

Address to Lajna Ima'illah by Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba) at the National Ijtema UK, October 2009

After Tahasshud and Sura Fatiha, Huzur recited Chapter 4, verse 2 of the Holy Qur'an:

O ye people! fear your Lord, Who created you from a single soul and created there from its mate, and from them twain spread many men and women; and fear Allah, in Whose name you appeal to one another, and fear Him particularly respecting ties of relationship. Verily, Allah watches over you.

And now I will begin my main subject. I wish to say some things to you which need to be addressed to both men and women, and are very important for Ahmadi society at this time. But as I am talking to you [ladies] at the moment, I will speak with reference to women. And all the statements that I am making are based on the Holy Qur'an, Hadith and the teachings of the Promised Messiah^{as}; obviously, whenever the Khalifa of the time says anything, he speaks within the context of these teachings; he cannot do so otherwise.

Therefore it should never occur to an Ahmadi Muslim to question whether these teachings are for women living in the East or for women living in the West. 'Women living in the West' means those Ahmadi women who are of purely European descent, or of other nations who have accepted Ahmadiyyat; or they can be Ahmadis of Asian or African descent who were born here and grew up here, or who have immigrated and settled here as children or in their youth.

We claim, and this statement is definitely in keeping with the claim of Islam, the assertion of Holy Qur'an and of the Holy Prophet^{saw}, that Islam is a religion, which is in accord with the laws of nature. No one can claim that its commands and teachings are easy for the Arab nation to practice but too difficult for anyone outside the Arab world to follow. No! In fact, just as these teachings were well-matched to the character and way of life of the Arabs a long time ago; they are still appropriate today for the character of people of Asian descent, people of Europe and Africa, the inhabitants of the islands, and also for the people of America. Just as these teachings were applicable 1500 years ago,

they are still applicable now. And until the Day of Judgment, this religion will remain the only one that provides a philosophy based on human nature.

Therefore, the charge made that Islam is outdated or difficult to follow, that its commands are very harsh, that it is unyielding and rigid; these are all baseless and unjustified objections, which are being leveled at Islam today by non Muslim scholars with great force. The Holy Qur'an is the one complete and comprehensive philosophy that has shed light on every subject from family issues to national issues, the rights of children to the rights of nations. It has elucidated rules for maintaining family stability and harmony; it has defined principles for the establishment of peace and stability in society; and in addition it has set golden rules for peace and harmony among nations.

When sophisticated and worldly people, who consider themselves to be quite enlightened, are introduced to the teachings of Islam today, their inevitable and constant reaction is that 'if this is really Islam, then it is a teaching that can produce nothing but peace, harmony, love and brotherhood – this is the philosophy of love and peace.' No Muslim man or woman, child or youth should ever be embarrassed or afraid that as a result of being Muslim and following Islamic practices, they may become the object of ridicule of some people. Nor should they ever develop an inferiority complex about it. For example, some people may make fun of our *purdah* (veil), or mock at our *burkas* (outer garments), or they may make fun of our clothes, or they laugh at the way we perform Salat. No one should ever take notice of this, especially young Ahmadi girls or anyone who has some kind of inferiority complex.

Here, where most people have no interest in religion, where churches are now situated in shopping malls, where youth feels privileged and proud of the fact that they have complete freedom; the passage of time is showing that the result of this way of life is the rapid degradation of moral standards. Children have become extremely disrespectful to their parents, as I mentioned in an earlier sermon. At last, protests against the unnecessary and unreasonable 'rights' of these children are being made on some TV programs. They are saying that the peace of society; family harmony and the behavior of children are deteriorating so fast and heading to disaster so rapidly, that some laws will have to be passed to halt the destruction.

