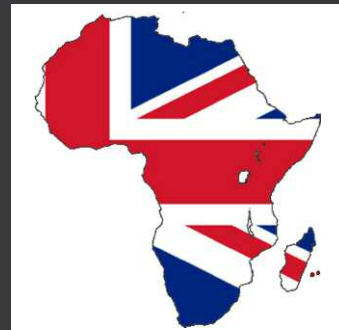




PAN-AFRICAN NEWS



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Message from President: **Simplicity of the Holy Prophet^(saw)**

My Dear Members of PAAMA UK!

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatullah.

May the Lord of mankind open unto you the gates of His mercy and may He so ordain that you are always accompanied by the supplication of His angels.

A great writer has described the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as "*Caesar and Pope in one*" but he was Pope without the Pope's privileges and Caesar without the legions of Caesar. He was born an orphan and ended his life as the acknowledged ruler of the whole of Arabia. Yet he had neither palaces nor bodyguards nor servants. He would sleep on the floor, do his own household work, mend his own shoes and patch his own cloak.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was indeed a personification of simplicity. Before he assumed the mantle of Prophethood, his marriage to Hadhrat Khadija (may Allah be pleased with her) presented him with a lot of wealth and property which he opted to distribute entirely among the destitute without keeping a penny to himself. He also refrained from engaging in the frivolous activities and merrymaking of his fellow Makkan citizens, preferring instead to retreat to the solitary confines of Cave Hira in quiet contemplation of the universe.

In his manner of diet and dress, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was an embodiment of simplicity. Apart from his awe-inspiring and majestic countenance, he was undistinguished amongst his companions so much so that unacquainted visitors would often mistake Hadhrat Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) for the Prophet. His household was the most basic and his home was bare of decorations.

His staple food consisted of dried dates, barley bread and water and it is related by Hadhrat Ayesha (may Allah be pleased with her) that they would often pass a whole month without once lighting a fire to cook.

Throughout his life, under vastly different circumstances, the lifestyle of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was characterised by simplicity. Victory did not spoil him nor did power corrupt him. He remained inaccessible to any notion of personal gain or glory. He remained a model of simplicity.

In the discharge of his duty, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was again an epitome of simplicity. His simple teachings evoked admiration and his humility procured him respect. Although he occupied a very exalted station, he was always the first to say "*Assalamu Alaikum*", even to children. He inculcated lessons of moderation in all matters. "*A simple way of life is part of Faith*", he stated in one Hadith and "*Poverty is my pride*", he declared in another.

It is my humble prayer that we can all emulate the Holy Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) love of simplicity in life so that we can profit from his precept and benefit from his example. May Allah so ordain and bless you all profoundly. Ameen.

Wassalam.

Yours humbly,
Tommy Kallon.

**President Pan-African Ahmadiyya
Muslim Association UK**

Quotations from the Holy Qur'an

Surely, a Messenger has come unto you from among yourselves; grievous to him is that you should fall into trouble; he is ardently desirous of your welfare; and to the believers he is compassionate, merciful.
(Al-Taubah, 9:128)

لَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ
عَزِيزٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا عَنِتُّمْ حَرِيصٌ
عَلَيْكُمْ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٢٨﴾

Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of Allah, and the Seal of the Prophets; and Allah has full knowledge of all things.
(Al-Ahzab, 33:41)

مَا كَانَ مُحَمَّدٌ أَبَا أَحَدٍ مِّنْ رِّجَالِكُمْ
وَلَكِن رَّسُولَ اللَّهِ وَخَاتَمَ النَّبِيِّينَ
وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا ﴿٤١﴾

Sayings of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)

Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) relates that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "The strong one is not he who knocks out others in wrestling, the strong one is he who keeps control over himself when he is roused" (Bokhari and Muslim, from Gardens of the Righteous, No. 45)

Ibn Mas'ud (may Allah be pleased with them) relates that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "After I am gone you will experience discrimination and will observe things that you will disapprove." Some asked: "Messenger of Allah, what do you command us we should do in such case?" He said: "Discharge your obligations and supplicate Allah for your rights." (Bokhari and Muslim, from Gardens of the Righteous, No. 51)

