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The MUSLIM WOMAN

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September/October 1998

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A monthly journal published by The Muslim Women's Association (Regd. Charity)

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FOR THE PERIOD DECEMBER 1997 TO
NOVEMBER 1999

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❖ MEMBERSHIP ❖

The Muslim Women's Association
is open to all Muslim Women.
Membership Fees (which includes the subscription
to *The Muslim Woman*) are: Annual UK £15 Overseas
£20 Life membership £100 Overseas £120

❖ ALL CORRESPONDENCE ❖

should be sent to our address
THE MUSLIM WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION
P.O.Box 6119, London SW20 0XG
Articles, letters and other matter appearing in this publication do
not necessarily express the official views of the Executive
Committee of The Muslim Women's Association.

Meetings of the MWA take place on the second
Sunday of each month

NEXT MEETING

Sunday 8th November 1998
at the Islamic Cultural Centre,
146 Park Road, London NW8 7RG
Time: 4.00PM

CIBERO
Guillettstr. 35
Postfach 17 04 27
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MUSLIMS TODAY*

BBC RADIO 4 Programme Proposal. Proposed duration 45mins
Summary: An exploration of what Muslims in Britain think of
themselves, and how that compares with how others (including
the media) view them.

Watch any TV programme, or read any newspaper article, about
Muslims in Britain, and nearly always the impression is
confusing. How representative is the Muslim being interviewed?
How much has the (non-Muslim) interviewer understood? Why
is the impression given so often negative? Or is it?

The programme will be about what Muslims think of the way
they are portrayed in the British media. Using film and radio
clips, and newspaper extracts to illustrate their points, we'll ask
how stereotyped IS the image? In what ways do they see the long
history of bad Christian/Islamic relations affecting today's press
coverage? The programme will also ask of them some tough
questions: Why shouldn't their divisions be made public? Is
there an unrealistic tendency to want coverage that is 100%
complimentary? Aren't other people equally stereotyped?

It will be important to let Muslims in Britain talk about how
they see themselves. We'll focus on perhaps three different
Islamic communities around Britain, and certain outstanding
personalities in them. We'll ask what they feel most proud of,
what they dislike, or feel disappointed by, what they think of the
jockeying for political influence among some self-styled Islamic
leaders, what Britain now means to them, whether things are
getting better or worse, and about their dreams of the future.

*Apologies yet again for the lack of an editorial in this issue.—Ed.

HENNA PARTY IN KINGSBURY —AN OCCASSION TO REMEMBER

Jasmine Ansari

I had the chance of attending a Henna party at my friend's house this month. The Henna evening precedes the actual Wedding or *Nikkah* day and it is celebrated in many Muslim countries. In contrast to the Henna or *Mehndi* ceremony as it is known in the Asian Subcontinent, the *Nikkah* is a serious and formal affair. The bride to be is usually dressed simply on this occasion and she has a chance of relaxing and enjoying herself with all her female friends and relatives before the Big Day! There is a lot of singing and tabla playing and girls may choose to sing romantic songs or ones with a catchy chorus so that everyone can join in. Songs that are sung extempore are usually very popular and they are directed towards the bride and bridegroom. The ceremony is an occasion for family and friends to be together and to enjoy themselves.

The Henna party that I attended recently was full of laughter and fun. It embodied all the characteristics described above. The bride was the center of attention and she herself looked like a flower as she was surrounded by dozens of bouquets given to her by well-wishers. A marquee was set up in the garden and its white interior was decorated by dashes of pink and red flowing materials. In the center of the marquee her friends had decorated two hearts tied with a bow and with the initials of the girl and boy. There were carpets and cushions laid all along the sides for the guests to sit and tables were set in preparation for the food which would be served later on in the evening for the guests.

The colourful event began at 8pm when the girls and women started to arrive in beautiful clothes and clad with *Hijabs* which were removed as they entered in to the marquee - a no male zone for that night! The girls sat in a circle and began to sing songs in their mother tongue which comprised of both Punjabi and Urdu. They were extremely energetic and were able to sing for 3 hours without a break! Their singing rose to a crescendo as the groom's side or *Baraat* arrived. Once the greetings and shrieks of welcome were over, the groom's side settled down and formed a circle as well and began to sing songs they had practiced just for that night. Each side tried their best to outdo the other, by being more louder and adventurous in their lyrics, accompanied by drums or tablas, tambourines and bells.

The groom's side came with gifts and sweets for the bride and her immediate family. Traditionally the mother-in-law presents the wedding dress and a gold jewellery set or sets to the bride on the Henna night. The groom's relatives also brought trays of beautifully decorated henna - for the bride. After the dinner, the close relatives of the bride sweetened the bride's mouth by feeding her bits of *ludu* or sweets. Others gave her money and prayed for the young couple to be happy in their future life.

As the evening drew on, the party took a swing. The carpets in the center of the marquee were rolled away and a dance floor emerged. The groom's sisters performed a dance with sticks. It was a traditional dance and it was followed by many other dances performed in solo as well as by groups of girls. One dance that stayed in my mind was *sona sona* which means literally fine! It was a Punjabi group dance and it had a nice beat. The girls moved in co-ordinated steps, holding flags in their hands as they danced.

The festivity carried on throughout the night. As the visitors began to leave they thanked the family of the bride for organising such a beautiful function. Muslim women need to organise more of these events as it gives us a chance to let our hair down in a friendly environment. Furthermore it stimulates our youth to know more about their culture as such ceremonies stem from our rich Islamic heritage spanning across many centuries. The MWA would also like to hear from its members about their experiences of a Henna night out!



