says that no Muslim man or woman should remain ignorant, rather they should indeed attain education.”

This is why the Holy Prophet (sa) gave special attention and consideration to women's education. Drawing attention to women's education, the Holy Prophet (sa) also said that

“...half of the religion should be learnt from Ayesha.”¹

The creation of Lajna Ima'illah with its 17 objectives provides the basis from which this can be achieved. This is just as true today as it was in 1922.

The Tarbiyyat Secretary is one of the offices held in the Aamila of Lajna Ima'illah. It focuses on practical implementation of religious education in day-to-day life with particular focus on safeguarding against immorality.

It is true to say that there is a significant relationship between Talim and Tarbiyyat and one cannot be fully achieved without the other.

The Secretary Tarbiyyat is required to:

- ◇ Constantly try to inculcate Islamic morals in the members of Lajna Ima'illah Mulk.
- ◇ View and assess all types of Tarbiyyati issues, moral, spiritual and cultural.
- ◇ Try to promote observance of Purdah amongst Jama'at ladies and take notice of any tendency against it and take necessary measures so that such tendencies do not take root amongst Jama'at ladies.
- ◇ Take necessary measures so that un-Islamic practices and unhealthy customs may not find their way into the Jama'at ladies.

The role of the Tarbiyyat Secretary is not a small undertaking. This auspicious occasion of the Lajna Ima'illah UK centenary is a great milestone and provides the opportunity to reflect.

It is very humbling and overwhelming that I have been given the opportunity to serve under the guidance of Sadr Lajna Ima'illah UK, serving as Secretary Tarbiyyat.

It was the Autumn of 2017 when the newly elected Sadr Lajna, respected Dr Fariha Khan Sahiba called. I was so pleased to hear her voice as I had not yet had the opportunity to congratulate her. I heard her voice as if it were in the distance say:

“Mubarak Michelle, you have been graciously approved as Secretary Tarbiyyat”.

I became numb with emotions. I felt the weight of the office and became overwhelmed. Sadr Sahiba was very calm and compassionate, I think she could see, hear and feel my fear. I did not believe I had the capability, knowledge or experience to serve in this role.

In that moment I also felt ashamed, because through Sadr Sahiba's words of guidance I remembered that

“Allah burdens not any soul beyond its capacity”

It is a true blessing to serve the Jama'at through the offices of Lajna Ima'illah UK and there should be no doubt in this. Sadr Sahiba told me to pray, write to Huzoor (aba) to request prayers and then she proceeded straight to business and this is the way Sadr Sahiba has led the Amila since.

My first task was to meet with Mrs Lubna Sohail Sahiba who served as Secretary Tarbiyyat Lajna Ima'illah UK 2012 – 2017 to receive a handover. Masha'Allah the most thorough handover was given; I learnt this was nothing less than to be expected.

As I worked through her reports, I saw the meticulous way in which she undertook her

role. Masha'Allah she was organised, logical in her approach and thorough in her handover. At the end of our meeting, she said:

“You are Secretary Tarbiyyat every day and every day is an important day for Tarbiyyat; never think your work is complete.”

In the first two years of Sadr Sahiba's Sadrat the main focus of the Tarbiyyat department was to return to the basic core elements of Tarbiyyat with a clear focus on inculcating morality in lajna mulk. To that end we focussed all efforts on observing timely salat, reciting Holy Qur'an with translation, watching Friday sermons and promoting the virtues of purdah.

It is by Allah's grace that Huzoor (aba) reiterated the importance of these measures by setting Lajna Ima'illah UK the target of achieving 100% for salat, watching the Friday sermon, reciting Holy Qur'an and achieving 75% Dars in households.

These targets were set in the Lajna Ima'illah UK mulaqaat with beloved Huzoor (aba) in January 2021. This follows a year where the world suffered, and continues to suffer, the calamities of the impact of the Covid pandemic.

Through focus on these core Tarbiyyat measures great impact can be made in improving Tarbiyyat, by strengthening morality in lajna mulk and achieving nearness to Allah the Almighty.

The Tarbiyyat work plan is often derived from a combination of what lajna members tell us and through the themes of questions which arise when travelling around the UK to visit members in their regions or local majalis. The programme is also guided by the results of surveys carried out by Sadr Sahiba to collect the views of lajna members.

In 2019 we addressed the basic rudiments of faith focusing on the six articles of faith, the importance of the institute of Khilafat, purdah, domestic issues and their solutions and contemporary issues. In this current year of the Sadrat of sadr Sahiba we are focusing on addressing un-Islamic customs, morality and achieving righteousness. We have also focussed efforts on the role of mothers in the upbringing and purdah of boys.

Whilst the work of the Tarbiyyat department continues it is important to understand that this work has not yet achieved its aims. This is best illustrated in the quote from Sadr Lajna Ima'illah UK, Dr Fariha Khan Sahiba when summing up the vision that Hazrat Musleh Maud (ra) had set for Lajna Ima'illah she said:

“The vision that he had set for Lajna Ima'illah when he founded it, I do not think that we have achieved it yet. It's still a journey”.³

1. <https://www.alislam.org/articles/equality-of-women-role-in-society/>
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Memories of Nasirat-ul ahmadiyya

BY MATEEN BHATTI (SECRETARY NASIRAT UK)



The foundations of Lajna Imai'llah were first established between 1922 and 1925. Following on from this, organising the Tarbiyyat of children became part and parcel of Lajna.

In Qadian, although provision had been made for the teaching of Nasirat, it was not officially established until 27th April 1945 by Hazrat Khalifat-ul Masih II (ra). The age for Nasirat membership at that time was 8-15 years old.

Tayyba Sadiqa Sahiba, wife of Masood Khan Ahmad Sahib, was appointed as first Secretary Nasirat on 24th April 1945. In May 1945 Nasirat was established in all majalis of Qadian.

In the UK, Lajna Ima'llah was established on 11th December 1949. Due to small numbers, The Nasirat organisation wasn't really established as a separate entity and girls would join in with the Lajna meetings.

In 1963, as the population of Ahmadis increased in London, Nasirat-ul Ahmadiyya was finally established. Tayyaba Karim Sahiba was made Nasirat Secretary and her naib was

Sadiqa Karim (Khalid) Sahiba.

In 1972, Lajna Imai'llah in other parts of the UK was established. The active Jama'ats were London, Middlesex, Gillingham, Glasgow, Huddersfield and Hounslow. Nasirat classes were held weekly in all these Jama'ats.

The aim of the Nasirat organisation has always been to provide Ahmadi girls with a firm grounding in religious knowledge and moral training. Another very important and deeper aim is to encourage girls to strive for a higher standard of spirituality than other non-Ahmadi girls. These aims can be seen behind the current names associated with the three groupings of Nasirat: Qanitah (for 7-9) which means obedient girl; Sadiqah (for 10-12) which means truthful girl and Muhsinah (13-14) which means benevolent girl and doer of good. Whatever a Nasirah learns in their formative years in groups Qanitah and Sadiqah, they are intended to develop as they get into Muhsinah and beyond into acts of kindness and piety.



Tajyyaba Karim Sahiba - London Nasirat secretary 1964-1965

My earliest memory of wanting to become a teacher was when I was six years old. This memory is from India when on one particular day there was a terrifying thunderstorm and all the children in the class, including me, began misbehaving, screaming or shouting due to fear of the storm. Our teacher was very angry and as a punishment made us all line up outside in the storm for 5 minutes. I was furthest away from the door when we were lined up outside.

During this time, there was another loud clap of thunder and being extremely frightened, I was the first to run into the classroom. My teacher was outraged that I had gone back in without permission and made me stand outside for longer than the other children.

I was so upset and angry with the teacher, that at that moment I promised myself that when I grew up, I would become a teacher and teach my pupils with love and care. Thus, my journey as a teacher began.....

I came to London from Pakistan in 1964 and was very keen to go and see the Fazal Mosque. As I was looking around, I saw Mrs Salam conducting a meeting with her Aamila members. I introduced myself and told her that I had come to England for a year .She was



very impressed and immediately decided to appoint me as Nasirat secretary, even if this was just for one year. This was May 2nd 1964. The following weekend I taught the first Nasirat class and during my time as Nasirat Secretary there was not a single Sunday when a class was not held.

Fifteen girls attended that class. Among them were: Mrs Salam's daughters, Mrs Rehman's daughters, Aziza Bashir, Amina Karim, and pilot Abdul Latif's daughter. Many of these young ladies are now grandmothers and come and meet me with so much love and respect at Jalsa.

The Nasirat classes were supposed to be one hour long but would often go on for two hours, as the girls were so keen to learn and would often ask me questions about the education system and life in Pakistan. When Mrs Salam realised that the classes were running almost into lunch time, she decided that the girls should be given lunch. I asked if I could have an assistant to help me and Sadiqa Khalid Sahiba was appointed as my helper. Peas pilau would be made for the girls and Maulvi Abdul Karim Sahib would bring the food in his car to Fazl Mosque for the girls.

Nasira Rashid Sahiba - National Nasirat secretary 1976 – 1980

There are countless memories of those days, Mash'allah the population of Nasirat had increased and our first Nasirat Ijtema was held in 1971 (at this time Parveen Rafi Sahiba was Nasirat Secretary) in the Mahmood hall. The girls were very excited and nervous at the same time.

One young girl who went on to become a teacher herself, had told me that her Grandfather Maulvi Abdul Karim would give her one pound if she took part. In those days that was a lot for a 10-year-old! All the girls eyed the shiny trophies and practised their speeches and tilawat etc. hoping they would be amongst the top three.

In 1976, by the Grace of Allah the first Sports day was organised in Richmond Park. The girls had a great time competing and having fun at the same time. Today, over 40 years later, my own daughter has been blessed to serve as the National Sports Secretary UK.

In 1980, the first Tarbiyyati class was held in the Mahmood hall. Lectures were given by learned elders of the Jama'at: Bangvi Sahib, Sharma Sahib, Hafiz Sahib, Maulvi Abdul Karim Sahib, Haadi Sahib... The list is endless. These young girls were very privileged to be taught by these elders and showed great enthusiasm, writing notes and absorbing every word spoken.

Cookery was also taught and Roohi Shah Sahiba taught the girls how to make potato bread which they happily ate after making! Tahira Chaudhry Sahiba was also a secondary school teacher at the local school (Mayfield School), she would not only deliver lectures to the girls but mark all their books to see if they had noted information down neatly and correctly. A prize was given to the girl with the best notes.

Today, many of the girls who sat through those Tarbiyyati classes now teach and deliver lectures at the Tarbiyyati classes held today. Alhamdulillah. This is our greatest blessing - that the legacy of knowledge and learning that begins in the Nasirat classes becomes the foundation for the future teachers and mothers of our Lajna today.



Sadiya Khalid Sahiba - National Nasirat secretary 1988-1997

I became National Nasirat secretary when Amtul Rashid Sahiba was Sadr UK. I remember that in those early days, we didn't have any computers or photocopiers and the whole syllabus would have to be hand-written.

We had to find someone with neat and clear handwriting who could write it up for us. Naima Khokar Sahiba and later Sameena Cheema Sahiba were chosen to do this difficult task. The syllabus would only go to the Nasirat Secretaries as it was difficult to copy it so many times!

We finally got a second-hand photocopier when Salma Khan Sahiba (Yorkshire) *donated one to the Lajna. We were overjoyed as this made our task so much easier.*

One clear memory that I have is of a speech that Hazrat Khalifa-tul -Massih IV (May Allah have mercy on him) delivered in the Mahmood Hall. This was after he had made a trip to Africa and in his speech he reiterated in a very loud and earnest voice that we must teach our children Urdu, otherwise they would become totally immersed in the Western culture. On this basis, Urdu was taught in Nasirat classes. Tayyaba Karim Sahiba tutored one of our Nasirat through GCSE and A level and she and another London Nasirat girl went on



to study Urdu at SOAS at degree level. Alhamdulillah from our humble efforts in Nasirat classes, many girls went on to do Urdu at GCSE and A level.

As well as religious knowledge, one of the key things that our Nasirat girls developed from taking part in Ijtemas was the confidence to speak to large audiences and to use these skills for Tabligh in schools and colleges- they highlighted Ahmadi girls as highly intelligent and confident young women. Some of these same young ladies went on to serve as National Lajna post holders.

Nasira Rehman Sahiba - National Nasirat Secretary 1997-2011

By the Grace of Allah I had the opportunity to hold the office of National Nasirat Secretary for about 13 years (1997-2011). It is a role I have cherished as I love working with children and assisting them to reach their full potential in life. It also is a role I take seriously as these girls are at a very vulnerable and delicate stage of their lives and the role of the Nasirat department is to nurture the young girls into the folds of Ahmadiyyat, the true Islam, to make them understand their true purpose: the worship of Allah and serving fellow beings.

In 1997, when I first became Nasirat Secretary, there were hundreds of Nasirat nationwide and by 2011, there were over one and a half thousand Mashallah. This fact alone paints a picture of the support needed by the girls growing up in this country. Thus, working in the education field influenced my decision to modify the Nasirat syllabus and its appearance.

A 4-stage syllabus was set up so girls could progress according to their abilities rather than being bound by their age. Furthermore, with the blessed guidance of Hazrat Khalifa-tul-Massih IV (May Allah have mercy on him) Urdu was included in the syllabus. Another important factor was the method of running local classes, so training was given to Secretaries to hold classes that encouraged girls to attend whilst teaching them about their faith.

In addition, the Nasirat were encouraged to arrange Tabligh, Talim and Khidamat-e-Khalq programs to prepare them for their future roles as Lajna. The results were astounding with Nasirat becoming leaders and volunteering to participate in school assemblies about Islam, doing projects about Islamic topics and memorising the Holy Qur'an. They even began supporting their local communities by collecting for charities,

visiting local elderly persons homes and contributing to Jama'at projects such as The Model village project, Bilal fund and The Khadija Mosque (which was financed by only Lajna and Nasirat).