Writings of the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him)

O all ye who dwell upon the earth, and O all human souls that are in the East or in the West, I announce to you emphatically that the true reality in the earth is Islam alone, and the True God is the God Who is described in the Holy Qur'an, and the Prophet who has everlasting spiritual life and who is seated on the throne of glory and holiness, is Muhammad, the Chosen One, peace and blessings of Allah be on him. The proof of his spiritual life and holy majesty is that by following him and loving him we become recipients of the Holy Spirit and are favoured with the bounty of converse with God and witness heavenly signs.
(Tiryaaq-ul-Qulub, quoted from Essence of Islam, Vol. I, pp.198-199)

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Summary of FRIDAY SERMON

Friday, 16th January 2015

[The Editorial Team takes full responsibility for any errors or inaccuracies in this summary. A more comprehensive summary is available online at www.alislam.org]

'Allah and His angels send blessings on the Prophet. O ye who believe! you also should invoke blessings on him and salute him with the salutation of peace.'
(Al-Ahzab, 33:57)

Huzur recited the above verse and commented that, as a result of these blessings, those who try to harm the progress of this mission will never succeed. Neither their wrong allegations nor their ridicule can succeed. Their conspiracies will fail. Indeed, in this age Allah has sent the Promised Messiah to further the mission of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and opened new avenues to spread the beautiful teachings of Islam.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was sent for all ages and all nations. It is Allah's decree that his mission will succeed, and a true Muslim should not be concerned about this at all. However, true Muslims should be cognisant of the task given to them, which is to invoke Durood on the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), to exalt him just as Allah and His angels do.

Huzur referred to the attack in Paris in which 12 French journalists were killed, in retaliation to the publication of cartoons of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). He emphasized that the triumph of Islam will not be through murder and mayhem, rather we will succeed in our objective by invoking Durood on the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). This attack has had the reverse effect in that they have printed caricatures once again which have caused us hurt yet again as indeed they would hurt any true Muslim. Whatever this publication, called Charlie Hebdo, did a few years ago had been forgotten but the act of those so-called Muslims ignited it once more. Worldly people are blind to faith. They even mock God. If we respond to ignorance with ignorance we would be committing greater ignorance.

After this incident, the media approached us to enquire about the views of the Jama'at on this matter.

We told them this was an un-Islamic act and we expressed our commiseration but we maintained that freedom of speech should have limits otherwise those who inflame others' sentiments are responsible. This was widely disseminated via various news channels.

It is indeed God's decree that the Jama'at of the true and ardent devotee of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is to convey the true teachings of Islam to the world. It is our responsibility to convey the message within their own sphere that wrong reactions only produce disorder and the global situation will be further inflamed. Neither people should be provoked by wrong reactions nor should God's chastisement be called on through them.

Ahmadis have to tread the line of: '*...O ye who believe! you also should invoke blessings on him and salute him with the salutation of peace.*' True believers should try their utmost to abide by this.

In Ahadith the benefits of invoking Durood are mentioned under various narrations:

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: On the Day of Judgment the person who sends the most blessings on me will be closest to me. He also said that the Durood of God and His angels were sufficient for him. The practice of invoking Durood is only an opportunity given by God to true believers to garner merit for themselves.

The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) also said that although the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is not in need of anyone's prayers, there is a very profound reason behind invoking Durood. A person who seeks blessings for another owing to personal love becomes a part of them. The beneficence granted to the person for whom blessings are sought is also granted to the person seeking blessings. And because God's beneficences on the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) are boundless, anyone who invokes Durood on him owing to personal love gets a measure of the boundless blessings.

The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) said: 'It is essential to recite Durood in every Salat to enhance

love for the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and to renew it.' He also said: 'Durood is a great source of attaining steadfastness. Recite Durood abundantly, not as a ritual or mere habit but while keeping in view the grace and bounties of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Recite it to elevate his station and for his success. As a result of this you will attain the sweet and delicious fruit of the acceptance of prayer.'