Look at marriages; the relationship between husbands and wives is also deteriorating. Lack of tolerance is causing marriages to break up. The number of divorces is huge and the concept of 'arranged marriage' is under attack and is being blamed for breakup of marriages. But non Muslim and non Ahmadi people who live here do not have arranged marriages, so why do so many of their marriages break up? Most of their marriages, certainly a very large percentage, are unsuccessful even though they are marriages of their own choice. The reason for these divorces is something else; it is impatience, and it is the demise of the sanctity of marriage. Women do not guard their own sanctity, nor do men uphold their [the women's] sanctity. This leads to a lack of trust, resulting in the breakup of relationships. Many children of single parents are involved in wrongdoing. They are not restrained by limits set by society or by religion; nevertheless, they do need to have some boundaries so that they can become useful citizens. The law does not control them either; in fact it defends them, with the result that children from single parent families, from their childhood to teenage years, commit an increasing number of crimes. They do not commit them for any particular reason; even if it is the wrong reason, there should be a reason. They do it just 'for fun'. A few girls and boys get together and make a gang and then they cause harm to others just for fun.

Just as society's problems are increasing, due to the credit crunch, problems between husbands and wives are increasing in the same way. Problems associated with children's behavior are escalating. As I have already mentioned, here boys and girls decide on their own marriages, which may appear to be great love stories; but in spite of this (I am talking about non Ahmadi people) these relationships break up due to many problems. Afterwards the man and women have to try to rebuild their lives. And then there are cases where the husband has killed the wife's children from her first marriage; sometimes they have been beaten to death, sometimes they have been strangled or killed in some other way. When the mothers of these children (their first husbands' children) are asked why they did nothing while their new husband was abusing their children; they answer that my lover or boyfriend can do what he likes and I do not care. Therefore a mother, who is supposed to be the supreme model of love, affection and self sacrifice, is becoming a figure of injustice and abuse. Are these progressive and successful values that an Ahmadi woman or girl should think of following? Especially when Allah Ta'ala has

revealed a treasure of incomparable teachings to her. Therefore every Ahmadi youth, boy or girl, should be proud of the fact that they have been given a teaching from their Living God and their living Messenger^{saw}; and that the living Qur'an is a treasure which will enhance our lives in this world and the Next, and which will also save the lives of our children. This teaching will also adorn the walls of our homes with love and beauty. It will illumine our homes with a light which will not only illuminate us physically, but will also illuminate our souls. It gives us glimpses of Paradise in this world and by following it, we can observe instances of Allah Ta'ala's assistance and blessings. And in our life Hereafter, which is eternal, it will allow us to enter Allah Ta'ala's paradise, *Insha' Allah* (if Allah wills).

So take care of this teaching, which Allah Ta'ala has given us and do not worry about life in this world but instead worry about that life which will be eternal. The verse which I recited is one of the verses which are recited when a *nikah* (marriage ceremony) is announced. In it, Allah Ta'ala says:

O ye people! fear your Lord, Who created you from a single soul and created there from its mate, and from them twain spread many men and women; and fear Allah, in Whose name you appeal to one another, and fear Him particularly respecting ties of relationship. Verily, Allah watches over you. (4:2)

The first verse I recited is the third of the verses which are recited at a *nikah*.

These verses discuss a subject, which if followed by both partners, would ensure that there would be no question of any marital problems, disputes or break up of marriages; nor would there be any problems with in-laws. The verse says that you are created from a single soul. One meaning of this is that you have been created for a common purpose. Therefore, man and woman, husband and wife – you should be searching for this common objective and you both must achieve it. The second objective, once this new relationship is established, is to establish harmony in society. And the first step towards this is the union of two families on account of the marriage. This connection must be established in a way that relationships are strengthened; no rifts should occur and no marriages should break apart. If a girl dislikes something about her husband and her in-laws, she should try and work things out with prayer and patience.

Right at the beginning of the marriage, when the couple have not yet fully understood each other's temperament; if at that point the girl complains to her parents or friends about her husband or her in-laws, it will cause rifts in the relationship and the marriage may break up.