As technology advanced, it was essential that the Nasirat too were provided with resources that ran parallel to this. Therefore, the department put a lot of effort into creating the Nasirat website, which was established in 2009 Alhamdolillah.

Seeing how much the Nasirat department has progressed over the years, with the loving guidance of Khalifatul-Masih (May Allah have mercy on him), makes one grateful to Allah Almighty for the countless blessings bestowed upon us.



Sajdah Zafar Sahibani - National Nasirat Secretary 2011-2014



It is very difficult to choose just one memory that I cherish as Nasirat Secretary, but what really stands out in my mind are the memories from the camps we held in Islamabad for the older girls who were about to move into Lajna. These were 4 day residential camps which included religious studies, workshops, horse-riding, sports and other activities.

For most of the Nasirat, it was their first time away from home, so understandably they were nervous and there were quite a few tears on the first night- especially when we told them that they had to hand over their mobile phones, and that they would only be allowed to have them for one hour each evening! However, through the hard work, dedication and a lot of love and patience shown by all the Lajna present, many of whom spent day and night with the girls, helping and

supporting them in everything from homesickness to spiritual guidance, the event was so

successful Alhamdulillah that on the last day, many of them were crying again, but this time because they did not want to go home!

Even now, I see many of these girls and they remember what a great time they had at the camp and how a special bond of friendship was formed that will always last Insh'allah.

Duro-Ahame Ahmud - National Nasirat Secretary 2015-2017

Becoming Secretary Nasirat was a daunting task and I was very aware of the responsibility on my shoulders. With time, I came to realise that no office bearer does their work of their own accord, in fact it is the help and guidance of Allah alone that allows us to complete the tasks He assigned to us. This realisation increased my faith tremendously and helped to strengthen my bond with Khilafat too.

During my time as Nasirat Secretary UK, by the Grace and Blessings of Allah, I had many wonderful opportunities and learning experiences. Even a five-minute individual meeting with National Sadr Sahiba would inspire me and my worries would disappear. There were many events and opportunities where I met Lajna from around the world such as Amla visits from abroad, the International Volleyball Tournament and a very special lady who visited London from the Congo (Ayesha Sahiba) who was a diplomat and highly revered lady in her region. Due to my knowledge of French, I spent a lot of time with her and got to see first-hand how someone gets moved by just one mulaqaat with beloved Huzoor (may Allah strengthen his hand) to such an extent that their heart converts to Ahmadiyyat within that mulaqaat.

Another unforgettable memory was the teen camp organised by the Nasirat department in May 2015 where I met and got to know a number of Nasirat and spent a week with them in Islamabad. The enjoyment of that week is inexplicable, as well as the outstanding lectures and workshops we experienced from role models such as Apa Qanita Rashid Sahiba



and Maulana Jahangeer Sahib. It was one of the best experiences for us and the girls.

Finally, I cannot complete this rendering without mentioning the local Nasirat Secretaries that work tirelessly throughout the year. The respect and love I received from them really humbles me and I will never forget the beautiful pictures and reports they would send in of their outstanding work.

May Allah bless them all. Ameen

 - Secretary Nasirat UK 2017-present

I'm currently serving as National Nasirat Secretary UK. My time with Nasirat has been an eye-opener: discovering that they're tender hearted, kind, caring with an inclination towards spirituality. They possess the instinct to voice their opinions regarding justice and morality. They work hard in school and Nasirat classes. The pandemic was truly a testing time for them. Undoubtedly it was a challenge to instil the spirit of Nasirat-ul-Ahmadiyya in spite of the long physical separation and being bereft of Jama'ats social community network that the girls were used to.

But, led by their dedicated Nasirat Secretaries, I was pleased to see the pandemic had brought out the best in them, Masha'Allah. They fervently took part in virtually all the requirements of their classes; and I hasten to add are still doing so.

We hope and pray that with Allah's Fazl, we are be able to fulfil Huzoor-e-Aqdas's (may Allah strengthen his hand) expectations which he explained to lajna recently:

"...If you ensure the good moral training of the girls when they are young and still in Nasirat, then all the problems faced by Lajna Ima'illah will be resolved and there will be no complaints.....once you do this you will see your next generation of Lajna will be much better than the current generation."

References

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Umoore Talibaat

رَبِّ زِدْنِي عِلْمًا

‘O my Lord, increase me in knowledge’
(Sura Taha -20:115)

SHAHANA NASIR - NAIB SECRETARY UMOORE TALIBAAT UK

The Lajna Umoore Talibaat Department UK was established in March 2018 by Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (aba) with its main aims to:

- ◆ promote communication with students
- ◆ encourage academic excellence
- ◆ provide support in all areas of student life
- ◆ endeavour to ensure that members of Lajna Ima'illah UK who are students, actively participate in all Lajna and Jama'at activities
- ◆ provide support to AMWSA (Ahmadiyya Muslim Women Students' Association).¹

From its inception, Huzoor Aqdas (aba) has graciously guided us to promote education to the highest level. Huzoor Aqdas (aba) said universal access to education is a necessary force to advance good in the world. He said:

“Islam teaches that each and every child, no matter his or her background, should be provided a proper education so that they can develop into skilled and truly beneficial members of society.”

Huzoor (aba) also expressed that Ahmadi Muslim children living in the UK should be grateful for the vast opportunities they had. He said:

“Do not waste these golden educational opportunities, but instead grasp them and seek to achieve excellence in your chosen fields of interest – whether it is science or other subjects.”²



Education can uproot even the deepest and darkest of society's ills and as such, it is imperative that all Ahmadis take hold of this opportunity and appreciate its value. Islam teaches us neither time, place or gender should be an obstacle in the acquisition of knowledge in the following beautiful Ahadith:



"It is the duty of every Muslim man and woman to seek knowledge."

“Seek knowledge even if it is far as China.”

“Every wisdom is the lost property of a Muslim”.³

The Ahmadiyya Jamaat has always advocated for women's education, but in the creation of this department, Huzoor (aba) has formalised our approach to inspiring and promoting education amongst girls and women.



A crucial part of this role is the organisation of annual seminars in universities on topics relating to *tabligh* and social issues, where the AMWSA have taken a leading role.⁴ On International Women's Day in 2019,

Lajna Umoore Talibaat Department and AMWSA held a seminar at King's College London called: 'Education Empowers Women'. The topics discussed ranged from the Islamic perspective on educating women to Transnational Feminism. AMWSA have also been instrumental in: arranging careers talks for Nasirat; setting up university groups; and connecting female Ahmadi students to an invaluable support network. The AMWSA *mulaqaats* with Huzoor Aqdas (aba) have been a particular highlight for the students; these are always immensely inspiring, with Huzoor Aqdas (aba) providing crucial guidance in all matters.

AMWSA, which was set up in 2007 on the instructions of Huzoor (aba), has been led by a number of presidents who have shared some of their thoughts:



“It seems difficult to imagine now, due to the proliferation of the internet and social networks in which communication is swift and spreadsheets and forms can more or less be self-populated, but the main duty undertaken during the initial year was obtaining data and compiling a database of students”.

(HOMAIRA NASIR, AMWSA PRESIDENT: 2007-2008)

“We looked to career guidance and preparing students for questions they might face in discussion with other Muslims and non-Muslims. In 2009, we held our first careers day with representation from Ahmadi women who worked or were students in the field. In 2010, we held our first Tabligh Training Day. The main focus was on discussions with non-Ahmadi Muslims, finality of Prophethood and the status of Jesus (on whom be peace).”

(MUNAZZAH CHOU, AMWSA PRESIDENT 2008- 2010)

“We were incredibly fortunate to have our first Lajna AMWSA *mulaqaat* with Beloved Huzoor (aba). It was a momentous occasion, and Beloved Huzoor's (may Allah be his



Helper) detailed interest in the studies of Lajna was clearly evident. Beloved Huzoor's (aba) expectation of Lajna is certainly one of excellence. With Beloved Huzoor's (aba) prayers and guidance we have witnessed the Lajna student body prospering and excelling to high standards, MashAllah."

(MALEEHA MANSUR, AMWSA PRESIDENT 2010-2014)

"A lecture was organised on Sikhism and Ahmadiyyat and university students were given an opportunity to attend. An AMWSA banner was made including the design of the logo and website/twitter design which is still used today."

(NAILA NASEER AHMED, AMWSA PRESIDENT 2014-15)

"Aside from the tasks of setting up more university AMWSA reps, contacting and writing to Prime Minister David Cameron regarding the government policies about implementing English lessons and Muslim women's right of wearing the veil and of gender segregation, the AMWSA *mulaqaat* that Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih V (aba) held with us was our highlight."

(LUBNA WAHEED, AMWSA PRESIDENT 2015-16)





“An exciting initiative that took place was the AMWSA diaries. These were made by AMWSA students for AMWSA students for the upcoming academic year. They included daily reminders for prayers, a new weekly quote from the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him), as well as informative pages on the Conditions of Bai’at and Purdah. The initiative was so successful, that a reprint was required to meet demands and renewed diaries were made for the next academic year.”

(MAHEDA REHMAN, AMWSA PRESIDENT 2016-2019)

“With Allah's blessings, we now have over 30 university and course groups, where we provide support to our students in their secular and religious learning, and through which girls are able to connect with each other and build lasting friendships and support systems.

In the coming years, we pray that Allah continues to bless our efforts to reach every student in need of our support and enables us to host many more successful events in the future, Ameen.”

(SIDRA GHINY, AMWSA PRESIDENT 2019-PRESENT)



The Umoore Talibaat Department aims to play a key role in the development and success of all students in the UK from writing applications, personal statements, interviews and research, to providing careers advice or contacting alumni students who are working in a particular field. The department has also created a database which is updated yearly, giving a snapshot of educational progress and statistical data; for example, this shows us that this year 25% of all Lajna university students attend a Russell Group University.

The Umoore Talibaat Secretaries also have a pastoral role, whereby they are encouraged to develop personal relationships with every student in order to become a valuable means of support to them, in all aspects of life.

Here are some glimpses of the work they undertake:





“From help on personal statements to a small rant about remote learning to an informal chat about what their studies might entail, they know they always have a listening ear when they need it, all within the comfort of our dearest Jama’at.”

(BASMA QURESHI, UTS FOR BEXLEY & GREENWICH)

“Students have told me they have benefited from the advice and support that has been provided throughout the year on topics such as online learning and cognitive development”.

(NABEELA SHAH, UTS FOR UPPER MITCHAM)

In the Umoore Talibaat department, long term success measures are more pertinent. We aim to see increases in the number of students attending university and achieving the highest commendations, ensuring that all Ahmadi girls are encouraged to reach their full potential.

In practical terms, the goal is to see an increase in the number of girls undertaking PhDs and research; to increase the number of girls attending top universities; to increase number of students receiving an educational award from Huzoor Aqdas (aba); to encourage every student attending university to register with AMWSA and become active in tabligh at the university and participate in humanitarian projects; and lastly for every student at university to feel connected with the Jamaat and for them to uphold the highest values of purdah as well as excelling in their studies.

When we look back to 1922, when Hazrat Musleh Maud (ra) formed Lajna Ima’illah, his vision was to see women empowered and educated in both secular and religious knowledge. Today, Lajna Ima’illah UK has a wealth of talent in its ranks. Without a shadow of doubt there are no limits to what an Ahmadi woman can achieve, and all of this can be attained within the bounds of purdah. Education is a tool which every Ahmadi girl should take full advantage of in order to fulfil their potential. Insha’Allah in the near future we will see our first UK Lajna Nobel prize winner, Booker Prize winner and Fields Medallist.

The Umoore Talibaat Department earnestly prays that we can support and encourage every Lajna member on their individual paths of intellectual and academic excellence so that they may be lights of the future. Insha’Allah.

1. Lajna Constitution; Sho’aba Umoore Talibaat Rules & Regulations
2. www.alislam.org/library/press-release/head-of-ahmadiyya-muslim-community-delivers-historic-address-in-singapore/
3. Forty Gems Of Beauty by Hazrat Mirza Bashir Ahmad (ra)
4. Sho’aba Umoore Talibaat Rules & Regulations

Highlights Tabligh

FARZANA YOUSUF - SECRETARY TABLIGH UK

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)

Tabligh is a responsibility of every Ahmadi Muslim and the National Tabligh Department plays a fundamental role in helping to convey the message of Islam to others. For example, the Tabligh Department is actively engaged in the training and development of Lajna members across the country so that they can fulfil their responsibilities as Dai'illAllah in the best possible manner.

From its humble beginnings, the department has been blessed with growth in size and resources. For more than 100 years and with the sheer Grace and Blessings of Allah the Almighty, it has had the privilege of striving in the cause of Allah so that knowledge and understanding about Islam Ahmadiyyat reaches women from many different faiths.

Tabligh Pre and Post Technological Advancements

Long before the Tabligh Department in the UK was established, members of Lajna engaged in Tabligh efforts through their words, deeds and conduct. There are so many remarkable stories which highlight that even before the advent of social media and the advancement in technology and electronic communications Lajna were actively propagating the message of Islam. One prominent example of an inspirational role model is that of the late Respected Sajida Hameed Sahiba from Hartlepool who was the first Ahmadi Muslim in England to start a local Jama'at where the majority of its members were indigenous. She drew her friends to the beautiful teachings of Islam which she personified in her warm and selfless ways. In total, she converted 18 ladies to Islam in a 20-year period, whilst raising a family of 4 children, caring for her extended family, running a business, writing a book, publishing a religious magazine (Kaukab) and battling cancer. She is truly a role model for all dai'ill'Allah and will remain so for generations to come.

Today, the blessings of MTA, Voice of Islam, which Lajna have used to propagate the message of Islam, YouTube through which Huzoor-e-Anwar's (aba) speeches are available throughout the world and social media are all tools through which the

Promised Messiah's (peace be upon him) revelation *"I shall cause thy message to reach the corners of the earth"* has manifested itself.