Hadhrat Musleh Maud (may Allah be pleased with him) gave the following perspective about invoking Durood:

'When we pray for others, in a way our prayer also becomes a source of elevation of our station. While our recitation of Durood elevates the station of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) it also increases our station and blessings reach him and then through him also reach us. For example when something is placed in a sieve it passes through it and cascades down. Similarly God has made

the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) like a sieve for the Ummah. First God grants blessings to him and then those blessings also reach us through his agency. As a result of us invoking Durood, God elevates the station of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and certainly God also tells the Holy Prophet that this gift is from such and such believer. This inspires the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to pray for us and because of his prayer God grants us a measure of His blessings.'

Huzur concluded by praying that Allah may enable us to recite Durood in the true sense and that we may attain nearness to Him as a result, thus increasing our love for the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and that we may always expand our capacities in spreading his Shariah. May we always play a positive role in removing disorder from the world according to his teachings! May God always enable us to do so!

ADDRESSES OF KHULAFAT TO AFRICANS

Hadhrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad^(ru), Khalifatul Masih III.

By Abdou Rahman Cham

A Message of Love and Brotherhood to Africa

Hadhrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad (may Allah have mercy on him) after having been elected as Khalifatul Masih III, the Supreme Head of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, visited six countries of West Africa – Nigeria, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Gambia and Sierra Leone – in 1970. On his return to Pakistan he delivered a Friday Sermon on June 12, 1970, (which was translated and published as the booklet *"A Message of Love and Brotherhood to Africa"*). In this Khutba, he gave an account of his tour. He expressed his gratitude to Allah for the way he was received by the Heads of the States, Chiefs of Africa and the people of these countries – Ahmadis, Christians, Pagans – the love that he gave them and the love that he received from them in return. In the beginning of the Sermon, he said that the situation he found himself in "is well-nigh impossible to describe", only those who saw and experienced it could appreciate it. He was the first Khalifatul Masih to visit Africa, his objectives were to have the first-hand knowledge of his Community and the people there and to give them the assurance that the good work which Khalifatul Masih II, Hadhrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmood Ahmad, al-Musleh Ma'ud (may Allah be pleased with him), started and continued throughout his tenure would continue under his Khilafat

too. Summing this up he said:

"We have now come to you with the message of love, we have been serving you – your different countries – for the last fifty years. Each one of you, old and young, the ruler and the ruled, the official and the public, know that during this fifty-year period, we did not involve ourselves in your politics and had no axes to grind and did not even cast an avaricious glance in the direction of your wealth. You know well that whatever we made we ploughed back in your countries, and what you had not earned but others had earned in another country, we brought here and invested in your service."



A Message of Love and Brotherhood to Africa, Preface to 2nd Edition, p.ix)

Huzur started his Khutba as follows:

“On the 4th of last April, I set out on my tour of West Africa with the help of Allah, the Glorious, carrying Islam’s message of love, affection, fraternity and equality and am back in your midst after an absence of a few weeks as the harbinger of the graces of Allah, the Supreme. What I saw, felt and observed there, can never be told in words. There were some glimmers that have been shown. There are yet other flashes that I plan to project. Those situations were only to be seen and experienced; it is well-nigh impossible to describe them in words. I delivered to the African communities that I visited, and through them to other nations of Africa, Islam’s message of love to mankind. I talked to

them with affection and brotherliness, compassion and fellow feeling and raised among them the voice of human equality and not only verbally but by practically fashioning my conduct to the example set by the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). I demonstrated to them that there was no difference between them and us, in fact, between man and man as human beings. I caressed thousands of children, held close in embrace thousands of grown-ups and have lost count of those I shook hands with, whether there was the occasion or not, and even at the time when I felt that if I tarried longer in the sun I would be running the risk of fainting. But what I planned to tell them by word and deed, I did my best to so impart.”