Here [in this verse], where it is commanded to take care of the ties of kinship; in addition to this deeper meaning, the Promised Messiah^{as} has said that after marriage, blood relationships are comprised not only of ones' own family, but the blood relatives of a husband and wife become the blood relatives of each others. That is, the husband's parents, brothers and sisters become the wife's parents and brothers and sisters; and in the same way the parents, brothers and sisters of the wife become the parents, brothers and sisters of the husband. When this is practiced, relationships will never be cool or distant and will never deteriorate. Therefore, he^{as} has said that you must uphold their rights in the same way you uphold your own parents' rights. These commands are not only for the wife but as I have already said, the husband is also commanded to improve the marital relationship with prayer and patience. Likewise, it is the duty of both sets of in-laws to refrain from disrupting the peace of society by criticizing or spreading slander about the husband or wife and thus causing rifts in the marriage.

The first verse also indicates that the moral upbringing of any children that you may have as a result of this union is your responsibility; so that you may spread harmony in society through their good training. Allah Ta'ala says that this cannot occur until you acquire *taqwa* (fear of Allah). What is Allah's *taqwa*? Having Allah's *taqwa* means doing everything the way Allah has commanded it to be done; leaving behind one's own desires and remembering only to please Allah Ta'ala. Allah Ta'ala says that 'Always remember that you cannot deceive Me, because I am keeping watch over your every action and deed.' Therefore, if every Ahmadi couple keeps this injunction in mind, they will naturally begin to seek those actions which please Allah. Allah Ta'ala has used the word '*taqwa*' five times in these *nikah* verses. Thus it is not possible for anyone, who keeps Allah's *taqwa* in mind to this extent, to ever have problems or disputes in their home. And furthermore, those who observe the commands to respect and take care of each other's blood relatives are given the glad tidings that their prayers will be accepted. Consequently, the doors to spiritual progress are opened for them. The relationship

formed through marriage is not simply a worldly one, nor is it just for producing children; rather the marital bond must be maintained and strengthened in order to attain Allah's pleasure; this in turn leads to the ability to raise good progeny, to maintain harmony in the community and to increase nearness to Allah Ta'ala.

Men and women have the same responsibility to make their marriage and marital life into the means of achieving nearness to Allah. They should sacrifice personal desires and emotions for the greater goal, which as I have already said, is to strengthen their bond with Allah and to produce pious offspring. This is why the Holy Prophet^{saw} selected these verses. Marriage is the greatest source of pleasure and fulfillment of personal desires. It should not be regarded as a way to gratification only; but *taqwa*, the fear of Allah, moral training of future generations and harmony in society should not be forgotten as its vital components. The care of children should not be sacrificed for one's own pleasure and worldly enjoyment. It is a trust that must be safeguarded and it can only be safeguarded when children are brought up in the best way; when a peaceful atmosphere is maintained in the home; and when husband and wife have developed confidence in each other. In order to achieve this, Allah Ta'ala has told us to speak only the right words, to tell the truth and perform every action with the fear of Allah. This allows trust to develop and thus strengthens relationships, and this is *taqwa*.

When Allah Ta'ala gives advice to the believers, He always reminds us of the future life (Paradise); at the same time He tells us that if we are righteous in this life, we can have Paradise in this world also. Therefore if we take this principle to heart; men and women; newly married couples and longtime married couples, because sometimes rifts occur after having four or five children and mutual dislikes begin to surface; if we make it our practice to use prayer and patience and live with Allah's *taqwa*, then all marital problems will be transformed into loving relationships. The change should occur in everyone, in every Ahmadi; otherwise they are not fulfilling the pledge which they have made with the Promised Messiah^{as}. Many of the problems in the home arise when the man is behaving badly and the woman acts in the same way, thus escalating the dispute instead of decreasing it. Indeed, it is the man's major responsibility to provide for his wife and take care of her rights. The Promised Messiah^{as} went so far as to say that 'if man knew how great a sin it is to deny his wife her rights and if he knew how much he

would be punished by Allah for it, then he would be afraid to ever get married.’ The Promised Messiah^{as} described some rights of the wife as the following: that whatever the husband eats, he should feed his wife the same; whatever the husband wears the wife should wear the same; and he should not turn her out of the home. Nowadays there are many cases where the husband or his family have thrown the girl out of their home and left the poor thing in the street. The Holy Prophet^{saw}, addressing men, said that the best among the believers is he whose conduct is the best; and the one whose conduct is the best is the one who treats his wife the best. This is the extent to which man has been admonished to take care of his wife and those who still do not are ill fated indeed.

