

PURDAH GUIDELINES GIVEN BY HAZRAT KHALIFATUL MASIH V (ABA)

1 Women in parades.

November 15, 2018: “As far as the participation of Lajna in parades is concerned, they may walk behind men at the rear of the parade as long as they observe proper Purdah, wearing modest clothing whilst upholding their identity. They are not allowed to mingle and walk alongside men. If they do so, nobody will recognize them but if they walk at the rear with decent attire and participate in the parade in a noble and dignified manner, they will not only be prominent but people will also come to know about Lajna Ima’illah.”

Reference: Letter from Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba) to Ameer Sahib USA, March 2017

- “You wrote that one Jama'at asked about women participating in a parade. When you refused permission, you were told that women had participated in the Humanity First Walkathon in London.
On this Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba) said: Permission was given one time on the condition they stayed in the back. However, this was not followed and permission was revoked.”

2 Women should sit in separate area in Jama'at interfaith meeting. If they have brought a guest, they may sit with them but should eat with the women.

Reference: Letter from Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba) to Ameer Sahib USA, March 2017

- “You wrote that one Jama'at asked about men and women sitting in one hall without a screen at an Interfaith meeting. On refusing permission, you were told that at a Peace Conference or similar occasion in London, some Ahmadi women sat in the men’s area.
On this Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba) said: The women who have brought guests may sit with them during the event but must go to the women’s area when food is served.”

3 There should be separate stall for men and women at book fairs etc.

Reference: Letter from Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba) to Ameer Sahib USA, March 2017

- “You asked whether men and women can share a stall at a book fair.
On this Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba) said: Separate stalls are better”

4 Women should not meet with male Congress members or their male staff.

Reference: Letter from Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba) to Ameer Sahib USA, March 2017

- “You asked concerning the ‘Day on the Hill’ that women come from all over the country to meet with members of Congress and more than 90% of Congress members or their staff that the women meet are men.
On this Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba) said: It is not permitted to meet with the men.”

5 Families may go to bowling together but men and women should stay at a distance from each other.

Reference: Letter from Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba) to Ameer Sahib USA, March 2017

- “You mentioned a program for men and women to go bowling together in one Jama'at. Also, you wrote that Muhammad Ahmad Chaudhry Sahib had a mulaqat with Huzoor (aba) and that he sent a copy of verified notes of the mulaqat in which the last question was answered that men and women could go bowling if proper purdah is arranged.

On this Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba) said: If they maintain a distance from each other.

Also, Huzoor (aba) said: Because it is more convenient for families to go together, permission is given. If it is reported that men and women are together, then there will be a total ban in the future.”

6 Men and women should not sit in the same room in Tabligh events and women should not give speeches to men in Jama'at events.

Reference: Letter from Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba) to Sadr Lajna Ima'illah, August 2014

- “You have mentioned that some officials seek permission and argue to include Lajna members’ speeches in Jama'at events in which men are also present, even though Lajna are in a separate place. This practice is not acceptable. A separate auxiliary organization of Lajna is formed to facilitate and cater to the needs of women in Jama'at. I have written to Ameer Sahib also.

Arrangement for ladies and men in the same hall or room for Tabligh events is wrong. Your stance on this is very appropriate. Even if for some reason such program has to be arranged in one hall, refreshment should be served in separate places for ladies and men.

7 Permission given for a mature Lajna member, approved by National Sadr Lajna, to address a mixed gathering at a Jama'at interfaith event with proper observance of purdah.

Reference: Letter from Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba) to Sadr Lajna Ima'illah, 2016

- National Sadr Lajna USA requested confirmation that a mature Lajna member, approved by National Sadr may address an Interfaith gathering which is mixed.

8 Men and women should walk on separate pathways.

Reference: Address to Jalsa Salana Qadian, December 24, 2010

- The streets and pathways of Qadian are narrow. So, I am addressing those who may be attending the Jalsa for the first time or have come from different countries and cultures to pay attention to this and to walk separately. Men and women should be walking on their own side of the road, rather than being reminded to do so by those on duty. Even non-Ahmadis who wrote about Qadian almost one hundred years ago, wrote that great examples of Islamic teachings and values could be seen there.

9 On shaking hands.

Reference: Address to Lajna at Jalsa Salana Canada, July 3rd 2004

- The spirit of purdah falters if you attend a gathering of men while wearing a *burqa* and start shaking their hands. The spirit of purdah requires that men and women who are non-Mahram should not freely mix or intermingle, rather they should have separate places to sit. It is not purdah if you visit your friend's home and freely sit with her husband, brothers and other relatives, even if you are covering your face; or if you are shaking hands with them while covering your face. This is not purdah! The objective of purdah is that Non *Mehram* men should not be among women and women should not go in front of men who are not Mahram. Their sittings should be secluded.

10 Interfaith Meetings

Reference: Guidance to the National Majlis Amila Lajna Ima'illah, Germany, 2007

- On June 7, 2007, in a meeting Huzoor (aba) advised the National Majlis-e-Amila of Germany regarding different departments, some of this advice was about purdah. Regarding organizing Tabligh [propagation] sessions, Huzoor instructed that indeed these should be organized and best is to do sessions where men invite men and women invite women. If a Lajna member brings guests who must sit on the men's side, then only the woman who brought the guest can sit on the men's side, other Lajna cannot. Lajna who brought the guest cannot eat with the men. Women must observe purdah. In this regard, Huzoor mentioned the visit of the Queen of Holland to see Masjid Mubarak Haigh Holland. She recently visited the mosque of this Jama'at while respecting the Islamic traditions. He said you should abide by our traditions and not compromise on purdah. Huzoor said on this occasion they [Lajna] needed to present an address, hence they were given a

special permission, but the permission was only for that function, not for any other gathering. (Published Weekly Al Fazl International; July 7, 2006)

11 Interaction of men and women at University/Work

Reference: Waqifaate Nau Class, 14 August 2008, Masjid Baitur Rashid, Hamburg

- Giving instructions about male classmates Huzoor (aba) said that: If [you] want to ask something regarding studies, [you] can do so. [You] can take part in class discussions. But [you] should not keep any other type of relationship. It should not be that at first [you] start to talk to them about studies and then start going out with them for various occasions, like picnics etc. This is not permitted at all.