(A Message of Love and Brotherhood to Africa, pp. 1-2)

PHOTO EXCERPTS FROM THE FIVE-WEEK TOUR OF SIX AFRICAN COUNTRIES



The Khalifa meeting the Prime Minsiter of Sierra Leone, Dr. Siaka Stevens



Huzur delivering the Friday Sermon at the Muslim’s Training college, Surulee (Lagos) which is being simulatenously translated in the local language



Children of the Ahmadiyya French Arabic School in Abidjan, capital of Ivory Coast, being entertained by Huzur



Reception by the Jama’at at Hotel Ambassador, Accra



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



Pan-African Ahmadiyya Muslim Association UK

Resolution of Condolence

The National Executive of the Pan-African Ahmadiyya Muslim Association (PAAMA) UK resolves to record its deepest condolences on the sad demise of Alhaj Ibrahim Bin Mohammed Sahib of Ghana aged 72. *Innaa lillahi wa innaa ilaihi raaji'oon.*

As the son of a devoted Ahmadi Missionary and a grandson of one of the Pioneer Ahmadis of Ghana, Alhaj Ibrahim Bin Mohammed Sahib himself was an active Ahmadi and a Musi, serving the Jama'at as a Regional Amir of the Eastern Region of Ghana for six years.

Alhaj Ibrahim Bin Mohammed Sahib was an agriculturist and a sportsman and he rendered useful services to his country and the Jama'at in these capacities.

He is survived by his wife, a son and two daughters. One of his daughters, Mrs Haleema Twumasiwaa Mensah, is our Respected Lajna Finance Secretary. Being also the paternal uncle of our Respected External Affairs Secretary, Alhaj Dr Ibrahim Asante, his death represents a loss to the entire PAAMA family.

By means of this resolution and on behalf of the membership of the Pan-African Ahmadiyya Muslim Association, we HEREBY:

1. Convey our condolences to Mrs Haleema Twumasiwaa Mensah and Alhaj Dr Ibrahim Asante and all the family of Alhaj Ibrahim Bin Mohammed Sahib;
2. Pray that Allah is pleased with his homecoming and immerses him into His mercy and forgiveness;
3. Supplicate for the patience and steadfastness of the bereaved family that they may bear this loss in honour and with submission to the decree of Allah.

This resolution of condolence is passed on the 8th of April 2015.

Yommy Kallon

Signed by the President for, and on behalf of, National Executive of the Pan-African Ahmadiyya Muslim Association UK.

Love For All Hatred For None

In Praise of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

Momodou Ousman Ceesay

'Allah sends down His blessings on the Prophet, and His angels invoke blessings on him. Do you, O believers, also invoke Allah's blessings on him and offer him the salutation of peace' (Al-Ahzab, 33:57).



The Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and his loyal and blessed Companions were victims of freedom of speech. Modern political thinkers, philosophers, historians and advocates of free speech seem to ignore or are not aware of the historical facts that prevailed over all of Arabia at the time of his birth.

In recent years, there have been much media coverage of the predicted violent reaction of certain people in some Muslim countries about western cartoonists that depicted the Holy Founder of Islam in unbecoming manner. To go back to the concept of free speech, people have the inherent rights to express their opinions wherever they want, and whenever they want. They may do so in public without fear of persecution or punishment. This being the case, freedom of speech is not something new. In fact it is as old as the hills.

Different regions of the world interpret this philosophy according to the prevailing circumstances, like the political climate of the time, religion and culture of tolerance, etc. Everything boils down to two major defining factors – truth and falsehood. Do we express free speech for the common good leading to a spectacular transformation of a primitive, backward and savage society to one which all the people are proud of?

Conversely, do we advocate expletive laden speech or writings that have enormous potential to provoke violence and instability? While some cartoonists believe that they have got the right to offend but the fact of the matter is that free speech has never been and can never be a licence to say absolutely anything anywhere.