However, women, especially those with children, must do their utmost to prevent their homes from breaking up. Sometimes women call the police and throw their husbands out of the home over some trivial matter. This action (calling the police) should only be taken if the man is really abusing his wife or is continuously ill-treating her; in which case she has every right to do it and she should also inform officers of the Jamaat. Marriages are ending because of trivial problems, petty arguments and small grievances and the young (divorced) girls have problems in getting remarried. Their parents, if they are living, have to deal with more stress. In addition, as I have stated before, we are seeing cases of children of single parent families in this society, who are out of the control of mother or father, whichever parent is raising them. Complaints from school officials indicate that the children who usually get into fights are children from single parent families.

The Holy Prophet^{saw} has explained the status of women in very beautiful way. He said that the world is just a provision, meaning that this world is a provision for this life, and that there is no better provision in this world than a pious woman. A righteous woman is the best provision for this life. The directive to men to marry righteous women should be pondered over by women also; they should live their lives according to the way that Allah Ta'ala and His Messenger^{saw} have prescribed. And how did the Holy Prophet^{saw} describe the best wife? He said ‘she is the one who does what her husband asks of her willingly, and refrains from that which he does not like.’ If the husband does not have taqwa, this command may be difficult, but even then she should keep trying in

order to save her marriage and her home as far as possible. This should be done to the best of one's ability to prevent disputes and conflict.

The Holy Prophet^{saw} prayed for mercy on every home with taqwa, which he described as one where the husband gets up at night for *tahajjad* (voluntary night) prayer and also wakes his wife. If she is sleeping deeply, he should wake her by sprinkling a little water on her. If the wife gets up first, she should wake her husband in the same way. Such homes, where the husband and wife spend their nights awake in offering *nawafil*, [due to her prayers]; will indeed be homes of Paradise.

A disputed case was brought before me; the marriage was about to break up because of the husband's cruelties. They had 4 or 5 children. I counseled them and some things were resolved. But the man began to abuse his wife again and she requested a divorce. Once again through prayers and Allah's mercy they reconciled. Now I see them coming for *Fajr* (dawn) prayers and I feel very happy that Allah Ta'ala enabled them to save their marriage for the sake of their children. Men and women must remember that they should not be thinking about their feelings only, they must consider the feelings of their children too. They must take care of them.

While the Holy Prophet^{saw} drew women's attention towards worship, he also set some limitations. He said that a woman should not offer voluntary fasts without her husband's permission. Obligatory fasts are of course obligatory, but voluntary fasts require permission. To keep openness and trust intact between them, he also directed that a wife should not allow anyone into their home without her husband's permission. But this does not mean that men can do as they like. Women should always be careful not to allow anyone into the home that may cause the husband's trust to be broken. The Holy Prophet^{saw} said that if a believing man should dislike something in his wife, he should not hold rancor in his heart; but should look for a good quality that is pleasing and should not criticize unnecessarily. Look at how the Holy Prophet^{saw} has admonished men to care for women!

The Holy Prophet^{saw} also upheld the rights of young girls at the time of marriage. Once a man arranged a marriage for his daughter; the girl did not like the match and rejected it. The matter came before the Holy Prophet^{saw}. He said that the match should be made according to the girl's wishes. So if a girl, who has *taqwa*, talks to her parents about

marriage and what she wants, her parents should listen to her. They should not insist on a match due to family obligations or some such matter. Girls and their parents should decide on marriages after much prayer.