Reference: Guidance to National Majlis-e-Amila of Lajna Ima'illah Germany 18 December 2009

- Huzoor (aba) said that Ahmadi girls in universities should take care not to sit alone with boys for chit chat. This gives rise to friendships which then result in going to the[shopping] malls or other places with them. If at the university they need to get help from a student about their studies, they are not prohibited from that. As far as individual preaching at universities is concerned, there have been instructions given about it already that girls should preach to girls and boys should preach to boys.

Reference: Guidance to USA Lajna Students Meeting, May 6th, 2013

- Huzoor (aba) has addressed the issue of male and female interaction many times. To summarize his answer, he has stated that professional interaction is permissible when necessary, but social interaction is not. Huzoor (aba) said that in our professional interactions with someone of the opposite gender, they being an Ahmadi or non-Ahmadi is irrelevant. Our interaction is to be concerning our work and should not extend to socialization. Huzoor (aba) also said that we should think of students as students, and not as anything beyond that.

12 Marriage Proposals

Reference: Friday Sermon, December 24, 2004

- It is related by Hazrat Mugheera (ra) that he sent a proposal for marriage to a family. The Holy Prophet (saw) said: “You should see the girl because after seeing her, there is a better chance that you will develop understanding and affection between each other.”¹²

Nowadays this permission is interpreted in the wrong way by society. It is being interpreted as allowing the boy and girl to be alone together or go out together so that they can develop a relationship. Even going together to a different city or sitting together alone for hours in the home is considered to be permissible, but

this is not right. The reason for making this allowance is that seeing each other face to face makes it easier to form an opinion of each other.

- Some characteristics become apparent while talking to someone and thus there is no harm in sitting together with the family for a meal. Many traits and behaviors become noticeable during the sharing of a meal. In case there is some behavior which a person may dislike, it is better to find out before marriage rather than have problems afterwards. If good qualities are seen, then a better understanding and liking can develop for that proposal and sometimes a bond with the proposed person can develop before the wedding.

Reference: Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV (rh) Liqa Ma'al Arab, August 17th, 1995.

- *There is no harm... that you eat from your own houses, or the houses of your fathers, or the houses of your mothers or the houses of your brothers, or the houses of your sisters, or the houses of your fathers' brothers or the houses of your fathers' sisters, or the houses of your mothers' brothers, or the houses of your mothers' sisters, or from that of which the keys are in your possession, or from the house of a siddiq [friend] of yours. There is no harm for you whether you eat together or separately. (Surah an-Nur, 24:62).*

Why is eating together mentioned? In fact, *siddiq* is a friend of the family who is true, honest, and trustworthy. This word does not refer to just anybody who visits. It is not permitted to invite visitors and to start eating with them in the presence of our family. This is not what the Holy Quran means. *Siddiq* means a regular friend of the family who has respect, who has honor, and who has trust. If such people can be invited to share the table if the parents decide, then why not the suitor who has in fact requested to be a member of the family? In such cases, invite the one who wishes to marry your daughter, and sit with him and your daughter respectfully, without showing her beauty, and let her judge for herself. That much is permitted.

Reference: Address to Lajna Ima'illah, Jalsa Salana UK, July 23, 2011

- It is stated that, primarily, say everything truthfully when arranging matrimonial matches. If a proposal comes for a girl, her health, age, height, etc., whatever it may be, should be told very clearly. All the information should be given to the boy. However, after receiving the information, it is the obligation of the boys not to turn up simply to look at the girl. Rather, after receiving the information, they should pray and then only go with the intention of arranging a match. If they go with this intention, a pure society will be created. When matches are sought with *Taqwa*, girls will not experience the anxieties that they do. Similarly, boys should

very clearly tell about their education, health, etc., and if they have any shortcomings, these should be communicated very clearly. Because *Qaul-e-Sadid* entails that everything should be clearly explained before a match is arranged.

Reference: Rishta Nata Committee in Canada. July 11, 2012

- Huzoor (aba) said there is a lack of training regarding the system of arranged marriage. Make them understand that first thing is prayer. Wealth, family background, lineage, and religion is usually considered in finding a spouse. Holy Prophet (saw) said “give preference to faith”. You should focus on faith, both boys and girl should be religious.

Huzoor (aba) said you need to lead people to prayers while looking for prospective martial matches and decision, so that they should make a decision after praying. Counseling is required even for arranging a marriage. It is not appropriate to visit a girl’s home, take her pictures, see her pictures, and then reject her. It should not be that girls are considered an item for sale. There are etiquettes for arranging a marriage that need to be observed.

13 The Importance of Purdah - Friday Sermon, January 30, 2004

14 Tabligh

Reference: Address to Lajna Ima'illah Jalsa Germany, June 2nd, 2017

- Speaking of tabligh, I want to mention that women and girls should only do tabligh to other women and girls. Tabligh should be to one’s own gender. Girls should do tabligh to girls and boys to other boys.