Of course, we condemn the killing of any person in the name of Allah. Our beloved Huzur in his countless sermons emphasised the need of educating people and to lead a life of righteousness, repentance and forgiveness. No one has the right to kill the Charlie Hebdo journalists. Killing one person is like killing the whole of mankind. Islam, a religion of peace, never sanctioned killing people who cursed the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). To fully comprehend the free speech denied to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) one must have some knowledge of the conditions of Arabia at the time of his birth.

With the exceptions of a few tribes here and there, the whole of Arabia sank to the illogical practice of worshipping idols. The sacred mosque at the Ka'aba had 360 idols. Extreme moral defects were the order of the day. To become drunk and to run wildly was considered a virtue for them. Gambling was a sport and winners were expected to entertain their friends

with wine. Crime and vices of various kinds were rampant. To the Arabs, there was nothing wrong to attack and to dispossess one from another. It was the law of the jungle.

Certain ignorant clans practised infanticide – baby girls were buried alive or simply strangled. A man could have as many wives as he wished and when he died his sons could marry their step-mothers.

Slavery was common practice and weak tribes were taken as slaves and no one could fight for their rights. In times of war when hatred was too strong, the bodies of the wounded were cut up and some parts were eaten. Bodies were mutilated.

It was against this background that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) proclaimed the Oneness of Allah and the folly of submitting to idols. The Holy Qur'an is a comprehensive book for mankind and its teachings were practised by the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). To know the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is to know the Qur'an. The pagan Meccans could not accept this freedom of speech and they tried to suppress the Holy Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) right to free speech. His worst enemy was Abu Jahl, who led a social boycott and public humiliation of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and his followers.

The house of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was stoned and

garbage and entrails of animals were thrown in his kitchen. On one occasion when he was praying, a party of disbelievers put a mantle round his neck and dragged him. At another time, while he was prostrate in prayer, a load of camel entrails was put on his back and he could not get up until this was removed by someone else.

The early Muslims of Mecca were the victims of the suppression of freedom of expression when they were being forcibly denied the right to choose their religion. The enemies of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) were worse than the western cartoonists - his Companions suffered torture and even death, but the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) never ordered them to fight back while they were in Mecca, nor to take revenge when they became victorious conquerors of Mecca years later.

Do the present-day Muslims love the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) more than his Companions that they can kill those who mock him? This was never the practice of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) nor of his Companions.

May Allah enable the Muslim Ummah to piously obey the instructions of the Holy Qur'an so that instead of violence, they respond to attacks on the character and personage of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) by invoking Allah's blessings upon him.

The Holy Prophet's Love and Kindness Towards Children

Humayon Ahmed Jahangeer Khan

It is famously said that "Love conquers all". However, as we all know, love is of many kinds; for example, the unconditional love a mother has for her child, or even the love for one's personal possessions, be it one's house, car, or even the love for one's pet animal. So what feature of love are we looking for? The answer is simple. Surely for love to truly "conquer all", it must have all characteristics of universality. It is this type of love that was planted into the tender, soft heart of our Master, our Commander, our Leader, Hadhrat Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The life of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) can be described as this universal seed that sprouted through the cracks of the Arabian Peninsula into a magnificent, overpowering tree, protecting all of mankind as a humble loving man, father and prophet.



“It is this tear on his heart that caused a state of infatuating weeping that would overpower the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) whenever he walked passed her grave...

....It is this tear on his heart that allowed the seed of love for humanity to begin to grow, establishing the building blocks to achieve true compassion for children.”

To begin with, looking through the Holy Qur’an, we find the following verse relating to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him):

“And we have not sent thee but as a mercy for all peoples.” (Al Anbiya, 21:108)

To achieve this goal, this mission of being the embodiment of displaying God’s mercy, many tortures, sorrows and agonies were suffered – eventually moulding him into the supreme leader that he is renowned for today.

The suffering started early on, after the demise of his loving mother, Hadhrat Aminah (may Allah be pleased with her). The comfort of parenthood was quickly wiped away at the tender age of only 6 years old, leaving a lasting tear on his soft little heart. It is this tear on his heart that caused a state of infatuating weeping that would overpower the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) whenever he walked passed her grave. It is this tear on his heart that allowed the seed of love for humanity to begin to grow, establishing the building blocks to achieve true compassion for children.

The Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) describes this incident in his writing *Malfoozat*:

“In the time of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), the father of a young boy was martyred in war. When he returned from fighting, the boy inquired of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him): ‘Where is my father?’ The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) lovingly placed the young boy upon his lap and uttered the words: ‘I am your father.’”

The Prophet of Islam was extremely tender and loving towards his own children and felt grieved to see his progeny pass away. Now, it is virtually

impossible for us to put ourselves in the Holy Prophet’s shoes here, as one by one his sons departed before his very eyes, casting a gloom over his life. The one remaining son of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), Ibrahim, was only 18 months old when he died. Hadhrat Mariyah (may Allah be pleased with her) Ibrahim’s mother, spent the last nights of her son in his close company, watching over her ill son, who was slowly ebbing away. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) took him in his loving arms and said:

“O Ibrahim, God’s commandment is true and His promise is that those who die will later be reunited with their loved ones.”

After this grief-stricken death, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) exclaimed his extreme love for his son and announced:

“If Ibrahim had lived on, then he most certainly would have been a truthful, pious prophet.”

Therefore, we have seen how the Prophet of Islam many a times was emotionally and physically shattered to the ground, but with his strong love for Allah, he continued marching onwards and upwards resisting all weathers of sorrow, hail storms of anguish, thunders of calamity, and through the thick, dark clouds of this pain, Allah was guiding him to a better life.

As we climb to the top of the spine which represented the compassion that the Holy Prophet had for mankind, we look down and see that each vertebra was a step closer to God and a step above all other men, and truly attaining the title of *Rahmatul lil Alameen* (A mercy for all peoples). (Al Anbiya, 21:108)

The Status of Women in Islam

By Halimatou Dibba

Before the advent of Islam, women in Arabia were subjected to the lowest levels of treatment. They were considered as inferior to their men folk, and had no right or say in any aspects of society or even their personal issues. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) pioneered the liberation of women from the shackles of barbaric laws and norms that reduced them to mere subordinates who were not entitled to basic rights and freedom, like ownership of property, freedom of speech or expression, the right to their individual wellbeing, etc. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) declared that Allah had particularly entrusted to him the task of safeguarding the rights of women. He proclaimed in the name of Allah that man and woman by virtue of their humanity were equal. In many instances in the Holy Qur'an, men and women are addressed as equal beings. Considering how much Islam has elevated and dignified women, one cannot help but be baffled by the erroneous misconceptions that have evolved about the status of women in Islam as being suppressed. Islam has conferred so much dignity and respect upon women that it has established certain codes of behaviour and dressing that safeguard the modesty and chastity of women. It is said in the Holy Qur'an:

"And say to the believing women that they restrain their eyes and guard their private parts, and that they display not their beauty and embellishments except that which is apparent thereof, and that they draw their head-covers over their bosoms, and that they display not their beauty and embellishments thereof save to their husbands." (Al Nur, 24:32)

This prescribed modesty by Allah in the Holy Qur'an is by no means a way of suppressing women, but rather to establish the true dignity, independence and freedom of women so that they can attain dignity and respect based on their personal traits

and achievements rather than their physical beauty, as well as to gain spiritual security and purity of heart.

The concept of Purdah in Islam is a means of establishing the dignity and true freedom of a woman. However, we live in an era of Western dominance, where immodesty and indecency have become the order of the day, while the sanctified concept of Purdah is mocked and considered cruel. Addressing the congregation of the 36th Annual Ijtema of Lajna Imaillah UK, Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih V, admonished Ahmadi women to embrace the Islamic concept of Purdah and to remember that *"Allah has not given a single command without reason or purpose. Every command of Allah is a means of benefit to the individual and to society. Allah's commands are a means of protection from the many dangers and obstacles that are placed in front of us in this life, and are also a means of making sure we attain the very best rewards and blessings in the Hereafter"*. It is therefore incumbent upon Muslim women, especially Ahmadi women, to shun such temptations and be steadfast in adhering to the commands of Allah in order to attain His blessings.