It should not be assumed, based on my saying that girls should have a choice in marriage, that girls may marry outside the Jamaat, that is a non Ahmadi or even an Ahmadi with very little connection to the Jamaat. Girls should be aware of this. If there is something of this nature going on, then the matter may go before the Khalifa of the time. After reviewing the facts he can decide whether such a marriage would be allowed according to the *nizam* (system) of the Jamaat system, in the same way as in the time of the Holy Prophet^{saw}. However, pious and virtuous girls should also keep in mind that on that occasion when the Holy Prophet^{saw} told the father to arrange his daughter's marriage according to her wishes, the girl who was a true *momina* (believer) said that she had only brought the matter to the Holy Prophet^{saw} in order to establish the rights of girls. Sometimes girls were cruelly forced into marriages; they had to marry a certain person otherwise her parents would never speak to her again. This believing girl went on to say that as the Holy Prophet^{saw} had supported her rights, she now had no objection to the marriage that her father had arranged. This is how the girl showed her piety and obedience.

Therefore, this is the lofty level of obedience and regard for parents that all girls should demonstrate. Girls should not be stubborn, instead they should pray and if after prayers they feel contented, they should tell their parents. Sometimes people have unmistakable dreams, not dreams that are a result of their wishes, but if a dream is seen after prayers are offered with a clear mind, parents should be told. Parents should not only pray themselves but also ask someone else to pray on the matter, i.e. whether it is a good match or not.

Now I am going to present some advice from Hadhrat Amman Jan, the mother of the faithful, which she gave her eldest daughter, Hadhrat Nawab Mubarika Begum at the time of her marriage. She told her daughter never to conceal anything from her husband, never do anything that she would have to hide from her husband. Her husband may not know, but Allah Ta'ala is watching and when the matter comes to light, the woman loses her respect. She loses her dignity and regard. Hadhrat Amman Jan^{ra} said that if anything

ever does happen that her husband would not like, never hide it from him. Tell him honestly what happened, that is the way to gain respect; hiding it will lead to losing your status and respect.

Hadhrat Amman Jan^{ra} also told her never to argue with her husband when he is angry. 'If he angry with a child or a servant, or you know he is in an angry mood and is not himself; even if you know what he is saying is wrong, still do not speak in front of him.' She said that a woman loses her dignity and respect when she argues with an angry man. Most fights happen due to impatience; the husband is angry for some reason and scolds a child, the wife becomes angry too and so the quarrel escalates. If the wife reproves him at this time, she will probably be insulted. Later when he has calmed down, she can gently tell him that he was wrong, as correcting a fault is also important. Men and women should also remember the advice given in the Ahadith that an angry person should sit down if they are standing or perform ablution which cools the anger. When such cases come before me, I always tell the man that there is no shortage of water in this country, when you are angry put your head under the tap or shower and your anger will cool off.

In addition, Hadhrat Amman Jan^{ra} advised her daughter that a wife must think of her husband's family and relatives as her own, as is directed in the Holy Qur'an and Hadith. I have already spoken about husband and wife treating each other's blood relatives as their own. She told her that if someone treats you unkindly, let them do so, but you must never do wrong to anyone. Never return a wrong with another wrong, and then you will see how Allah Ta'ala will bestow favors on you. Another piece of advice that Hadhrat Amman Jan^{ra} would give to young girls was that when they went to their new homes, they should never say anything that would cause their in-laws to dislike them and that would dishonor their parent's reputation. They should never interfere in their in-law's affairs, and they should never criticize their mother-in-law or sister-in-laws to their husband.

Hadhrat Nawab Mubarika Begum^{ra}, the eldest daughter of the Promised Messiah^{as} also mentioned some advice given to her and other girls by Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih I^{ra}. I feel that the need to follow this advice is even more important today than ever before, and girls as young as twelve or thirteen years old should begin to use this

prayer. Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih I^{ra} told her on several occasions that one should not be embarrassed to pray for anything from Allah Ta'ala. He said even though you are very young, you should be praying to Allah to provide you with a righteous and good husband. This guidance given to Hadhrat Nawab Mubarika Begum^{ra} has great importance today; it teaches young girls that they can amass a great treasure for their future lives through prayer. Young girls should be praying regularly to accumulate a wealth of blessings, so that when the time comes, Allah Ta'ala will bestow a treasure from His bounties on them. However, girls should not get any wrong ideas in their head while they are praying for a pious match. At this age, they are not ready for marriage and cannot marry; first they must grow up, finish their studies and become an asset for the Jamaat, then Insha' Allah they will get a good match. But children must bear in mind that while they should be praying, they should not develop an 'ideal' in their mind because many things can go wrong if they start looking for their 'ideal'.

