



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
 "In the name of Allah,  
 The Beneficent, The Merciful".



# THE CALL

JOURNAL OF THE AHMADIYYA ANJUMAN ISHA'AT-I-ISLAM, INC., TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

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FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION

Vol. 15

Sha'baan, 1411

March, 1990

## Women's Lib and Islam

There is no doubt that Islam has certain regulations with regards to dress and attire of both men and women. The dress of women has unfortunately been setup as the criterion of woman's status and dignity.

There are some Muslims who think that the cause of Muslim progress is inseparably bound with the adoption of the western call for women's lib and the rejection of any restrictions on women laid down in the Holy Qur'an.

There are other Muslims who think that the re-introduction of the eastern custom of PARDAH or HIJAAB or the seclusion of women is the only solution to raising the

status of womanhood and that any departure from this PARDAH or HIJAAB is a departure from the religion of Islam itself.

This is often the reaction to the obscene attitude prevalent in the west that the more a woman denudes herself, the greater is this an indication of her freedom.

It is equally false to uphold that the more a woman clothes herself the greater is this an indication of her chastity and piety.

History has shown that as in the case of men, the education and enlightenment of women is in no way connected with the amount of clothes

she has on or off. What is clear however is that woman has often not been recognised for the species that she is. Her personal worth has more often than not been estimated in relation to the achievements of the males species.

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We believe in the finality of Prophethood in Muhammad.

مُحَمَّدٌ رَّسُولُ اللَّهِ وَخَاتَمُ النَّبِيِّينَ

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In the eastern and western worlds the attitude towards women has been manifested in two extreme positions. Whereas women in the east have been so segregated from men and considered so different, she has been likened to a creature without a soul.

She has however in the west been so integrated that her physical and biological differences are no longer perceived.

Small wonder then that nowadays in the west Steve has replaced Eve as the mate of the male and madam has replaced Adam as the companion to the female.

Throughout the ages Islam has always come to the rescue of civilization by formulating ideology and giving practical advice. With the perfection of religion in the time of Muhammad however, perfect laws have been given which, if adapted by both men and women, will ensure the advancement of both.

It is for this reason that when the Qur'an gives regulations peculiar to the treatment of women and attitudes towards them, it addresses both men and women.

The fact that Islam

has given further regulations regarding the clothing of women in no way can be construed that women occupy an inferior position to men.

On the other hand the opposite is to be considered true. That is, with any species that is rare and in danger of extinction conservation becomes necessary. It is precisely because in modern times the differences between men and women have so disappeared that woman-hood is on the verge of becoming extinct.

THE HOLY QUR'AN  
CHAPTER 24 VERSES 30-31

SAY TO THE BELIEVING MEN THAT THEY LOWER THEIR GAZE AND RESTRAIN THEIR SEXUAL PASSIONS. THAT IS PURER FOR THEM. SURELY ALLAH IS AWARE OF WHAT THEY DO.

AND SAY TO THE BELIEVING WOMEN THAT THEY LOWER THEIR GAZE AND RESTRAIN THEIR SEXUAL PASSIONS AND DO NOT DISPLAY THEIR ADORNMENT EXCEPT WHAT APPEARS THEREOF. AND LET THEM WEAR THEIR HEAD-COVERINGS OVER THEIR BOSOMS.

The advancement of women in Islam is seen to be restricted because of the so-called concept of seclusion in Chapter 24 verses 30-31. Because an

extreme form of PARDAH or HIJAAB is practised by some Muslims on the basis of this verse, it is surmised that Islam is responsible for the social exclusion of women and the sometimes degradation of Muslim women.

A closer examination of this verse, however, would show that there are four salient points mentioned here, only two of which apply to women alone. The two injunctions which are enjoined on men first and then on women are the restraining of looks and the observance of continence.

Both of these are essential qualities for developing modesty in any social structure. Restraining of looks is an appeal to be conservative in ones outlook rather than be too liberal, while observing continence (restraining sexual passions) is an appeal to respect ones own need for privacy.

Islam preaches the conservation of women rather than the liberation of women in respect of relations between the male and female species. Is this not the same message of Jesus who preached: "Lead us not into temptation" ?

The additional injun-

ction to women given in Chapter 24, the chapter of Light, is that as an aid to her own and others respect for privacy she should hide what modesty requires to be hidden and she should expose what necessity requires to be exposed. It is to be noted that the Qur'an emphasises the covering of the breasts rather than the head of the women.