On the other hand, despite our efforts to maintain the true purpose of Purdah against the odds, we should bear in mind that the concept must be kept in moderation. There are Muslims whose extreme and misconstrued concepts curb the rights and freedoms of women. The actions of such Muslims who are so fanatical in the ways they treat their women also contradict the true purpose and reason of Purdah.

Islam highly recognises the value of a woman, and has elevated her to a status that recognises and respects her rights and freedom. It is therefore the responsibility of every Muslim woman to live an exemplary life that does not only disprove the misconceptions that Islam suppresses women, but also becomes a testimony that Islam is a religion that liberates, protects, honours, respects and dignifies its women.

REGIONAL EVENTS

Midlands Region: **Tarbiyat & Ta'lim Forum** – *Report by Halimatou Dibba*

On 28th March 2015, members of PAAMA UK Midlands Region converged at Darul Barakat, Birmingham, for a Tarbiyat and Ta'lim Forum.

After Tilawat by Hassan Muhammad Sahib, and English translation by Salvator Idris Sahib, PAAMA Regional President, Toban Ephram Sahib, delivered a short welcome address in which he highlighted the purpose of the event as an effort to bring together members of the Association to deliberate on issues that would remind them of their duties and responsibilities as Ahmadi Muslims.

Most of the selected topics were addressed as open discussions, which enabled participants to exchange very solid views on pertinent issues. During a discussion on the importance of prayers, participants stressed the importance of performing Salat as one of the key factors of every Muslim's faith. It was unanimously viewed that as Muslims, we should not only focus on our individual performances of such a core value of our faith, but to make it a point of duty to inculcate such a habit in other members of our families. Particular emphasis was also laid on the importance of performing Salat on a regular basis and in the prescribed manner.

Participants also had a very elaborate discourse on the reasons they have become Ahmadi Muslims, as they expressed the grace in embracing such a noble Jama'at.

After lunch and Zuhr and Asr prayers, men and women participants had separate discussions on E-safety. While recognising the benefits of the Internet in modern society, participants of both groups also pointed out that it



continues to be a menace in many aspects.

Delivering the concluding speech, the Regional Missionary, Maulvi Abdul Ghaffar Sahib, cited the importance of attaching ourselves and family members to the Jama'at. He pointed out the fact that the current chaotic world situation characterised by so much turmoil and conflict is highly attributed to the lack of proper leadership. However, we as Ahmadi Muslims are blessed to have the guidance and leadership of Khilafat. He stressed that the need for every Ahmadi Muslim to follow the guidelines and admonishments of Huzur cannot be over-emphasised. According to Ghaffar Sahib, it is incumbent upon us as Ahmadi Muslims to attach ourselves and family members to Khilafat, in order to overcome the challenging temptations of modern society.

In conclusion of the programme, Maulvi Abdul Ghaffar Sahib led the forum in silent prayers.

London Region: **Nasirat Field Trip** – *Report by Halimatou Dibba*

As part of efforts to nurture the spirit of sisterhood and love amongst the Nasirat, Lajna of PAAMA UK in London organised its first ever field trip for the young girls on 5th April 2015. The day was a very exciting and interesting one for both the Nasirat and the accompanying Lajna members as it involved trips to two very dynamic museums, the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Science Museum in London.

The children's excitement and enthusiasm during the tour of both museums prompted for the extension of the tours. They also exhibited very interesting ideas and creative talents through their interactions, artworks and some games they played. The girls displayed great enthusiasm during the tour, which made the trip worthwhile.

The accompanying Lajna members expressed their profound joys of seeing the girls interact, have fun and learn a lot together in an environment different from the everyday PAAMA Jama'at events. The Head of Lajna for PAAMA UK, Mrs Faosat Sanni Sahiba, highlighted the fact that the trip embodied several underlying benefits for Lajna as it served as a platform to realise one of Lajna's aims of building good relationships amongst Nasirat members at a tender age. She stressed that such initiatives would go a long way in making the young girls realise that in order to maintain strong ties as Ahmadi sisters, they could indulge in other productive activities. The heads of the Tarbiyyat and Internal departments also expressed their gratitude to all the accompanying ladies, other Lajna members and parents of the girls for the success of the day.