The means by which we have new tools to engage in Tabligh have greatly increased. Rather than only relying on face-to-face interactions, we can now reach millions with the simple click of a button. Social media platforms such as twitter and Instagram have enabled us to instantaneously convey the teachings of Islam, refute allegations, inform about the rights of Muslim women in Islam to audiences across the globe, as well as garner new Tabligh contacts.

Huzoor-e-Anwar (aba) has said:

"During the Covid-19 pandemic, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community has greatly increased its efforts to spread Islam through online Tabligh. Certainly, more online events should be organised in which questions others may have about Islam or our teachings are answered"

[29 August 2020, meeting with Majlis-e-Amla, Sweden]

Alhumdulillah, with the Grace and blessings of Allah, the Tabligh Department were able to utilise technological advancements and continue with our Tabligh efforts through virtual means during the Covid-19 pandemic. Interfaith events, Coffee Mornings, Tabligh Workshops and Forums were held virtually and whilst communities around us stood still amidst this unprecedented occurrence, Lajna Ima'illah UK continued in their Tabligh outreach efforts utilising methods such as article writing and preparing materials about Islam for schools to use as part of their remote learning initiatives.

Publications

Huzoor-e-Anwar (aba) has said:

"Whether people join the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community or accept our message is out of our hands – it is Allah the Almighty who guides people, however our great task is to ensure that we convey the message of Islam far and wide. Thus, you need to carefully assess the needs of the time, the attitudes and views of the people and ascertain what literature or information is best suited to removing their reservations and fears of Islam."

[Virtual Mulaqaat with New Converts and Students, Holland, 23 August 2020]



Alhumdulillah, Lajna Ima'illah UK has written and published the following leaflets: The Status Of Women In Islam, The Rights Of Women In Islam, The Role Of Women In Islam, Understanding The Islamic Veil, Muslim Women: the Reality, Female Circumcision: Not In The Name Of Islam, COVID-19, A Divine Message For Mankind: Historic Letters To World Leaders from His Holiness, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad Worldwide Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community and Introducing Lajna Ima'illah, The Ahmadiyya Muslim Women's Association.

Some Inspiring Examples

Dr Qurratul Ain Anni Rehman, who has previously served as Secretary Tabligh UK reflects that, *“Lajna UK celebrated the Centenary of Khilafat and wanted to organise a national Tabligh event exclusively for females. This had never been previously organised at a national level as Lajna used to invite our contacts to Huzoor's Peace Conferences. The preparation started in earnest and the invitation cards were sent to all the local Sadrs and Tabligh secretaries to distribute to their Tabligh contacts. Over 1000 invitation cards were also posted to all the local female Councillors and headteachers in London as well as all the female MPs, MEPs and Baronesses in the UK. The event was to be held on Saturday 22nd November 2008 at Baitul Futuh entitled 'Khilafat Centenary Celebratory Evening'.*

Exhibitions were arranged for all the guests on Khilafat, the establishment of Lajna Ima'illah, the activities of Lajna Ima'illah UK and Humanity First. Tours of the Baitul Futuh mosque and library were also arranged for all guests. By the grace of Allah we had well over 150 guests including MPs who spoke about their involvement with our Jamaat. Following on from the success of this event, Lajna Ima'illah UK organised an annual Peace Conference covering timely and topical issues pertaining to women”.

Mrs Talut Saqi, who has also served as Secretary Tabligh UK reflects that, *“An area that was developed was empowering Lajna members to give talks on Islam both in primary and secondary schools. The central team produced slides on various aspects of Islam for members to use/amend as appropriate. After the opening of the Baitul Futuh mosque in 2003, the central team became involved in conducting school tours of the mosque.*

This started as a result of one local Tabligh Secretary asking the national secretary for her help for her son's school visit and within a few months the central Lajna team together with trained Lajna members were conducting 3-4 school visits per week during term time.

A script was developed, incorporating the main features of the mosque together with some facts about Islam. Worksheets were produced targeting both primary and secondary school children which helped them further understand Islam.

Initially an old overhead projector and acetates were used to give talks to the

students and later as technology developed, a laptop projector was purchased for this purpose.

The slides and worksheets were shared with Lajna members who had mosques in their areas to encourage them to conduct mosque tours and talks.

We found that these mosque tours left a deep impression not only on the children but also on the teachers and parents that accompanied them who asked us many questions too. Some entered the mosque quite suspicious and apprehensive but by the time they left through the blessings of Allah they were relaxed and appreciative of the beautiful teachings of Islam.

Events and Initiatives

Annual National Peace Symposiums

By the Grace of Allah, Lajna Ima'illah UK has been blessed with the opportunity to hold an annual National Peace Symposium, drawing together women from all walks of life and from all parts of the UK. In January 2020, before the pandemic hit, Lajna held its 11th National Women's Peace Symposium at the Baitul Futuh Mosque in London. Guests at the Peace Symposium include Parliamentarians, Diplomats, Academics and representatives from different faiths and Charities. Peace symposiums were held annually until the pandemic.



Hon Baroness Susan Williams of Trafford, Lords Minister, was a guest speaker at one of the Peace Symposiums. Baroness Williams remarked:

'Your dedication to your faith and your country is an inspiration to us all. Ahmadiyya Muslim women demonstrate to me their importance to building strong communities. Thank you!'

National Women Shelters Campaign



United Nations International Women's Day was used as a mechanism to initiate a new Tabligh initiative.

The National Tabligh Team asked all Regions to participate in the 'Love from Lajna' Shelters Campaign. Alhamdulillah, nearly 100 Women's shelters across the UK were contacted and sent 'Tabligh Hampers' consisting of food items, amenity kits and Jama'at literature. Lajna were instructed to include the following literature in their Hampers: *Life of Muhammad, Word Crisis and the Pathway to Peace, Peace Loyalty leaflets, Introduction to Islam leaflets, leaflets on the Holy Qur'an and leaflets about the Promised Messiah* (peace be upon him). 93 Shelters were contacted and 485 Hampers were delivered.

By extending the hand of friendship and generosity to women living in hardship and difficulty and who were deprived of love and kindness, we were able to provide them with humanitarian support and also bring awareness about the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community and in particular, the work of Lajna Ima'illah in the UK.

PETERBOROUGH WOMEN'S AID

Registered Charity No. 273 803

POST OFFICE BOX 75
PETERBOROUGH
PE1 4UZ

Ghazala Tariq
Ahmadi Muslim Community

Thank you so much for your generosity in presenting our organisation with such beautiful hampers in celebration of International Women's Day. Your expressions of love will be shared with the women we help who will be delighted to receive such lovely gifts.

We would like to thank everyone concerned and thank you for your interest in Peterborough Women's Aid.

Yours sincerely



Tracy Foster
Service Manager

From: **Donnah** <Donnah@newcastlewomencaid.org.uk>
Date: 15 March 2016 at 14:56
Subject: Thank you
To: shafin.saeed@gmail.com

Hi Shafra,

My name is Donnah and I am a Refuge Support Worker at Newcastle Women's Aid.

I am writing on behalf of Newcastle Women's Aid residents and staff to say a big thank you for the beautiful gifts, fruit and books which you kindly donated to our women and children.

The residents and children are really enjoying the lovely fruit and some of them have tried items which they have never tasted before!

We have put the spare books in our mini library which is in the women's lounge for future residents.

Once again, thank you so much for your lovely donations.

Best Regards

Donnah

Donnah Illingworth-Barnes
Domestic Abuse Prevention Advocate
Newcastle Women's Aid

Letters to David Cameron

Huzoor-e-Anwar (aba) has instructed:

"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.

"Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V, may Allah be his helper, Concluding Address, Lajna Ima'illah National Ijtema, September 2017

Lajna across the UK have strived with passion and determination to defend the name of Islam. In January 2016, when the then Prime Minister David Cameron alluded to the fact that Muslim women are oppressed, more than 2000 letters and almost 4000 emails were sent to Mr. Cameron from Lajna across the UK, refuting his comments and emphasising the rights and freedoms given to Muslim Women by Islam. Several Lajna also took to Social Media to express their concerns and shed light on the true teachings of Islam. National newspapers were also contacted and a number of our Lajna had their articles and comments published.



With Allah's blessings and the guidance of Khalifatul Masih (aba) despite the many challenges faced due to negative media about Islam and more recently, the Covid-19 pandemic, the mechanisms and opportunities for Tabligh have continued to increase May Allah enable us to fulfil the wishes of Khalifatul Masih (aba) and further spread the true teachings of Islam across the United Kingdom, and worldwide. Ameen.



Ishaat Department

LUBNA SOHAIL SAHIBA - SECRETARY ISHA'AT UK

“And when Scrolls will be Published”



Since ancient times, the leaves of trees, their barks, bones, and stone tablets have been used for the practice of writing; and the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^(Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was no exception.

The proper practice of writing began in China. The first known written document dates from 880AD and is exhibited in the British Museum in the China collection.

The skill of writing and imparting knowledge is developing rapidly in various new forms through printing presses, computers, and the internet. These developments under Allah's Command are the emphatic proof of the truthfulness of the Promised Messiah^(Peace be upon him).

The Promised Messiah^(Peace be upon him) writes:



Regarding these Latter Days, God had also given the news in the Holy Qur'an that books and magazines would be published extensively throughout the world at that time, ways of interaction between nations would open up..."¹

The following verse points to another truth of The Promised Messiah (Peace be upon him). Six prophecies are mentioned in these verses, which we have seen and are witnessing in this age and some which may take place in the future.

وَالْمُرْسَلَاتِ عُرْفًا ۚ فَالْعَصْفِ عَصْفًا ۚ وَالنَّشْرِ نَشْرًا ۚ فَالْفُرْقَةِ
 فَرَقًا ۚ فَالْبُلْقِيَةِ ذِكْرًا ۚ عُدْرًا أَوْ نُذْرًا ۚ إِنَّمَا تُوعَدُونَ لَوَاقِعٌ ۚ

(The Holy Qur'an 77:2-8)

“By those who are sent forth with goodness, then they push on with a *forceful* pushing, And by *those* who spread the *truth*, a good spreading, And then they distinguish *fully* between good and evil. Then they carry the exhortation far and wide to excuse *some* and warn others. Verily, that which you are promised must come to pass.”²

Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba) in his Friday sermon of 15th October 2010 explains these verses in the following words:

“Today, God has provided ways and means to propagate these books and to respond to our detractors, ways which are much swifter and proficient than ever. The Holy Qur'an and the books of the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) and other literature is traversing new stages of broadcast via Television and the Internet. A few decades ago, all this was unthinkable. God has provided these opportunities so that they are utilised in the defence of Islam and in its Tabligh. It is indeed His blessings to provide us with these modern inventions. We should try and make good, rather than idle use of these inventions. If we become part of that group which is taking the message of the Muhammadan Messiah (peace be upon him) to the world we too can be counted among those who God has borne witness to.³”

Muslim Television Ahmadiyya (MTA) International is one way in which we have harnessed the power of these resources and opportunities, and used it to spread

spirituality and blessings to the corners of the earth. Emphasising the importance of seeking its blessings, Huzoor ^(aba) instructed that the Lajna Ima'illah in particular should take maximum advantage from it. Huzoor ^(aba) said:



“Like I have already said, today we can use modern technology to spread our teachings. Apart from MTA, there is the Jamaat website which is full of programmes and books which impart knowledge and learning that are easily available. You should make use of these resources and constantly increase your knowledge. Every Lajna member should connect to MTA and watch its programmes regularly. At the very least, they must make it a point to watch the Friday sermon and other programmes of Khalifatul Masih and should also ensure that their children also sit down and watch these programmes. Those girls that have been born and brought up in the UK should make certain that they associate themselves with the MTA and the Jamaat website. They must also ensure that they watch the programmes of Khalifatul Masih as this will be a source of spiritual and moral training for them and their religious knowledge will also increase.”⁴

From the early days of Islam, women have also been serving in spreading the true message of Islam throughout the world.

“Among the women who have played an important role in changing the course of world history, the name that tops the list is that of the mother of the believers, Hazrat Khadija ^(ra). Apart from being one of Arabia’s most noble and wealthy women, she was blessed with exemplary knowledge, grace, faith, and belief. Regarding Hazrat Ayesha ^(ra), the Holy Prophet (sa) would say: “Learn half of faith from Ayesha”.⁵


Similarly, Hazrat Umme Salma ^(ra) was literate and played an important role in the education and training of Muslim women. In the books of Hadith, she is the source of many traditions and narrations. She is second in the list of narrators of Hadith among the wives of the Holy Prophet (sa) and 12th overall in the list of narrators when considering men and women.”⁶

Following in their footsteps, there have been a long line of women who forged a path of spreading knowledge. During the lifetime of the Promised Messiah (Peace be upon him), there were numerous women who lit a lamp of knowledge and blessing in their hearts after reading his books and listening to his speeches.

When Hazrat Khalifatul Masih the II (ra) launched the Al-Fazl newspaper, his wife Hazrat Umme Nasir (ra) donated her two gold bracelets which she had kept for the use of her daughter and Hazrat Amma Jaan (ra) and donated her land for Al-Fazl. ⁷


Letter about Ladies Column in Al-Badr

Ustani Sakinat-un-Nisa Sahiba, the wife of Qazi Muhammad Zuhoor-ud-Din Akmal Sahib, were among these empowering ladies. She would submit articles for newspapers and magazines from a very young age of 14 or 15; she went as far as demanding a women's column or one ladies' page in Al-Badr. She wrote:



“Respected Editor Sahib of Al-Badr Newspaper,
Your esteemed newspaper is as dear to me as my family is to me. I swear by God that it provides contentment to my heart. Hence, I wish to pen a suggestion, that could a column for ladies be added to Al-Badr for our ladies to also be able to write articles.”

She continued writing articles, and in turn the Editor gave his appreciation in the following words:



“Since this column (for ladies) has commenced in Al-Badr newspaper, so far only three ladies have contributed to the column. The wife of Malik Karam Ilaahi Sahib, the wife of Akmal Sahib and the daughter of Ghulam Ahmad Phulwari Sahib. May Allah Almighty reward them.” ⁸

In his article in the first edition of Al-Fazl published on 19th June 1913, Huzoor (aba) spoke about the aims and objectives of Al-Fazl and the order of articles, Huzoor(aba) also said:

“Two columns will be for the ladies.