It is obvious that by enjoining the guarding of the person of the woman, the Qur'an places an extremely high value on the worth of her person. Only that which is precious needs to be guarded and protected.

Islam thus places a greater value on honour, chastity and integrity than upon material things which it encourages to give away freely. Woman is so precious that she needs to be protected. We do not protect that which is not valuable.

How peculiar it is that we are made to think of a man who steals a dollar as a crook and a criminal even though the owner of the dollar may not have had his happiness diminished in the least. But another man who steals a wife or a daughter or a sister or robs them of their

chastity is a hero and an idol even though his action brings ruin and misery upon a whole family and destroys all its happiness by committing adultery with another's wife or by seducing his daughter or his sister.

Shame it is that the law whether moral or legal does not look with equal if not greater disfavour upon sexual larceny as it does upon petty larceny.

If a woman gives away her jewellery or her wealth she is considered foolish, but let her give away her chastity and her honour and she is classed as liberated by the society we live in.

HOW LUDICROUS !

"Islam would have none of this. The Muslim is made to feel equal if not greater guilt when he merely steals a look at a woman not belonging to him (Qur'an 24:31-32) than when he steals a dollar not belonging to him.

This was the Islam of Jesus who preached: "He that looks at a woman with lust has indeed

committed adultery." And adultery in the time of Jesus was punished by stoning to death.

If a woman gives away her jewellery or her wealth she is considered foolish, but let her give away her chastity and her honour and she is classed as liberated by the society we live in. How ludicrous!

Woman in Islam is a radiant jewel. She is likened in the Qur'an to a brightly shining star encased in glass and she is found in houses (The Qur'an 24:35,36).

Every jewel, every precious gem has a part to be displayed and a part to be concealed. Only when one part is properly embedded in finery can the radiance of the other part be manifested.

Woman in Islam is not a Statue of Liberty upholding a fire of desire attracting all and sundry to explore her entire body. She is presented in the chapter of Light (chapter 24) as a radiant gem, a jewel which if carefully displayed but at the same time carefully encased and protected radiates the brilliance and beauty of the Divine Light which surrounds her.

# FASHION

Every woman is concerned with fashion, for fashion in the age in which we live can either enhance the beauty of her womanhood or hold her up as an object of ridicule. One of the problems of fashion is that the world determines fashion as what would look good on a woman, not what would a woman look good in -- in other words fashion is imposed on a woman from outside and has little or no relation to her inner modes or feelings.

Fashion, for example, may reflect the seasons -- spring, summer etc.; the occasions -- easter holidays etc.; but it never reflects the psyche or mind of the woman. But fashion does affect the mind of women for it makes them copyists or imitators of styles which others wear. Indeed one wonders whether we are living in an age of fashion or follow-fashion; for while the word fashion means to make anew, in practice it means to imitate the old.

Islam reminds woman

that she is a creator and the Holy Qur'an emphasizes that all mankind is fashioned in the womb of woman: "He (Allah) it is who fashions you in the womb as He pleases." (3:5) Allah Himself is "al Musaw-wir" -- the Fashioner, meaning the One who brings out beauty in form or shape. Since the aim of a Muslim is to imitate the attributes of God, not man, the Muslim woman needs to remember that her personal beauty must originate from the Divine within her.

The crisis of women in the world today centers around her struggle for equality. In dress this has led to the mistaken fad of unisex fashions. Real equality in dressing is not to wear the same clothing and styles of men, real equality is to insist that as men do not have to expose or highlight their bodies to be properly dressed, why should women be required to do so. Far better it is therefore, for women to strive for quality before equality.

In any study of fash-

ion, the purpose of fashion is distinction and admiration. But the effect of fashion is very often the opposite of these, viz. imitation and vanity.

To be distinctive and admirable a woman needs to be unique as well as humble. Allah, our Lord whose attributes we imitate, is One and Unique thus He is al Hamd -- the One worthy of praise and admiration. He possesses all beauty but He manifests them in a simple way.

Let us not for a moment think that fashion relates only to the garment or outward clothing of the individual. Beauty must lie first and foremost with the clothing of the flesh over the bones of the body as the Qur'an indicates "We clothe the bones with flesh" (23:14).