Peace Convention between the Pan-African Ahmadiyya Muslim Association UK Midlands Region and Shia Muslims – *Report by Halimatou Dibba*

The world today is characterised by so much violence that usually emanates from fanatical misunderstandings at grassroots levels. Recognising the fact

that such chaos is leading the world towards a tumultuous future, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Association, through various initiatives strives to build

and maintain peace at all levels of society, especially within local communities. In a bid to fulfil such a laudable objective, the Midlands Region of the Pan-African Muslim Association (PAAMA) UK, following consultation with PAAMA National President, Tommy Kallon Sahib, Regional Amir, Dr Muhammad Ashraf Khan Sahib and Regional Missionary, Maulana Abdul Ghaffar Sahib, invited their Shia Muslim counterparts to a Peace Convention aimed at promoting mutual understanding between the two communities and seeking ways to work together to promote peace in society.

The event was held at the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community's Darul Barakat Mosque in Birmingham on 30th May 2015. In accordance with tradition, the event commenced with recitations from the Holy Quran by PAAMA Regional President Midlands, Thauban Ephram Sahib and translation into English by Ali Muhammad Sahib. This was followed by Swahili translations by a member of the Shia Muslims group, Mr. Shoaib Ladak. As Chair of the event, Regional Amir Dr. Muhammad Ashraf then welcomed the guests and gave a brief introduction to the Ahmadiyya Muslim

Community.

The head of the Shia Muslim delegation, Shiekh Muhammad Amin Evans, applauded the initiative as a milestone in establishing peace and harmony between the two communities. He also highlighted the fact that the event did not only serve as a platform to elucidate certain misconceptions but it also manifested that the two Communities share a lot more in common than meets the eye. For his part, Regional Missionary Maulana Ghaffar Sahib reiterated that inculcating peace and harmony within and between local communities is tantamount in ensuring a more tolerant and peaceful world order.

A member of the PAAMA Midlands Region, Farid Mahmood Mubashar Sahib, recited a poem celebrating love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). This was followed by a Question and Answer Session during which participants directed questions at both lead speakers. The event concluded with Silent Prayers led by Regional Amir, Dr Muhammed Ashraf after which a complimentary dinner was enjoyed by all attendees.

Secular Matters:

MAKING JOLLOF RICE – Mrs Fatiha Ghaffar Walker

“Jollof rice is a popular dish across many parts of West Africa served on special occasions. This article details the ingredients required and how to make Jollof rice.”

INGREDIENTS

3 tablespoons of oil	1 scotch bonnet pepper
2 medium sized onions (sliced)	5 cups of water (rice cooker cup)
2 tablespoons tomato puree (optional)	Half root ginger (chopped)
2 cans of chopped tomatoes	Tuna (optional)
2 cloves of garlic (chopped)	Jollof seasoning (optional)
	4 cups of rice



METHOD

- Put saucepan on cooker, add the oil, when hot add the onions, till golden brown. Stir in puree.
- Blend ginger, garlic, pepper and tomatoes together till smooth, then pour into onions, leave to simmer till oil separates from tomato sauce.
- Add water to cover the sauce, then allow to boil and reduce in volume a little then pour in tuna and season with salt to taste and jollof seasoning or any seasoning of choice.
- Wash rice by rubbing in your palms, then drain and add to the tomato sauce and reduce heat to lowest setting.
- Cook till water is absorbed and rice is tender. If hard add a bit of water and allow to cook.
- Serve with kelewele (fried spiced chopped plantain), fried/roast chicken and salad of choice. Tropical all-purpose seasoning can be used in place of jollof seasoning. Mixed vegetable or spaghetti can be added just before adding the rice.
- *Note: Rice measurement is based on the standard rice cooker measuring cup.*