At the bottom of the same page, a note was also included stating that two columns for ladies is very little; however, as ladies read Jamaat newspapers, these columns have been introduced for their interest and benefit. Otherwise, Sheikh Yaqoob Ali Sahib Editor of Al Hakam has initiated a magazine entitled ‘Ahmadi Khatoon’ (Ahmadi woman) for this purpose, which should also be taken advantage of.”⁹

“The newspaper ‘Ahmadi Khatoon’ remained in publication from 1912 to 1916. From time-to-time ladies’ articles were published in it, with the greatest number of articles written by the late Ustani Sakeenat-un-Nisa Sahiba. Additionally, articles written by Hazrat Sayyeda Umme Nasir Ahmad Sahiba^(ra), Hazrat Amma Jee, the wife of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih I^(ra), Hazrat Sayyeda Amtul Hayye Sahiba^(ra), Hajira Sahiba wife of Chaudhry Fateh Muhammad sahib, Umme Ayesha, the wife of Maulvi Muhammad Ahsan-ul-Haque sahib Purini, District Bhagalpur, Zohra Begum, the wife of Maulvi Muhammad Sahib MA. Mahamooda and Hameeda, the daughters of Hazrat Yaqoob Ali sahib Irfani, Aziza Razia the daughter of Khalifa Rasheed-ud-din sahib, Sayyeda Naima, the daughter of Sayed Hamid Shah sahib of Sialkot had also been published.

First Al-Fazl collective for ladies

For the purpose of increasing religious knowledge and education amongst ladies, the editorial board of Al-Fazl decided to add some supplementary pages to Al-Fazl. These pages were to be published on a monthly basis rather than with every issue of the newspaper.

Shortly after the above announcement from Al-Fazl, the first supplement for women was published on 16 December 1916. It consisted of twenty pages. There was also an announcement stating that prizes will be awarded to the ladies who wrote outstanding articles. The initial prize-winning article was entitled ‘Hospitality’. A prize of five Rupees was to be awarded for it. It was also announced that the article should be divided into the following sub-headings.

- The need for hospitality and its effect on society
- What are the essential qualities required to respect a guest
- What matters should the host consider when providing comfort for the guest
- Is there a negative angle to Hospitality; if so, what is it?”¹⁰

An Article of Hazrat Sayeda Amatul Hayye Sahiba

On 20th November 1917 a special issue of Al-fazl (newspaper) consisting of articles on topics relating to women was published. In this issue an article by Hazrat Sayeda Amatul Hayye Sahiba with the title 'For the attention of Ahmadi women' was also published. While she mentioned the services of women in the early era (of Islam) towards the propagation of Islam, she made an appeal to the ladies of this age to offer sacrifices in the same manner.

Drawing special attention towards Tabligh she wrote:

“God has provided our women with the opportunity to learn religion, teach it to others and to make their generations religious”.¹¹

While elucidating the aims of establishing Lajna Ima'illah, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II (ra) said:

“Write articles to make use of knowledge. By writing articles, novel ideas are created which broadens the knowledge. You must make use of this methodEstablish Lajna Ima'illah and through this arrange for the religious education and moral training of Ahmadi ladies. Written instructions have also been despatched to individuals in this regard...”¹²

He acknowledged the services of “Tadeeb-un-Nisa”, a magazine initiated by Hazrat Sheikh Yaqoob Ali Sahib (ra). This magazine had been initiated for the benefit of Ahmadi ladies and it was rendering a great service. Hazrat Sheikh Yaqoob Ali Sahib Irfani (ra) earlier initiated a magazine by the name of “Ahmadi Khatoon” which probably continued for five to six years. Then in March 1923 Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II (ra) named it “Tadeeb-un-Nisa” which continued for approximately two years. It continued to publish reports on women's work. From 1926 Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II (ra) launched a regular magazine

Need of a Periodical for Ahmadi Ladies

Considering the wish that there should be a periodical for women (“Tadeeb-un-Nisa” had ceased its publications in 1925; probably due to financial issues) Lajna Imai'llah pondered and decided that at the time, it was difficult to establish a separate periodical. The Editor of Al-Fazl had already decided to dedicate a whole page of Al-Fazl for the articles written by ladies. Below are the details of this decision of Lajna Ima'illah, in the words of Sayyeda Umme Dawood, the acting Secretary Lajna Ima'illah, Qadian.

Ahmadi Ladies' own Periodical

“By the Grace of God Almighty, the sentiment of the Ahmadi ladies to have their own periodical for their educational and moral training is increasing day by day. This aspiration has been in the minds of Lajna Ima’illah Qadian ever since its establishment, but as a result of some difficulties, Lajna Ima’illah was unable to implement it. However, the good news is that after a lot of deliberation, a plan has been formed and if Ahmadi ladies give their full attention and make an effort to make it successful, then the aforementioned aim can soon be achieved. The plan is that before publishing such a permanent periodical, a page of Al-Fazl should be dedicated for this. The Editor (of Al-Fazl) had already accepted this idea in a previous edition. In this page, articles from Ahmadi ladies on cultural, moral, religious, historical topics, in fact all kinds of articles would be published. If useful and appropriate articles for this page are regularly provided by Ahmadi sisters for six months, then a two pages supplement can be published with Lajna bearing the cost. If this second step is also taken firmly by Ahmadi ladies, and this supplement is sufficiently sold, and enough articles are provided, then after six months or a year, Lajna can start to publish their separate periodical. This is the plan under consideration for Lajna and all Ahmadi ladies should make effort to achieve this. I also deem it important to mention that until each sister who is able to write does not pay attention to this; we cannot be successful in this scheme. If sisters do not take the first step well, then they would not have the courage to take the next step. Therefore, O my sisters, stand up and have courage, and as soon as you read this article of mine, make a firm commitment and pledge that we must make this scheme a success. Prove to the world that this could become a proverb: ‘Himmat-e-niswan, madad-e-Khuda’ (God helps those who take courage-The actual word ‘men’ in the above proverb is substituted with ‘women’ to make an impact)

Following this, I would request all literate Ahmadi ladies generally, and the lady writers especially that for the fulfilment of this scheme, they should make their first attempt to write various interesting articles and send them to the Editor of Al-Fazl, to be included in this allocated page.

Wassalam,

Umme-Dawood - Acting Secretary Lajna Ima’illah, Qadian”¹³

Articles by Women in Al-Fazl

After the announcement by the editor of Al-Fazl, that a page will be dedicated for ladies' articles, there was an article by an Ahmadi lady with some suggestion for the progress of women in every issue. The daughter of Malik Barkat Ali Sahib of Gujrat wrote: "In Qadian, there is no accommodation provided for the female students from outside Qadian. The only reason for this is that there is no boarding house arrangement for women. Is it not possible for us, the women, to collect a sum of money, under the supervision of Lajna Ima'illah so that a women's boarding house is established in Qadian?"

Initiating the Periodical 'Misbah'

"For some time, Ahmadi sisters had been feeling the need for a periodical for women. They had been expressing their views in this regard. Finally, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II (ra) gave permission to initiate such a periodical.

It is true that Hazrat Qazi Muhammad Zahoorud Deen Akmal (ra) and his wife, a teacher Sakeenatun Nisa Sahiba, held an exceptional position out of those who presented the idea to establish a periodical exclusively for Ahmadi ladies.

Shortly before the initiation of the magazine Misbah, Sakeenatun Nisa Sahiba (ra) a teacher, made an appeal to women for their full cooperation and assistance and said the following words: "O courageous women of the Ahmadiyya Community! O sisters who give precedence to faith over worldly matters! Glad tidings for you that the person who understands our pain and who is our well-wisher – our Khalifa, has decided to begin a women's periodical for you – yes, out of sympathy for your delicate and pained condition; and in order to transform your feelings into joy... Now, please appreciate this with full courage, enthusiasm and with steadiness. The Ahmadi women were rewarded for their exemplary courage and extraordinary sacrifice for donating to build Fazl Mosque London. Their examples were presented as sacrifices made by women who belong to a poor nation with limited means, to women in neighbouring nations. Thus, now please promote this periodical in exactly the same way." ¹⁴

The first issue was eventually published on 15th December 1922 and this periodical was named 'Misbah'. The editorial of the first issue of Misbah stated: 'For a period of time there has been a call in Al-Fazl, which is the organ of the Ahmadiyya movement, that there should be a separate periodical for women... Thanks to Allah, our Imam Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II (ra) instructed the Sadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya to establish a periodical for women and named it 'Misbah'... Misbah means a lantern; which

brings light into dark houses. This is equally required in the homes of the rich and the poor; and all business is completed in its light. May God make Misbah, our periodical, true to its name, and may it transport the light of knowledge and beneficence to every home.'

In this very issue of Misbah, it was also announced by Lajna that sisters in other cities should establish Lajna Ima'illah, the programme for the Annual Convention was also published in this issue of Misbah."¹⁵

New Era under the Supervision of Lajna Ima'illah:

At the beginning of 1947, Lajna Ima'illah made the decision that it would take this periodical under its supervision and take responsibility for its expenses. Therefore, after seeking the permission of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II, ^(ra) Central Lajna made the announcement about it. Only three issues had been published when the country was partitioned, resulting in the migration from Qadian. Although the Lajna office was temporarily established in Ratan Bagh Lahore, the matter of re-establishment of Misbah was postponed for a while.

Publishing Misbah from Rabwah:

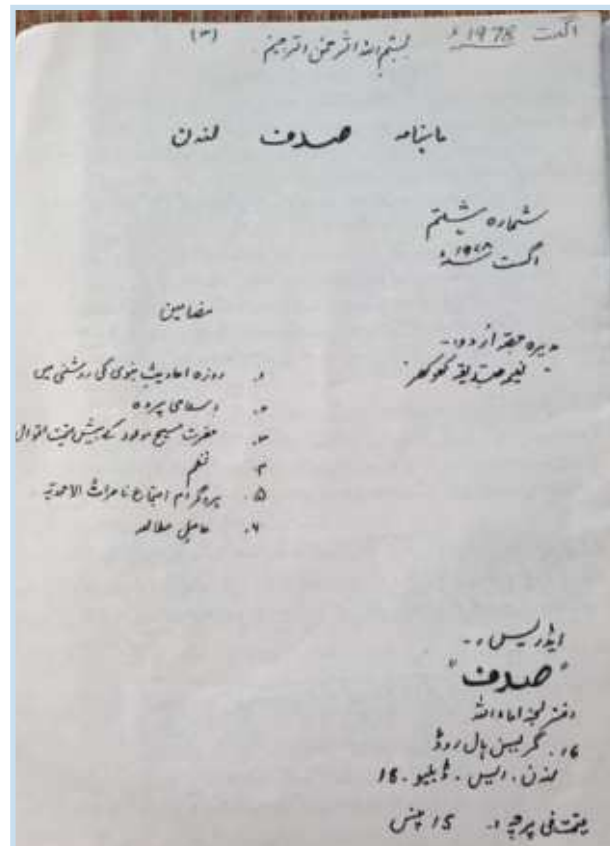
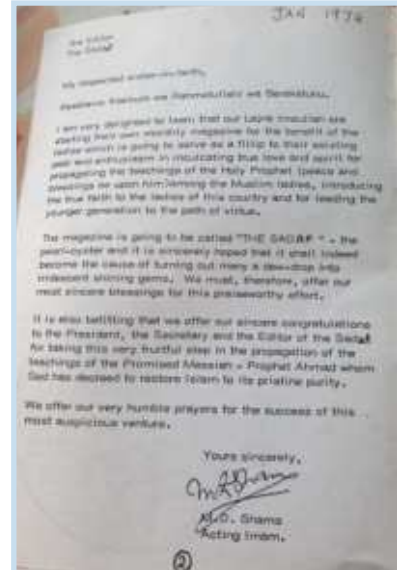
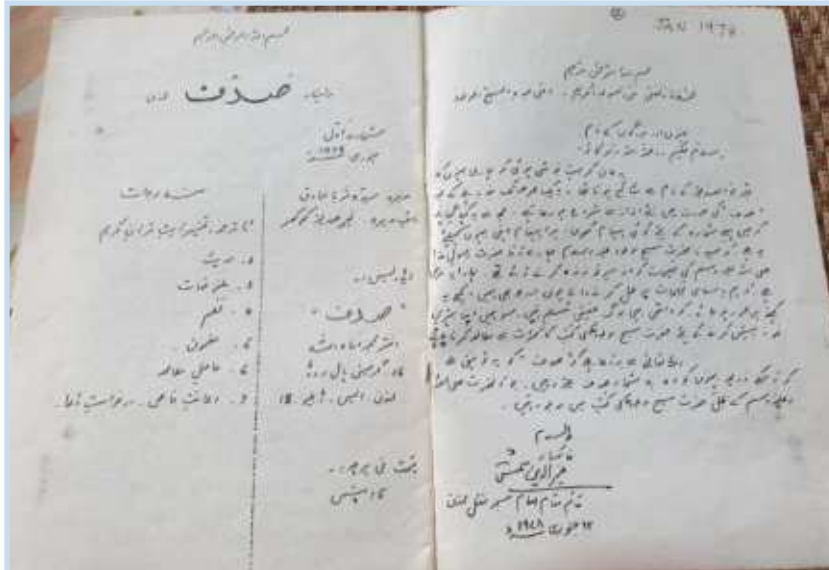
Finally, Misbah was reinitiated in 1950 from Rabwah and by the Grace of Allah it continues to be published with full proficiency. It is the only literary representative of women. Its first editor was Amatullah Khurshid Sahiba, the daughter of Maulvi Abul Ata Sahib, who despite his ill-health, made a lot of effort towards this magazine. She carried this magazine forward with full responsibility. After her demise on 26th September 1960, Amatul Rashid Shaukat Sahiba, the wife of Malik Saif-ur-Rahman Sahib, became its editor.