Then there is the subject of friends. Young girls should be prudent in making friends at school. Friends should be selected with great caution. They should make friends with girls who are trustworthy and who stay away from wrongdoing. In schools and colleges, friendships between boys and girls allow Satan to do his work. I have repeated many times that women should safeguard their integrity; girls should take great care of their virtue and their honor. They must always remember that if they are doing anything they would not want their parents, elders or Jamaat officeholders to see, then that action is wrong; it is poisonous and will lead to committing sins. Therefore always keep your actions virtuous, those which can be done in front of anyone. Older Nasirat, ages 12 to 15, and girls entering Lajna must be very careful because this is the age when Satan attempts to corrupt them. As I said in the beginning, never be influenced by people who are far from God or have no faith. *Dajjal* (deceivers) try to entice people into their circles in different ways, sometimes with love, sometimes by fear. You must save yourselves from such attacks by prayers.

I also want to mention an important dream that Hadhrat Nawab Mubarika Begum^{ra} saw. She wrote that I saw the Promised Messiah^{as} in the courtyard of our house (in Qadian) sitting on a chair and that I am standing next to him. At that time, my daughter, Mansura Begum, was two and a half years old (she later became the wife of

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih III). I saw her also in the dream, playing nearby. A fair man dressed in white came and asked, “What is Huzur’s command for girls?” The Promised Messiah^{as} looked up and said in a very loud voice, “until you present your girls to be the foundations, the building of Ahmadiyyat cannot arise.” Hadhrat Nawab Mubarika Begum^{ra} says that the interpretation of the dream that came to her mind was that, “First, it is vital to educate girls and give them good moral training so that they can fully concentrate on the religious upbringing and training of their children; and thus the continuation of pious progeny is maintained. Secondly, that all the boys should have Ahmadi wives.”

This advice is for older women too; boys’ mothers come to me saying that ‘their sons will not agree to any match they propose and would I persuade them’. Their sons should marry Ahmadi girls; if they do not, what will become of Ahmadi girls? As we do not allow Ahmadi girls to marry out of the Jamaat, boys should make sacrifices also. They should marry Ahmadi girls only. Hadhrat Nawab Mubarika Begum^{ra} wrote that ‘having Ahmadi wives is important for the children’s sake also. Mothers have great influence which begins in infancy. I have related this dream to many women and am writing this now that the effect of society and the times is very destructive. It is your foremost responsibility to make the foundation of the building of Ahmadiyyat so that it stands firm to the Day of Judgment.’

Therefore girls do not have minor importance, but as the Promised Messiah^{as} declared in the dream, it is girls who have to uphold the building and structure of the Jamaat. We must give them the best education and training that we can, both spiritual and worldly. May Allah Ta'ala sow the seed of righteousness in every home and every girl’s heart and may the best fruits result from them. This is the most important issue, which if established, will ensure the righteousness of our future generations. This is the duty of girls on the brink of womanhood, of their mothers and fathers, who must pay attention to it. It is also the responsibility of every Lajna officeholder. Every officeholder must pay attention to her own training; if her own upbringing is righteous then she can train others. She must try to acquire the knowledge, understand the knowledge and act on the knowledge which Allah Ta'ala has bestowed through the Holy Qur'an. It is indeed the teaching that will solve all the problems of the home and all the problems in society and

will raise the eminence of the Jamaat. Then we will become the means of attaining nearness to Allah and the means of training future generations.

May Allah Ta'ala enable you all, young and old, to achieve all these goals. Let us pray.