Since the first onlooker of the beauty of the natural nude state is the woman (or man) herself and later on, when she (he) marries -- her husband (or wife), Islam emphasises that personal

hygiene is as essential as the covering of the body.

For this reason the Holy Prophet Muhammad, upon whom be peace, has enjoined the cleanliness of the entire body especially the teeth and also the removal of superfluous hair. It will be obvious to every woman having her monthly periods that her personal hygiene is much easier to maintain with the entire removal of pubic hair.

So far as clothing is concerned the Qur'an explains what social psychologists have only now discovered that clothing performs three functions - firstly it is for mod-

esty, secondly it is for decoration and thirdly it is for protection.

**MODESTY** is that attitude that refrains us from drawing the attention of others to ourselves. In Islam there are different standards for modesty for men and women. This is because unlike a man a woman's attraction relates to her whole body. Social psychologists seem to uphold this view.

Flugel in his book "The Psychology of Clothes" pg. 107 states "in women the whole body is sexualised ...hence the exposure of any part of the female body works more erotically than exposure of the correspond-

-ing part of the male.."

It is also important to note that the effect of exposure of the body is different for men and for women. To men, even the slightest exposure of a woman's body is fraught with sexual intent.

It is unfortunate, therefore that fashions imposed upon women give importance first and foremost to decoration then to a lesser extent to modesty. The Qur'an warns in 7:27 "O children of Adam, let not the negative influences of society lead you astray as they did to your forefathers, stripping them of their garments exposing their immodesty.

#### AHMADIYYA HOUSE

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At long last, the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ish'at-i-Islam Inc., Trinidad & Tobago is to have its own home - **AHMADIYYA HOUSE**. The Anjuman, which has been orphaned since its birth in 1975, had been housed at the premises of various jama'ats and at the homes of members, well-wishers and supporters of the Ahmadiyya Movement.

The longest tenure of accommodation was at the Mosque, Fireburn where the Anjuman used its resources to build a huge structure for its use as well as that of the Fireburn jama'at. Having come of age, the Anjuman has since been unceremoniously kicked out of the house of God, which its members helped to build.

**AHMADIYYA HOUSE** is being built on its own property at Arena Road, Freeport on two lots of land which were donated by a humble farmer and road worker, Mr. Samsair Baksh - Jazaahul-laah (May Allah reward him).

**DONATIONS FROM MEMBERS, FRIENDS OF AHMADIYYAT, WELL-WISHERS AND SUPPORTERS OF THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT IN TRINIDAD WILL BE WELCOMED.**

# *The Dignity of Womanhood*

Women of the world! I would like to say a few words to you on the "Dignity of Womanhood." Many of you take for granted the freedoms you enjoy as women and particularly as Muslim women. But there were times when even among Muslims, women had no place in religious functions or in the Mosques.

It was a hard struggle to convince not only men but women as well that according to the Qur'an and the Hadith, women too, can be teachers of religion and can pray in the Mosques.

The Ahmadiyya Anjuman is still carrying on this struggle to keep women in the forefront by recognizing the dignity to which Allah and His Messenger has elevated them. This is heartening to know especially in times like these where there is an attempt to once again put women in the prison of the PARDAH and to keep her away from the House of Allah.

In many communities, women are still regarded

as second-class citizens and are deprived of the basic rights enjoyed by men. Indeed women can be regarded in this unfortunate light as a fourth-world community.

Some women have struggled for the emancipation of women but, by not knowing the limits of their nature, they have gone to the other extreme of licentiousness and have fallen further into the trap of exploitation by men. In the world today, then, we find women are either too backward or too forward, too dominating or too exploited.

It is in this context therefore that there is the need to present to the world the Islamic concept of womanhood as a model of virtue. But how can this be achieved when woman is either kept in the background or she is so free she ignores the limits that Allah has placed on her.

Monkery is an innovation not prescribed by Allah says the Qur'an in 57:27; and there is a well-known saying of the Holy Prophet Muhammad

that there is no monkery in Islam. Both these statements apply equally to women as to men. No matter how virtuous a woman may be, that virtue is not a moral quality until and unless it is manifested in the society at large.

It is for this reason that Mary, the mother of Jesus, though she developed virtuous qualities while confined to the temple, she was told to be an example to the women of the world and to bow down with those who bow down (3:42). In other words to come out in public and join others in the worship of Allah, the One True God and in the doing of good.