In 1962 on the occasion of the Jamaat's Annual Convention, the ladies' periodical Misbah was also mentioned in the opening address by Maulvi Farzand Ali Khan Sahib. He stated: "The sixth new point this year is literature for the new Ahmadis. Two of these are notably worth mentioning... One is the Jamaat's ladies' own periodical Misbah."

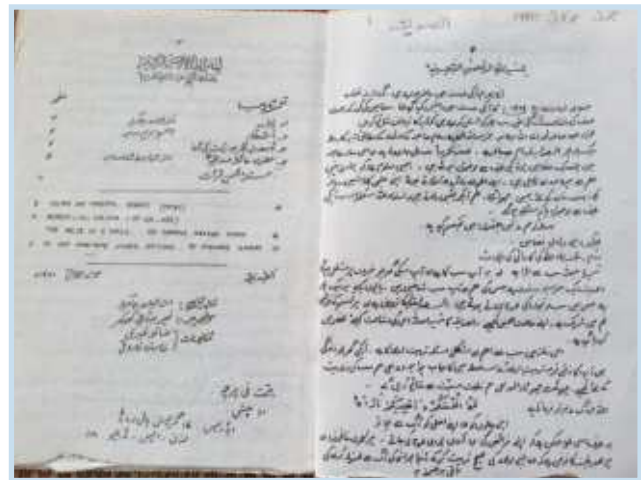
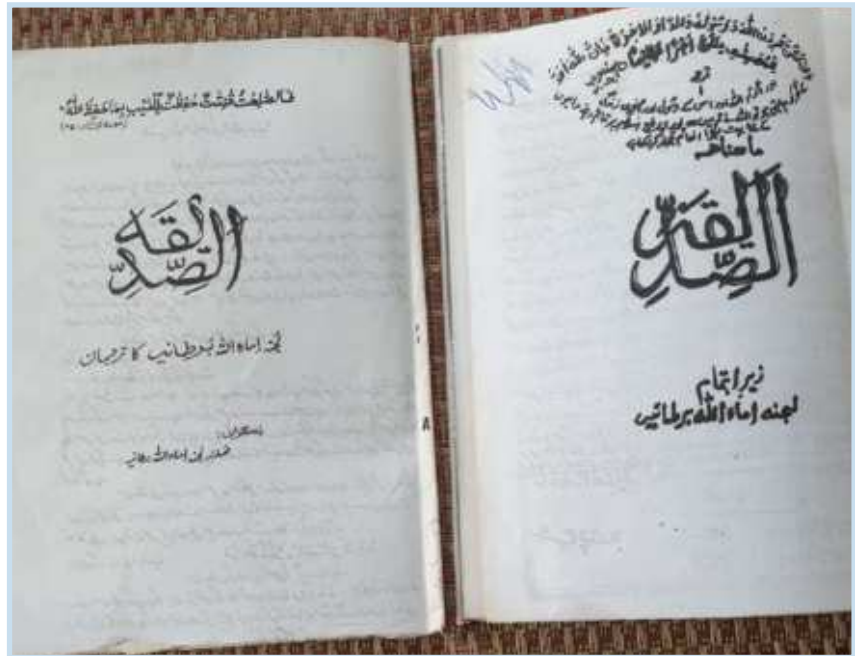
Moreover, on 27th December Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II ^(ra) personally also mentioned Misbah in his Jalsa Salana address.¹⁶

Lajna Ima'illah UK

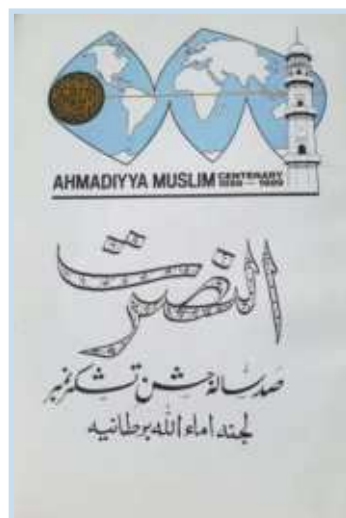
Lajna Ima'illah UK began its efforts to publish a magazine in the early 1980s. At the time, magazines were handwritten. Mrs Tayyaba Shahnaz Sahiba has copies of some magazines from that era in her possession.



The magazine titled “Al-Siddiq” was published under the supervision of Mrs Amatul Hafeez Salam Sahiba. Mrs Tayyaba Shahnaz Sahiba was the editor. This magazine was published intermittently, but could not be continued. Later a magazine by the name of “Sadaf” was published. After sometime “Al-Siddiq” was reinstated under the supervision of Mrs Amtul Hafeez Salam Sahiba.



Later in 1989 a magazine titled “Al-Nusrat” was published on the occasion of the Jamaat Centenary Jubilee, under the supervision of Mrs Amatul Rashid Ahmad Sahiba. Mrs Tayyaba Shahnaz Sahiba was its editor.

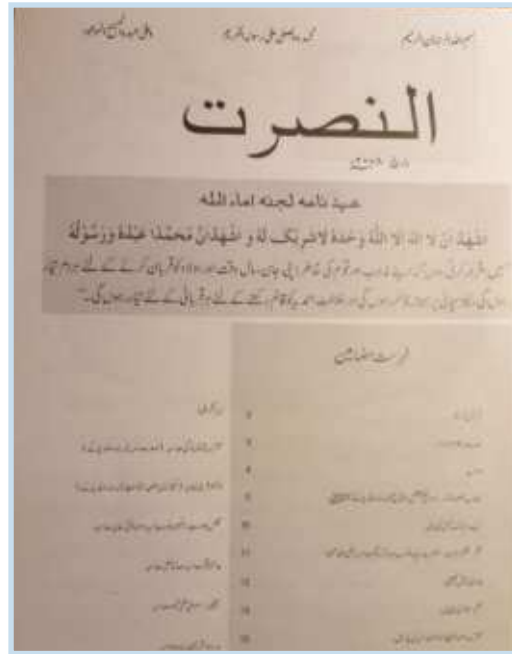


The same team had the honour of compiling a special edition of this magazine in 1992, in memory of Hazrat Sayyeda Asifa Begum Sahiba. (may Allah be pleased with her)



In 2003 upon the demise of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV (may Allah have Mercy on him) Lajna Ima'illah UK had the honour of publishing a special edition of the magazine. This magazine passed different stages of development as "Al-Nusrat", under the supervision of Mrs Shmaila Nagi Sahiba. At the time Dr. Fariha Khan Sahiba was serving as the Secretary of Publication. Mrs Sharmeen Butt Sahiba was then appointed the editor for both the English and Urdu sections of the magazine.

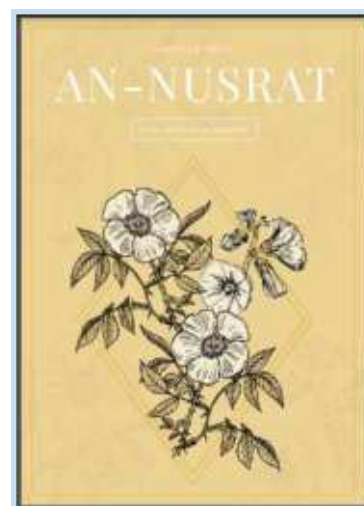
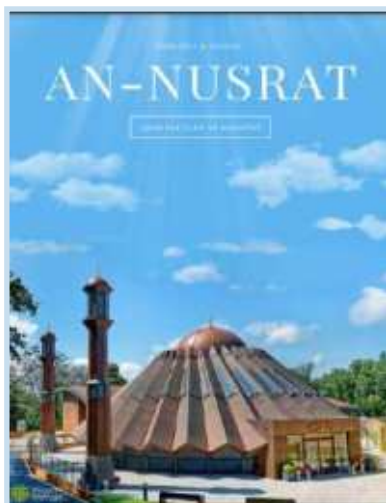
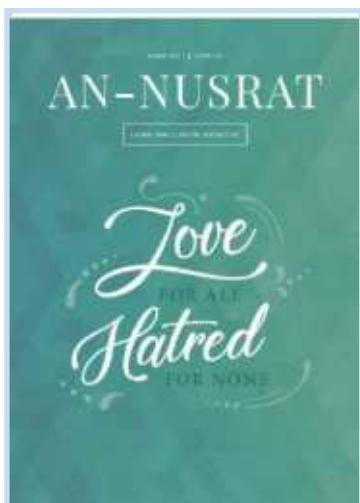
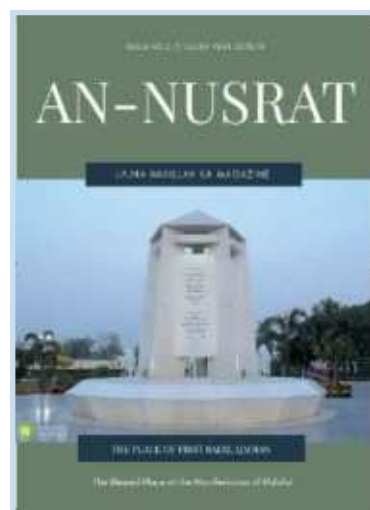
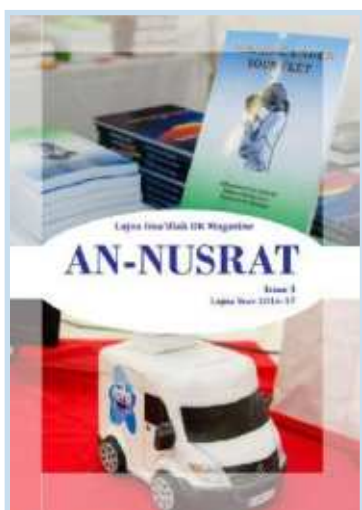




This magazine continued to be published under the supervision of Mrs Nasira Rahman Sahiba while Mrs Zahida Bashir Sahiba served as the Secretary Publication. The editor for the Urdu section was Mrs Hamida Farooqi Sahiba and Mrs Shermeen Butt Sahiba for the English section.



Currently this magazine is published with Dr Fariha Khan Sahiba being the National Sadr of Lajna Imai'llah UK, while my humble self is currently serving as the Secretary of Publication. The editor of the urdu section of the magazine was Mrs Saiha Maaz Sahiba and for the English Section Mrs Nudrat Mubashar Sahiba. As a result of both these editors moving abroad, at present Mrs Farida Basharat Sahiba and Mrs Qanita Qureshi Sahiba are serving as editors respectively.



Allah has provided us with the latest technology for dissemination of knowledge. During the time of the Holy Prophet (sa), the companions fulfilled the duties of preaching Islam despite not having these modern means and resources. The amenities, facilities and means that we are blessed with today were Divinely destined for the era of the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him), the true servant of the Holy Prophet (sa).

Thus, this age of the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him), is the age of spreading knowledge through books. This is the reason that the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) has left behind a vast ocean of spiritual treasures that were published in his era. His companions also played a significant role in spreading these books.

In his Friday sermon delivered on 15th October 2010; Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba) states:

“Today, these verses are a sign of his truthfulness and indicate towards the progress of his community. Therein is a prophecy which has been fulfilled, is being fulfilled and will be fulfilled in future. This is the Word of the Master of the heavens and the earth Who is All-Powerful, Who, through His great power has fulfilled the revolutionary change destined for the time of the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) and shall continue to do so in future. What is needed is for us to endeavour to be part of this revolutionary change so that we may partake of the blessings that God has destined with it. For this we have to bring about revolutionary changes within ourselves.”¹⁷

May Allah the Almighty grant us the ability to fully benefit from the developments of the modern era and enhance our capability in our education, propagation of our message and moral training. May we also become the strong helpers of the Khalifa of the time, and become true servants of Islam Ahmadiyyat.

1. <https://www.alislam.org/library/books/Barahin-e-Ahmadiyya-Part-5.pdf> p.482
2. Al-Mursalaat v2-8
3. <https://www.alislam.org/friday-sermon/2010-10-15.html>
4. Address to Lajna Ima'illah on the occasion of Annual Lajna Ijtema UK 25th October 2015. <https://www.alislam.org/video/lajna-Ima'illah-uk-ijtema-2015-concluding-address/>
5. Copied from the Seerat Khatam-an-Nabiyyeen (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) by Hazrat Sahibzada Mirza Bashir Ahmad Sahib MA Pg 530- 531)
6. <https://www.alislam.org/library/books/Seal-of-Prophets-Vol-2.pdf> p.389
7. (Tareekh Lajna Ima'illah Vol 1 page 18- 19).
8. (Tareekh Lajna Immaillah, Volume 1, page 10)
9. (Tareekh Lajna Immaillah,, Volume 1, page 60)
10. History of Lajna I volume p.38
11. History of Lajna Volume I p. 46-47
12. History of Lajna volume I p.88

References:

Security Department

AMTUL BARI ARIF - SECRETARY SECURITY UK

The history of the past hundred years stands witness that we have been living in the shadow of God's Protection,
Why would the moth have any fear when the night approaches or when the full light of Khilafat is shining

We are immensely grateful to Allah that He has enabled us to witness the completion of a century of Lajna Ima'illah. On this blessed day of Juma, I pick up my pen in an attempt to convey my feelings at the loving insistence of the editor of An-Nusrat magazine. We are forever grateful to Allah the Almighty that we are blessed with Islam, Ahmadiyyat and Khilafat. We witness these blessings in our everyday life, and are ever grateful to our elders who accepted Ahmadiyyat - the true Islam.

Whatever duty or task is undertaken for the Jamaat carries immense blessings and is indeed a great honour. However, security duty is particularly

important and very sensitive. For this reason, everyone involved in this duty considers themselves to be immensely fortunate. As Lajna, we promise that we will always be ready to sacrifice our life, wealth, time, and children in the cause of our faith. By the Grace of Allah every Lajna member works with great responsibility and conscientiousness to fulfil this pledge. In the same spirit, you will notice that the security team carries out its duty responsibly and reliably. There have been instances where the security team have been called at short notice and they still have made themselves available. In spite of weather conditions, the security team would always perform their duty with a smile on their faces, and considered it an

honour. In addition to this, the Lajna security team is present wherever Huzoor^{aba} is in attendance. This includes events such as mosque inaugurations; Jalsa, Eid, funerals, Nikahs, Ramadhan and many more functions. The team is ever present on these occasions and undertake their duty with a cheerful countenance.

The security duty started during the time of Khalifatul Masih IV^{ra}. Whilst discussing its early days with a member who had been part of that team, it came to light that initially there was no separate team for each department. There was only one team which undertook all the duties. These duties began at Fazl Mosque during Juma, and was later extended to include Baitul Futuh.

After an unfortunate incident in 2010, security duty was formalised. After that incident, duty was performed daily from Fajar to Isha. Initially there were no facilities and nor was there the use of a separate cabin for the security team. Despite this, members performed security duty happily. They would be outside checking bags, often in extremely cold weather. Later, they were provided with the facility of a cabin.

When *Qasr e Khilafat* was shifted to Islamabad, the cabin would open in the morning and would

remain so until Isha. As well as Lajna from the local area, Lajna from other London regions would also perform this duty with passion on a daily rota system.

The security team also had the opportunity to give duty with Aapa Jaan. By the Grace of Allah, they are very fortunate to be recipients of Huzoor's^{aba} and Aapa Jaan's prayers and we were given directives from them directly. Security duty is also given when there are meetings with Huzoor^{aba} or Aapa Jaan, or if the Aamila members of any country have mulaqaat. This is a great privilege as these are opportunities to serve the Khalifa of the time. There have been numerous times when people bestow prayers upon our members, and tell them that they are very fortunate to serve the Jamaat.

Irrespective of the occasion, whether it is Eid, Jalsa or a wedding, by the Grace of Allah, purdah is fully observed. I remember once we had dinner with Aapa Jaan and Sadr Sahiba very graciously instructed us to just enjoy dinner with her. One of our colleagues went to meet Aapa Jaan and Aapa Jaan said "I had never seen you look like this but recognised you with your voice." I cannot express the love and affection of Huzoor^{aba} and Aapa Jaan, and the many memories with them, but I will share one such

instance. During weddings and other functions, we didn't eat at the function, but Aapa Jaan instructed that as we were performing Huzoor's^{aba} duty, we must also eat the food provided. Then she very lovingly gave instructions to Sadr Sahiba to take special note of this. There are numerous fortunate moments when Aapa Jaan would ask us to bring our chair to the table and have dinner.

The days of Jalsa Salana are very special. During this time, the team is given formal training so that the team is ready to face any situation. On this occasion duty holders from London, Islamabad and from all over UK carry out their duty with passion from Tahajjud prayers to Isha prayers. In accordance with Huzoor's^{aba} instructions, we engage with people with a smile on our faces, whatever the conditions. We check AIMs cards, check bags and carry out body scanning. The security team performs this tough duty conscientiously with the cooperation of all Lajna members. During Jalsa or Ijtema when Huzoor Anwar^{aba} visits the Lajna marquee, lots of our Waqf e nau girls get the opportunity to carry out this duty. They are also given the privilege to walk alongside Huzoor^{aba}. This is a great honour.

Despite having guests at their own homes, our team performs their duty tirelessly. Sometimes we don't even get to see our guests for

the whole day. In fact, they assume the responsibilities of our homes and jokingly say that during these days they are the householders and we are the guests. During the three days of Jalsa, it is commonplace for us to leave the house early in the morning and return home after eleven, but our guests never complain. Similarly at Eid, duty starts early in the morning. While people would be enjoying and getting ready for Eid, we would be happily arriving early in the morning for duty and would leave after all the Lajna members have gone.

I would also like to thank all the husbands for their support as they are with us at every step. Without their support, our duty would not be possible. May Allah reward them abundantly.

May Allah bless Khilafat and the blessings associated with it, be with us always.





NINA RASHID - SECRETARY SPORT AND FITNESS UK

Key Events Health and Fitness in UK



The First Annual Sports' Day

The first annual sports day of the Nasirat-ul-Ahmadiyya UK was held in the grounds of Richmond Park on 25th July 1976. Nasirat from London, Gillingham, Hounslow, Southall, Walthamstow and Bradford took part. The total attendance was nearly two hundred. Four groups were made according to their ages. The programme began with the recitation of the Holy Qur'an and was supervised by Mrs. Amatul-Hafeez Salam.



Historic Marathon Walk 1984

Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV (may Allah have Mercy on him) suggested a marathon walk for ladies. This walk was in the Tilford area. The organising committee consisted of Lajna and Ansar members. Maps were printed, roll numbers were allocated and general instructions were issued. All along the route members of Ansar were on duty. On 13th July at 4 pm Huzoor (may Allah have Mercy on him) led a silent prayer and signalled the start. After a little while Huzoor (may Allah have Mercy on him) and Begum Sahiba were present near the starting of the second round of the walk. There were four age groups. From 13 branches of Lajna and Nasirat, 323 members from 10-65 years of age participated. About 11 ladies, who were over 65, circled around the Islamabad ground for approximately 4-5 miles, just to share blessings. Though the length was supposed to have been 13 miles, it actually turned out to be more around the 18-mile mark.



Health and Fitness Today

The Health and Fitness department has come a long way through the years. It has been a crucial department during the Covid pandemic, when not only physical but mental health became a priority. There are many activities that are being run, organised or promoted in the UK by Lajna Ima'illah for many girls and ladies who do not always have the opportunities to access these activities. This may be due to the prevalence of mixed classes in regular gyms or simply the absence of safe spaces. Lajna activities have been a source of great enjoyment and sisterhood. This has not only been beneficial for their physical health but also their mental health.

Here is a list of the many activities that have been organised by Lajna Ima'illah UK in many of our Majalis:

Sports' Days

Fun Days

European Volleyball Tournament

Lajna Football Club

Self Defence classes

Badminton Tournament

Kick-boxing classes

Yoga

Walking groups

Local trips

Hiking trips

Lajna Rambling clubs

Health webinars

Health talks

First Aid

Hygiene

Lajna Swimming

Lajna Gardening Club

Survival Weekend

Healthy Eating

Nutrition

Mental Health Champions

Mental Health




What Health and Fitness activities have meant to me



A passion for sports - Jamila Lone

My name is Jamila Lone, I was born in Qadian. I had been a student of the Girls School in Qadian where my mother Zainab Sahiba, known as Ustani Zainab was well-



respected. After the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947, we moved to Sialkot in Pakistan where I studied at the Ahmadiyya Girls School. Later on I studied at the Nusrat Girls School, and the Jamia Nusrat College in Rabwah.

I believe that every person, whether they be young or old, has a desire in their heart or a passion for one thing or another. I was the same. I was very fond of sports, and loved to play games. I used to play “Gulli danda” (a game with sticks and stones) with my brothers. At school I loved the swings, and sometimes my clothes would get stuck in them and would tear in places and I would get told off because of this!

Health and fitness was also considered important in the past as it is today. Whilst at Nusrat Girls school, and at College, we were given opportunities to pursue our passion. For me this was sports. We had a teacher called Hameeda Khilji Sahiba (late), who was very encouraging to all players. Her support and enthusiasm was contagious, and this pushed me further in my pursuit of my passion. We played netball, volleyball, badminton, deck tennis and so forth. Our team participated in sports competitions organised via the Punjab University of Lahore, and we often received prizes in these competitions.

I was the captain of our College Volleyball team, and by the grace of Allah our team won the championship and we had the honour of receiving a trophy from the sister of the founder of Pakistan Fatima Jinnah (late). Another team from our college that I was in was the deck tennis team, and we came second in this sport. In this way the name of our college became quite well known in the realm of the University of Punjab.

I also served as the regional sports secretary and would train girls and liaised with local councils and arranged sports days in various areas. For these events the councillors and Mayors were also invited.

To this day, I still work with the National Health and Fitness secretary Nina Rashid Sahiba. My biggest achievement is that the Lajna whom I trained for these sports are the ones now running the very same department in an enviable manner MashAllah.

Playing for TEAM UK in the European Volleyball Team - Maria Chaudhry

At the age of 14 I joined the National Volleyball Team. I had never met these ladies before, let alone played with them. However, I was immediately welcomed with open arms and felt supported by the entire team. I trained two times a week with my fellow Lajna, preparing for our upcoming tournament, where we improved our volleyball skills and became closer as a group. As the tournament season came, we were placed in our teams of GB and UK and had such a fun time together playing opposite each other. I was in Team UK and by the grace of Allah, Team UK came 1st in the European Tournament! I believe this was a combination of working together as a unit,

maintaining respect for one another, reciting prayers throughout and each player demonstrating full obedience to our coach and to Nizame Jamaat.

I was humbled to be the youngest player ever to receive the MVP (Most Valuable Player) of the tournament. It was such an honour and I could not have done it without the love and support that I received from my team and my new volleyball family.

I have continued to play volleyball for the past year and a half and I cannot wait for volleyball to start again so I can reunite with my family, Insha'Allah. May Allah enable us all to show full obedience to Khilafat, Nizame Jamaat and enable us to become righteous examples for Lajna and Nasirat Insha'Allah, Ameen!



Serving as a coach for the National Volleyball Team - Rabia Shah

In 2018 I was blessed with the opportunity to serve on the National Health and Fitness team. I was asked to oversee the overall training and coach both experienced and beginner Lajna volleyball players. I also had to liaise with our volleyball trainers, Çiselle and Laura. It was a good opportunity for outreach, to let our sporting skills develop and also for our values to shine through.

As a newcomer to the volleyball team, I was warmly welcomed into this close-knit family and can proudly say that despite differences in our backgrounds, personalities and temperaments, we were all united in our love for volleyball and our determination to be good role models for our Jamaat, under the guidance of our Beloved Huzoor, (aba).

During my time as coach, I observed many things, for example, on the court we were fierce competitors, but off the court we supported each and every player to succeed in their game. We are sisters in faith, sharing a strong bond of friendship and community, counting down the days when we would meet again and host our volleyball family for the European Volleyball Tournament held in London. We have missed playing over the last year and pray Allah reunites us in good health, keeps us all safe under His Protection and enables us to build more beautiful memories together Insha'Allah, Ameen!



Recollections from hiking -“Mam Tor, Here We Come!” - Saira Ahmad

I have always been a fan of the great outdoors: walking, exploring and learning, but it's not necessarily the product in itself that should take all the credit; it's the build-up: the process.

What is the process? It starts off with getting the thumbs up from family, making sure that nothing else coincides with the trip that lies waiting for you. The excitement begins. It's the signing-up; convincing others to join as well; getting all your equipment and clothing ready. The excitement builds-up. It's having the meetings: double

checking the tick sheet and finding out that your friends from other jamaats have also enrolled. The excitement heightens. As the coach pulls up, that feeling of adventure is indescribable.

Of course, the journey is long and tiring, especially if the coach takes a wrong turn! But every moment of anticipation is well worth the wait when a breath-taking view befalls your eyes. Standing still you try your best to capture every crevice, every hue hoping to retain an eternal print in your memory. Goosebumps and a lump in your throat remind you of the Almighty and how blessed you are. This is the product.

The fresh air and changing temperatures keep you alert. The terrain is steep, then plateaus, with crumbly paths, sometimes grassy with sporadic wild flowers to marvel. All along, whilst enjoying the scenery, the group mingles: interacting with existing and new friends, whom you see at a future Jalsa or Ijtema, reminiscing and drawing on those meticulously filed memories. This is the product.



At the end of the hike, following a soothing hot shower and changing into dry clothes, there is no doubt that excitement is still in the air. After all, time is running out and soon enough you will be back to your old routine. So, what now? After offering prayers, it's time for some down time: snacking, chatting and having a laugh. This is the product.

Before you know it, you're back on the coach and heading home. What a journey it has been – and that is only from one participant's point of view. The immense effort and weeks of hard work to arrange the two-day trip, though not experienced, has not gone unnoticed. For that and all the contingencies put in place, may Allah bless you, our wonderful Health and Fitness team. Jazakumullah Ahsan Al Jaza!



Yoga Classes for Local Lajna Members - Shimul Khan

My name is Shimul Khan, and I have been the health and fitness secretary for Thornton Heath Jamaat since 2015.

As a group, we started up a weight loss initiative in November 2020. Each member measured their BMI's and used this to set up realistic weight loss targets. Supporting each other by sharing dieting plans, healthy recipes and exercise advice on a dedicated group, our 22 Lajna have lost a total of 95 kg in just 5 months; something that otherwise seemed a distant dream had the group not been together and the initiative not sent down from the national team.

Yoga classes:

After moving to the UK from the Netherlands in 2012, I started to miss staying active. Using a bicycle for daily transport isn't as practical and safe here as it was in the Netherlands. I had been doing breathing exercises and some easy stretching for a long

time. I soon replaced cycling with proper yoga for my daily routine to stay healthy. After becoming Health and Fitness Secretary for Thornton Heath Halqa in 2015, I started weekly yoga teaching to our Lajna. After some time, Lajna from other halqas also joined us.

Everyone was very happy with the classes because they were seeing improvements to their health such as: increased joint mobility, reduction in joint pain and an increase in cardiovascular strength. The classes had a regular attendance of around 12 to 15 Lajna and the ages ranged between 16 to 65.



Serving as a Local Health and Fitness Secretary - Huma Mir, Bradford South

This pandemic has brought upon an extremely sad time for us all, as some have lost their loved ones and the rest have felt that they are trapped in their own homes through not being able to meet their loved ones. Nevertheless, on a brighter note we as Ahmadi Muslims, being part of an extraordinary jamaat, even through these stressful times have been able to come together with so much positivity. The current situation has given us the opportunity to reflect upon ourselves and bring about a physical, mental and spiritual change. Our health and fitness department has played a vital part in these difficult times, where any type of help is available. Whether it is motivation quotes or healthy recipes, Alhumdolillah the department has been communicating with us throughout. Our health and fitness secretary regularly sent links and guidelines regarding exercise and mental health.