The Qur'an in 2:213 states that "Mankind is a single nation". The arabic word for nation or community is UM-MAH which is derived from the word um-m meaning mother. The word um-m indicated direction on a right course. A mother is called um-m in arabic because the responsibility of directing her child on the right course rests with her.

The word IMAAM (a

leader or a book or a road) is also derived from this word and as such it means one who, or that which, directs others on a right course in prayer or knowledge.

"Mankind is a single nation" therefore means that all mankind including women must have a single or common direction on the right way.

But from where should mankind obtain this direction on the right way? The Qur'an says in 16:78 "Allah has brought you forth from the bellies of your mothers - You knew nothing - And He gave you hearing and sight and hearts that you might fully utilise them." Thus just as physically, women are entrusted with the role of providing the senses of understanding for humans, so too spiritual

ly, the Qur'an gives women the responsibility of presenting to the world the model of virtue. This is why even a prophet of God viz. Jesus, was presented to his people by his mother Mary (19:27), and the Qur'an then indicates that this relationship between Mary and her son is given as a sign for the nations (21:92).

No other spiritual system has identified this responsibility of woman. It is only in Islam that the dignity of womanhood is enhanced by giving her the role of presenting the model of virtue to the world.

While other religions have confined woman to the home, the Qur'an has gone many steps further and entrusted to her the task of developing within the home, moral and

spiritual values and then presenting them to the world. Thus the Qur'an addresses women in 33:34 "Mention that which is preached and practised in your houses of the messages of Allah and wisdom i.e. qualities which distinguishes between truth and falsehood, right and wrong.

Women have always been intended to be teachers of the precepts of religion and this is why two women have been singled out in 66:11,12 as examples for all believers.

Muslim women must therefore be more inquiring in the knowledge of Islam and more assertive in the propagation of Islam. The Muslim woman is required to develop virtuous qualities in the home and demonstrate them in public with the dignity of her womanhood

**"I will not waste the work of a worker among you whether male or female, the one of you being from the other."**

The Holy Qur'an 3:194

**"Whoever does good, whether male or female, and he is a believer, We will certainly make him live a happy life, and We will certainly give them their reward for the best of what they did."**

The Holy Qur'an 16:97

We accept Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, the founder of the Ahmadiyyah Movement as the Mujaddid of the 14th century and we affirm that he never claimed to be a Prophet.

### UNDERSTANDING THE QUR'AN

The Ahmadiyya Anjuman continues its classes designed to teach one how to understand the Holy Qur'an. Classes are held fortnightly at various centres. A new class has started weekly in collaboration with the Gasparillo Islamic Group (GIG). The Qur'an is studied verse by verse and chapter by chapter.

Every Tuesday	Chapters of the Qur'an	Gasparillo
Alternate Wednesdays	Islamic Studies Course	Iere Village
Alternate Wednesdays	Topics based on the	New Grant
Alternate Thursdays	Qur'an e.g. Polygamy is	Siparia
Alternate Fridays	forbidden, Jesus is dead	Claxton's Bay

At New Grant, Siparia and Claxton's Bay the classes will deal with the topics "JESUS IS DEAD AND WILL NOT RETURN - according to the Holy Qur'an", "JESUS DID NOT DIE ON THE CROSS - according to the Holy Qur'an and the Bible" and the "Prophecies of the coming of Muhammad - according to the Bible". At Siparia, at present, the topic "The Qur'an forbids POLYGAMY" is being discussed.

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The Qur'an makes no difference between man and woman in the bestowal of reward for the good he or she does:

"AND WHOEVER DOES GOOD, WHETHER MALE OR FEMALE, AND HE IS A BELIEVER, THESE SHALL ENTER THE GARDEN (PARADISE), IN WHICH THEY SHALL BE GIVEN SUSTENANCE WITHOUT MEASURE " (40:40).

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The Ahmadiyya Anjuman has organised a INTER-FAITH meeting on the topic "CRISIS IN WOMAN-HOOD, HOW MY RELIGION VIEWS IT."

The meeting is being held at the Rienzi Complex, Couva on Saturday 2nd, March, 1991 at 7.15 pm. Speakers include Pundit Ramesh Tiwari, Rev. Joy Abdool and Maulaana Mustapha Kemal Hydal. Mrs. Ermine Lewis of the Rape Crisis Centre will open the function.

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Name:.....

Address:.....