I had always heard that your physical state affects your mental state and vice versa but recently I had experienced it myself. I really pushed myself to physically become more active and not think that doing house chores counted as “exercise”. Of course, it is always easier said than done as there are millions of reasons to stop you doing any form of exercise, from the thought of, ‘Oh it’s too cold’ to ‘Oh! I will start tomorrow’.

I soon realised the motivation must come from within. So, I prayed and started walking after dropping my children off at school. There were days when it was cold and rainy but I didn’t give up. Some days were more difficult than others but I must admit the amount of energy I gained after the walks was incredible. I would feel full of energy all day and it helped me sleep earlier and better at night. This also had a positive impact on my mental health too. Alhamdolillah.

A very important aspect of my walks is that I would listen to a great amount of audio. This is when I found a deep treasure of programmes that we have in the form of sermons, speeches, radio discussions and Q&A with our beloved Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV (may Allah have Mercy on him) and our beloved Huzoor (aba). Our lives are so fast paced, especially with those of us who have children. Therefore taking time out to listen to this kind of audio had almost become impossible, however in incorporating my walks, listening to these audios became my daily routine too. Now, even during my

house chores I try to listen to these audios out loud. This spiritually heals us and makes us focus on what is more important in life.

The key to bring about any change is consistency. You have to be consistent and persistent in whatever it is you do. If you find it difficult to motivate yourself then you should plan your day and get yourself organised. Put up a planner in your kitchen and write `morning walk` in bright red so you have no excuse to miss it. Insha'Allah, I plan to continue my walks and add some additional exercise in the near future too. I request all my sisters to motivate yourselves and bring about a better change both physically, mentally and spiritually.





SAFIYYA SALAM - SECRETARY INDUSTRY AND HANDICRAFT UK

The San'at wa Dastakari department has its roots back to the year 1926, although it was formally recognised as a separate department much later on. On the 20th August 1926 a resolution was passed that Ahmadi ladies should pay their chanda with income raised by their own handiwork. In addition, Lajna should organise an exhibition at Jalsa Salana, 1926. All Ahmadi ladies were encouraged to take some of their own handiwork to the meeting of October, 1926. Lajna therefore held their first exhibition in the courtyard of the house of Hazrat Mirza Bashir Ahmad (may Allah be pleased with him). It was decided that all proceeds from this would be donated to the Tabligh Fund.

On 27th June 1936 at 10:30, Hadhrat Khalifa tul Masih II^(ra) delivered a speech in a Muqami Lajna meeting advising Lajna of the benefits of learning handicrafts and carrying out this work on a large scale. Thus a separate official department in National Amla for Trade and Industry came into being.

The real objective of Hazrat Musleh Maud^(ra) in establishing this department was to provide work for needy women so that they may improve their living standard. Hazrat Musleh Maud^(ra) stated: "No one should remain idle. In our nation, no one should remain inactive. Everyone should do hard work, learn skills and, when the need arises, should not feel dependent upon others."

The Lajna Ima'illah constitution states about this department:

With the permission of Sadr Lajna Ima'illah Mulk, Secretary San'at wa Dastkari shall make arrangements for holding exhibitions of handicrafts, the purpose being to make Ahmadi ladies skillful and to eradicate inactivity. Secretary San'at wa Dastakari shall be responsible to maintain regular accounts of exhibitions. It shall be the responsibility of Secretary San'at wa Dastkari to prepare and submit an annual report to the Majlis Amila Mulk concerning the exhibitions held in local Majalis during the year. It is the duty of Secretary San'at wa Dastkari that she shall constantly remind Lajna members about exhibitions and think of ways and ideas to improve the work of her department with continuous efforts. Secretary San'at wa Dastkari has the authority to arrange for the preparation of



such articles that are worthwhile and profitable.

This department has developed greatly in the UK over the years. Sajeda Khokar Sahiba remembers that under the Sadrat of Amtul Rasheed Ahmed Sahiba they had started competitions and selling food on a very small scale. They had one hose with cold water and three burners to make samosas and pakoras to sell at Jalsa Salana. Everything was checked carefully by Khalifatul Masih IV (may Allah have mercy on him). She remembers Huzoor (may Allah have mercy on him) said that making the people happy was more important than the money being made. Plates of food with the exact number of items arranged on it were sent for Huzoor (may Allah have mercy on him) to check the quality, quantity and pricing. There were also competitions held at this time in sewing of clothes.

Hamida Mannan Sahiba was secretary under the Sadrat of Qanita Rashed Sahiba. She reports that as the sole fundraising department in national amila she was required to raise £120000 a year. She began setting up clothes and food stalls in the form of a bazaar for national Lajna functions such as National Ijtema, Refresher Course and Jalsa Salana as well as a separate Meena Bazaar. Teams were made up to work in shifts and she said it was a lovely team effort. Equipment was hired from Hammersmith council including popcorn and candy floss machines. Fresh kebabs were made by the ladies at 75 Gressenhall Road and frozen to be used at later events. She said the work was very hard but so rewarding, Alhamdollilah.

This work continued to develop with Nasira Rashid Sahiba under the Sadrat of Shmaila Nagi Sahiba, Nasira Rehman Sahiba and Dr Fariha Khan Sahiba. She continued to make huge developments in the department, organising competitions on many levels. Prizes were given at National Ijtema's and many competitions took place including a first ever live bake off! The National Meena Bazaar became a very large event allowing ladies with businesses to sell their items and for Lajna to show their skills as well as raising large amounts for Lajna Ima'illah. A syllabus detailing what was to be made throughout the year was produced with certificates given in all areas.

To date we see the department taking a slightly different turn. Whilst handicrafts are still being made and Bazaars held to raise money for Lajna Ima'illah, the department is developing more in the area of cottage industry giving advice and support for Lajna members who are starting their own businesses. A team of dynamic business owners has been put together to advise those who seek help and workshops are given on various business topics. Alhamdolillah many ladies have taken advantage of this help and are showing keen interest and ability.

Alhamdollilah, this department has always had dedicated Lajna members who work extremely hard on ground level to raise funds for Lajna Ima'illah and to provide support for those members wishing to put to use their skills or to learn new ones.

Lajna Ima'illah

BREAKING THE BARRIERS

of race, colour and class

NUSRAT SAFIR (SECRETARY NAU MUBAI'T UK)

Those of us who have experienced the international character of The Ahmadiyya community, which is most evident at our Annual Gatherings (Jalsa) can't help but be inspired by the brotherhood/sisterhood witnessed among people from all over the world. People from Africa, Indonesia, Germany, India, Syria and many more countries; walking, praying, eating side by side, breaking the barriers of age, race colour and class.

In the Holy Qur'an we read:

“O mankind, We have created you from a male and a female; and We have made you into tribes and sub-tribes for the sake of easy recognition. Verily, the most honourable among you, in the sight of God, is the most righteous among you. Surely, God is All-Knowing, All-Aware.”¹

This verse lays down the foundation of all-comprehensive and all-pervading brotherhood/sisterhood of all human beings. It highlights that the worth of a human being is not based on the colour of their skin, rank, social or economic status but on their righteous actions and in the way that they discharge their moral and social responsibilities to God and man.



Furthermore, the Holy Prophet (sa) said:

“O People, your Lord is One, you are the progeny of the same father (who was created from dust). Hence it is not permissible for you to make any discrimination between high and low. Neither an Arab has superiority over a non-Arab, nor a non-Arab over an Arab. A white person is not superior to a black person one, nor a black is superior to a white. The most honourable among you in the sight of God is the one who is the most righteous.”²

By the grace of Allah, since the establishment of the Ahmadiyya Community in the UK, we have had the privilege and honour to welcome into the Jamaat, those ladies whom Allah has guided.

Blessed are those who convert to Islam, Ahmadiyyat. They have been specially chosen, and no matter what race, creed or colour, they are often collectively known as ‘White Birds’, referencing a prophecy of the founder of Ahmadiyyat, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (peace be upon him).

He stated:

“I saw in a vision that I was standing on a pulpit in the city of London, and setting forth the truth of Islam in the English language, in a very well-reasoned address. Thereafter, I caught several birds who were sitting upon small trees and were of white colour, and their bodies resembled the bodies of Partridges. I interpreted this vision as meaning that though I would not be able to travel to that country, but my writings will be published there, and many righteous English people will accept the truth.”³

There are two ladies who can be considered as being the first female “white birds”. They are Violet Ebrahim, who left the community and became a member of the Lahori party with Khawaja Kamaluddin, and the other is Miss Hameedah, who from her letter dated 1916, believes herself to be the first English lady convert under the tabligh of Hazrat Sial Sahib (ra).

Although no formal department was set up for the Talim and Tarbiyyat of new converts, weekly religious training programmes were held right from the outset in London.

In the History of Lajna Ima’illah, we read:

“As more and more people joined the fold of Ahmadiyyat, these classes became increasingly popular, and a large number of people would attend. It is fair to say that the work that had been ongoing within the Central Lajna and indeed the Community as a whole, was, in earnest, being mirrored in London, albeit without proper structure since the Lajna model had yet to be inaugurated in the UK. Nonetheless, members worked day and night, both in the fields of propagation, and more importantly at the time, the Talim and Tarbiyyat of these “white birds”.’

The Talim and Tarbiyyat of new converts was the responsibility of the Talim and Tarrbiyyat secretaries until Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV (may Allah have mercy on him) formed a separate Tarbiyat Nau Mubai'at Department during his Khilafat.⁶

Lajna Ima'illah has been formally established in the UK from 1957, starting with only 34 members, the Jamaat has continued to grow and to progress and now stands at over 13,000 members. Similarly, by the grace of Allah, the Tarbiyat Nau Mubai'at Department UK has also seen its numbers of new converts continue to grow, as quoted by Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V in a Friday Sermon, "...pure hearted people are slowly and gradually entering the fold of Ahmadiyya."⁷

These new converts are not confined to any particular nationality or race, by the grace of Allah, the National Tarbiyat Nau Mubai'at Department sees those 'pure-hearted people' enter into the fold of Ahmadiyyat from a huge variety of nationalities, ages, cultures and religious backgrounds. Some have converted through seemingly obscure ways. Learning their stories is an inspiration for all Lajna members and are a reminder never to take for granted that we were born into this beautiful faith.

In 2013, Sister Ann Benson who hails from a small town in the very north of Scotland, converted to Ahmadiyyat. She was born a Christian and her story of conversion shows how Allah can reach the hearts of anyone in the most unusual of ways:

"I came upon the Islamic course [online course designed by Imam Tahir Selby Sahib] just by chance. After I finished the course, he asked if I would visit the mosque in Glasgow. I told him it was too far; I would not get back in a day. A couple of months went by and I was planning on going down to Bradford, so I asked him if there was a mosque down there. I went to the mosque and met Laiq Ahmad Tahir; he gave me some brochures to take with me. A week later I received the book "The Life of Muhammad sa" and a lovely letter. I still have the letter. About 5 months later I went back down and came back a Muslim. And 11 years on, there was no looking back."

Another story of conversion comes from one of our older Nau Mubai'at, Sister Georgina Quansah, originally from Ghana. Born a Christian, Sister Georgina became a Sunni at the age of 38. Her story shows us that it is never too late to find the light and that Allah guides whomever he pleases. Sister Georgina joined Ahmadiyyat at the wonderful age of 83, MashaAllah. She was told by an Ahmadi man to watch MTA, she began watching the programmes and after seeing how much work and pressure lay on the shoulders of our beloved Khalifah (aba), she truly believed that he must be a Man of God. She attended a few Ahmadi events and soon after she found the truth and took Bai'at in the UK.

The Nau Mubai'at continue to add to the colours of the Community, bringing their own unique cultural background but joined together in faith and in their love for Allah and belief in the Promised Messiah and Imam Mahdi (peace be upon him). Sisters who join

our Community often bring a new found passion for spreading the beautiful message of Islam Ahmadiyyat and a deep desire to bring others to Allah.

Sister Maria Butterworth originally from Spain, converted in the UK in 2013 and was mentioned by Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba) for her immense efforts in Tabligh in a Friday Sermon, Alhamdulillah.⁸

“Since by the Grace of Allah, I converted to Islam Ahmadiyya in 2013, I developed a desire to also share with people of my country the beautiful teachings of Islam. And I realised the importance of Tabligh in Spain, as many people in my country have a negative view of Islam and Muslims. I started contacting secondary schools and universities, sending them letters and requesting the opportunity for me to come and give an informative talk about Islam. I remember I sent many letters to school directors, teachers, and other organisations such as women’s associations. Some of them didn’t respond. Others responded saying it wasn’t part of the topic of Islam of their curriculum, and some others showed interest. By the grace of Allah, and the prayers of our beloved Khalifatul-Masih (aba), after some months I managed to book a few talks in the north, central and south of Spain, in a university, in a secondary school and in a women’s association. After the talks, I would normally pass a questionnaire to the attendees to find out if their view of Islam had changed after attending the talk. By the grace of Allah, all of them expressed their change of view about Islam, and how their misconceptions were removed.”

The Nau Mubai’at not only join us from different countries of origin, but also religious backgrounds. Sister Zamora, originally from Nicaragua, was raised by nuns and at the young age of 14, joined a convent herself to study and to become a nun. At age 18, Sister Zamora left the convent.

“By then, I decided that I would take time out without going to any religious establishment and just do my best with my children. I’ve never asked God to guide me or to show me the way, I don’t think I had a choice really. I came across the Holy Qur’an and started reading it and with this, started to research into this religion that believed in Jesus, not as the son of God, but as a Prophet. I was surprised by the high regard that Mary, the mother of Jesus, had in Islam, to the point that a whole chapter in the Qur’an was named after her! I was immersed in things that cannot be found in the Bible! The angels, the jinns, the story of the prophets being told in such a detailed way. The way of worship, 5 daily prayers and how men and women don’t mix in congregational prayers, which curbs the problem of temptation and indecent behavior, also the fairness on calculations of Zakat, inheritance, and what I found most amazing was that ladies get to keep their salaries, that was their right, only to contribute to the household if they wished to do so! How amazing is that!?”

Because of my journey into religion I didn’t want to rush into it, so for three years I was reading and reading and reading, and one night I fell asleep and started to dream that the sky was full of clouds, then the clouds divided apart to the left and to the right and in

the middle a fire wrote something in a language I did not understand. This dream repeated itself every single night for almost a year. It was so powerful that I did not want to fall asleep and used to take so much coffee to stop myself from sleeping, but at the end, sleep would come and I would have this dream.

After almost a year, I decided to go to a local mosque, where I did Shahada. When I was reading the words ‘Ashhadu alla ilaha illallahu wa ashhadu anna Muhammadan ‘abduhu wa Rasuluh’, then I discovered they were exactly the same words I saw up in the sky being written with fire. I went home that night and never had that dream again. After that I became a Sunni Muslim.

I wrote to the mosque outreach department but never received an answer, so a few months later I made contact with the Imam in San Pedro Abad Cordoba, Spain. From there, things started happening fast, he immediately put me in contact with a Spanish sister here in London, I met her a couple of times, then I had a Mulaqaat with beloved Huzoor (aba) and he suggested for me to take Bai’at during Jalsa Salana 2019 and that’s how I became by the grace of Allah SWT an Ahmadi Muslim.”

These awe-inspiring stories of conversion remind us of how important it is that these converts are supported and cherished when they enter our community.

In welcoming these new converts into the fold of Ahmadiyyat, the Tarbiyyat Nau Mubai’at department has a great responsibility on their shoulders. Not only are they responsible for maintaining an atmosphere of mutual respect which breaks the barriers of race, colour and class, but also, as stated in the Lajna Ima’illah Constitution, the Tarbiyyat Nau Mubai’at department has three primary roles:

- To keep details of all Nau Mubai’at Lajna and Nasirat
- To provide educational and moral development of the Nau Mubai’at according to their ability
- To include the Nau Mubai’at in financial sacrifice

These objectives are achieved in a number of ways, firstly by working closely with our local counterparts to create a feeling of love and friendship between the local New Convert Secretary and their respective Nau Mubai’at. The local Secretaries are also encouraged to hold regular Tarbiyyati classes and regular events tailored for the Nau Mubai’at, are also organised by the National Team. To further encourage integration, the Nau Mubai’at are also encouraged to actively participate in their local meetings/events, by way of giving presentations, performing duty or assisting the local Aamila members in their respective roles.

Nau Mubai'at only remain under the care of the Tarbiyyat Nau Mubai'at Department for three years after conversion. During this time, the Department aims to provide Nau Mubai'at with the knowledge necessary to ensure that they are fully integrated into the Community. It is the responsibility of the Tarbiyyat Nau Mubai'at Department to ensure the Nau Mubai'at feel enabled to continue on their spiritual journey three years post conversion. After 3 years, they are supported and guided by the central Talim and Tarbiyyat department, where they can continue their spiritual journey side by side with all Lajna members.



References

- 1) *The Holy Qur'an (49:14)*
- 2) <https://www.alislam.org/articles/cultural-understanding-and-racial-harmony>
- 3) *Tadhkirah, p. 239, 2009 edition*
- 4) *History of Lajna book volume 1 1913-1981 p.38*
- 5) *History of lajna volume 1 1913-1981 p.23*
- 6) *Department of training and education of new converts*
- 7) *Khalifatul Masih V, Friday Sermon 20th April 2018*
- 8) *Friday Sermon 20th April 2018*
- 9) *Image 1: <https://www.reviewofreligions.org/17169/the-flag>*
- 10) *Image 2: <https://jalsacconnect.mta.tv/the-baa-it-ceremony>*

Ziafat

DEPARTMENT



RASHIDA NAEEM - SECRETARY ZIAFAT UK

About 1874

In a dream I saw an angel seated on an elevated platform in the guise of a boy. In his hand he was holding a pure loaf of bread, which was very bright.²⁸ He gave it to me and said: [Urdu] This is for you and for the dervishes who are with you. I saw this dream at a time when I was not at all known nor had I put forth any claim nor was there any group of dervishes with me. But now I have a large Jama'at of people who have voluntarily chosen to put their faith above the world and have thus reduced themselves to the position of dervishes. Having migrated from their homes and having separated themselves from their relatives and friends, they have taken up permanent abode near me. I had interpreted the loaf of bread as meaning that God Himself will provide for me and for my followers and that we will not be rendered anxious on account of lack of provision. This has been the case over a long number of years.

[Nuzulul-Masih, pp. 206–207, Ruhani Khaza'in, vol. 8, pp. 584–585]

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[/www.alislam.org/library/books/Tadhkirah.pdf](http://www.alislam.org/library/books/Tadhkirah.pdf)

If we ponder over the above revelation of the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) which prophesied the establishment of the ever-expanding institution of the Langar, one is full of awe and gratitude. This system of *Ziafat* began in the blessed home of the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) and it was Hazrat Amma jan herself (may Allah have mercy on her) who prepared food for all the guests that came to visit the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him). Today, throughout the world, wherever there is an Ahmadiyya community established, there is a Langar Khana in operation, ready to serve the blessed guests of the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him).

Lajna Ima'illah has also had the opportunity to serve this blessed Langar under the Ziafat Department. We cannot underestimate the key role of this department (hospitality) which like the other departments of Lajna also plays an important part in the organisational activities of Lajna Ima'illah.

The Responsibilities of Ziafat

'Secretary Ziafat shall be responsible for maintaining accurate and complete record of the expenses of Ziafat. This includes:

-  Account of daily expenses
-  Account of expenses for functions and events. It shall be the responsibility of secretary Ziafat to arrange catering for functions which are held under Lajna Ima'illah Mulk.

It is the duty of secretary *Ziafat* to maintain a complete record of all material held under her department and to check this from time to time.'¹

Early days of Ziafat Lajna Ima'illah UK

In the early days of the UK Jamaat, the number of Lajna was very small. Along with other responsibilities, cooking was done by Lajna themselves. This not only included cooking for Jamaat events, but at a time when there was limited catering and wedding halls, Lajna would cook for Jamaat weddings as well. This was also a great act of kindness and generosity for those families for whom the organising of a wedding in the UK, where resources were limited was extremely difficult at this time.



For several years, Lajna Ima'illah UK also had the honour to cook at the occasion of Jalsa Salana and Ijtemas. The members who played a prominent role in cooking were respected Ameena Karim Sahiba, Mansoorah Taj Sahiba, Saleema Buksh Sahiba, Masooda Gulzar Sahiba, Tayyaba Karim Sahiba, Mumtaz Ashraf Sahiba, Mansoorah Sehgal Sahiba, Safiyya Qureshi Sahiba, Zubaida Shah Sahiba, Razia Mirza Sahiba, Akbari Ismail Sahiba, Amtul Hai Rehman Sahiba, Haleema Rasheed Sahiba and Bushra Khwaja Sahiba.

When Hazrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad, Khalifatul Massih III (ra) visited Britain and came to London, Mrs Masooda Gulzar Sahiba had the honour to cook for Hazoor (aba)

Cooking at the occasion of the first Jalsa Salanas in the UK(1964) was carried out with the help of some Lajna members at the home of Mrs Ameena Karim Sahiba under the supervision of Mrs Salam Sahiba. (Sadr Lajna UK)

The Roti Mountain

Memories of Ziafat by Sadiqa Akhtar Sahiba (wife of Khalid Akhtar sahib)

“I would like to relate an incident that occurred in the early days of the UK Jamaat.

“If you look at the hundreds and thousands of rotis that are churned out by the roti plant for Jalsa Salana UK today, it is a far cry from the rotis made for Jalsa in the domestic kitchens of our early Lajna members. The Lajna played a vital role in the cooking of food



for the first few Jalsas that took place in the UK(1964). When there were just a few local families, Amina Karim would cook food on her cooker at home. She would light all four gas hobs and put a large *dejka* (cooking pot) in the middle for the food. She was helped by Mrs Ghulzar, Mrs Ashraf, Saleema Rahim Baksh Sahiba and Mrs Maulvi Abdul Rehman Sahiba among others. These ladies were provided with all the ingredients and they would cook all the meals for the three days. Once the kitchen had been constructed by Mahmood hall, the cooking was done at the Masjid. In those days there was no naan or pitta bread, so the food would be eaten with bread. *Keema aloo* (mince meat and potatoes) was the preferred meal as the broth in the aloo gosht caused too much spillage. 100 kilos of keema would be cooked. One *dejka* held 10 kilos of keema. *Keema aloo* and bread was provided for the 3 days of Jalsa. On the Friday, we would be provided with the delivery of fresh bread for the three days of Jalsa.

On the Friday of one Jalsa we were told that the delivery of bread wouldn't happen. Khalid Akhtar sahib, who was the Ziafat secretary at the time, went to Imam Bashir Rafiq sahib telling him that they had this problem. He said this is a problem you need to resolve, Ziafat is your responsibility. Khalid Akhtar sahib recalled a similar incident in Rabwah and suddenly had an idea. He called a local grocer and asked him if he could provide flour in 10 kilo and 5 kilo bags. He agreed to do this. After this, Khalid Akhtar sahib



called all the local Lajna ladies individually and asked them if they would be able to make rotis, either 5 kilos or 10 kilos. He also called the local presidents of Croydon, Southall, Hounslow and East London explaining the situation and asking for their help. Some women used the flour that they had at home, to be reimbursed later, and others had the flour delivered to them. During this time, very few people owned cars and Khalid Akhtar sahib personally delivered the flour and collected the rotis. The local presidents of the other areas arranged for the rotis to be delivered to the Masjid. In this way, every Lajna contributed to making rotis for the Jalsa. We estimate that 5 kilos would make around 100 rotis.

A big white sheet was spread out in the Mahmood Hall and as the rotis arrived they were placed on this sheet, slowly making a mountain of miracle rotis ready for Jalsa. The Lajna ladies showed their fervour, commitment and teamwork and rescued the Ziafat team during this bread crisis. Khalid Akhtar sahib called Imam Bashir Rafiq sahib to come and look at what had happened in the hall. On his entrance he was flabbergasted to see hundreds of rotis ready for Jalsa, courtesy of Lajna Ima'illah. This is the spirit of Lajna Ima'illah, who with blessings of Allah Taalaha, were able to carry out this enormous task. Alhumdollilah.”

Key Ziafat milestones Lajna Ima'illah UK

When Hazrat Khalifatul Massih IV (may Allah have mercy on him) migrated to London, Lajna cooked for all the programmes in the kitchen adjoining Mahmood Hall. This was a modest kitchen with limited space and a few burners but the ladies were able to cook excellent meals for all the guests.

When the ten-day Tarbiyatti classes started in 1980, the responsibility of food and accommodation was on Lajna Ima'illah. Members cooked in the kitchen next to Mahmood Hall and accommodation was arranged in different houses. All women fulfilled these responsibilities in an excellent manner.

In 1985, summer school was started in Islamabad and responsibility for food was given to Lajna. In 1998 when respected Qanita Rashid Sahiba was President Lajna, the responsibility of cooking was transferred from Lajna Ima'illah to the men which they are continuing to fulfil diligently up to now.

Ziafat today

Respected Majeeda Nasir Sahiba along with her team fulfilled the duties of Ziafat in an excellent manner for a long period of time and when I got the opportunity to serve, I had no experience of working in Ziafat. It was with the



sheer grace of Allah Almighty and guidance from Sadr Sahiba which made it easier for me to carry out my responsibilities and the team that was created Alhumdollilah is very hardworking and fulfils its obligations with utmost fervour.

Whenever members are called for duty, they arrive immediately whatever the occasion, be it Jalsa Salana, Ijtema, Tarbiyatti Class, volleyball tournaments or any other Lajna programme. Whenever overseas Lajna and Nasirat come to London to meet Huzoor (aba), it is the Ziafat team that fulfils the duty of catering for them. At the summer camp in Islamabad, we had the opportunity to cook many times. At Ijtema, omelette, *Halwa* and *Channay* (chickpeas) were served with the help of a few members.

At the occasion of Jalsa Salana, the whole Ziafat team welcomes the guests of the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) wholeheartedly. With smiling faces and with consideration for everyone's sentiments, Lajna distributes food for everyone's different tastes.



Very young girls keenly put their names down for duty and then actively participate in the work, whether it is to serve water or to lay the tables or place rotis, they carry out the work with beaming smiles.

Allah Almighty says:

“And eat and drink but exceed not the bounds;
Surely, He does not love those who exceed the
bounds.”

(Sura Al A'Raf v 32)

This year, the Ziafat department is working on measures for healthy eating and how to store the leftover food and re-use it. This is crucial in an environment where food wastage and healthy eating is a big issue for our modern society to address.

May Allah enable us all to fulfil our duties sincerely and always enable to serve our faith.



Reference

1. <https://lajna.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/english-lajna-constitution.pdf> p.36

Tree Planting

Glimpses of the tremendous efforts of Lajna Ima'illah UK to reach our goal of planting 100,000 trees across the UK to commemorate our 100 years centenary.



Sports Days



Sports Days



Sports Days



Sports Days



Meena Bazaars



Meena Bazaars



Meena Bazaars



Peace Conferences



Peace Conferences



Peace Conferences



Ijtemas



Ijtemas



Ijtemas



Ijtemas



Ijtemas



Jalsas



Jalsas




Jalsas



Jalsas



Tabligh Activities



UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF HIS HOLINESS KHALIFATUL MASHIH V :

IN 2021 ALONE:

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Schools Countries

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PAAMA LAJNA UK cordially invites you to

INTERNATIONAL

Women's Day

Theme: Promoting a world free of bias, stereotypes and discrimination: The muslim women agenda

Date: Sunday 20th March 2022
Time: 2:30pm - 5:30pm




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IN 2021 ALONE:

384 **39**
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Tabligh Activities



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