NOTICE TO ALL MEMBERS

Please note that the November meeting on November 8th, at 4 pm precisely, is our Annual General Meeting. Although it is not an election AGM, members are urged to attend this meeting as many important issues will be discussed.

The Committee is looking forward to meet and hear the views of as many members as there are.

EVALUATION OF MUSLIM SCHOOLS

Ibrahim Hewitt

*Adapted from Evaluating a Muslim School, an AMS
Publication*

People tend to dislike criticism and it is human nature to assume that evaluation will lead to criticism. However, there are very good reasons for evaluation as a practice. The Qur'ān has a number of verses which stress accountability for actions in this life (e.g. *Surah 21*, verse 47; 18:49 and 16:14). Combined with supporting *ahadith* we can say that we are obliged to "take a long, hard look at ourselves".

In his monumental work *Ihya Ulum-ad-Din* (Vol. IV), Imam Ghazali states that there are six main stages in the process of taking proper account of which *Muhasabah*, taking account of oneself, is vital. This, he believes, makes it possible for people to do what Allāh says in the Qur'ān: "O you who believe, fear Allāh and let every soul look to that which it sends in advance for tomorrow. And observe your duty to Allāh! Lo! Allāh is Informed of what you do." (chapter 59, verse 18)

Thus evaluation should be an essential component in the functioning of a Muslim school, with the ultimate aim of ensuring that the school realises its main objective of creating and nurturing *Taqwa* (consciousness and awareness of Allāh) in the whole school community. To do this, evaluation must aim to enhance the quality of teaching and learning and the overall effectiveness of the education offered. It should also seek to determine the school's effectiveness as a transmitter of Islamic

values and provide a sound Islamic base upon which to build teachers' self-confidence, all the while promoting the concept that professional accountability is incumbent on Muslim educators.

The behaviour and conduct of pupils inside and outside a Muslim school should be a clear indicator of the school's success. As a result, evaluation guidelines need to be viewed within the context of a total Islamic ethos for the school. Teaching should not be evaluated in isolation. Questions need to be asked about the degree to which the governors are involved in the organisation of the school and to what extent the head's leadership has an effect on this. Are there effective organisational structures with ongoing processes and procedures being developed continuously, and what support systems are in place to assist the management of the school and its effectiveness? An overriding factor is knowing whether or not there is sound financial management of the school.

Without classroom observation, evaluation will lack first-hand evidence of teaching skills and provide little that can be built upon to spread good practice or secure improvement. However, observation should be supportive and evaluative and pay attention to the direct effect that curriculum planning, organisation and teaching have on pupils' learning. Moreover, evaluation should not be seen as an end in itself. It should be linked closely to ongoing in-service training and research.

The governors of a Muslim school can contribute to the evaluation process by their constant and active interaction within the school community becoming in the process conversant with the characteristics and ethos of effective Muslim schools.

Most research on the evaluation of Muslim schools concurs that

an essential ingredient of a good school is strong, consistent and inspired Islamic leadership. The pivotal role of the head teacher in establishing a sound Islamic ethos and culture in the school cannot be over-estimated. Hence, the evaluation of a Muslim school must include the leadership provided by the head teacher and his/her quality of and relationship interaction with the Board of governors: members of staff, teaching and non-teaching; pupils; parents; and the wider community.

Bear in mind, though, that effective evaluation and appraisal are linked with good school leadership at all levels, including the governors, managers and teachers.

The school's philosophy, mission statement, aims and objectives should be cohesive. Related to this would be the long-, medium and short-term planning for the school. Remember, though, that the procedures used to formulate the mission statement and aims have to be based on sound Islamic educational principles. Moreover, these procedures must be realistic and attainable for the community served by the school, including those who are employed by the school and those who are managing the school.

First impressions are important when we meet other people, and the same is true of a school. The environment inside and outside the school says a lot about the ethos of the school. It is important, therefore, to ensure that the buildings and grounds are kept clean, that visitors are welcomed in a friendly manner, that there are plenty of displays of pupils' work around the walls and that it is obvious that this is a Muslim school. The latter point is not easy to determine, but it shows in the way staff and pupils behave with each other and with visitors, how much respect is given to Muslims and non-Muslims alike, as well as respect for

the school itself. If the atmosphere of a Muslim school is warm and friendly then the chances are that it will be providing a positive learning environment for pupils.

Management and staff (and pupils) should be clear about the ways by which a warm, friendly environment is created at the school. For example, do staff and pupil notices, work displays and the behaviour of staff and pupils reflect the Islamic ethos in a warm fashion, and does the environment reflect concern for all who use, visit or work at the school? Are there clear criteria used for selecting display work? How regularly are displays changed? Who has the responsibility for this? Does the school have satisfactory policies for Equal Opportunities, Health and Safety and Child Protection? Do the daily routines and displays of staff and pupils reflect and convey Islamic values and are there clear policies for dealing with litter, vandalism and graffiti to maintain the standards of the school? There should be a clear management strategy, which is understood by all involved within the school community, for achieving the agreed outcomes related to the questions above.

Education is a partnership between parents, pupils, teachers and religious leaders. All have a responsibility for and interest in the development of young Muslims educationally, spiritually and morally. If education is to be successful, all four groups must work together.

All aspects of the curriculum in a Muslim school should reflect the Islamic ethos, even if the National Curriculum is being used as a guide. Adaptation is essential if Islam is to be cross-curricular. Although it may be convenient (and traditional) to speak of "religious" and "secular" subjects, this terminology

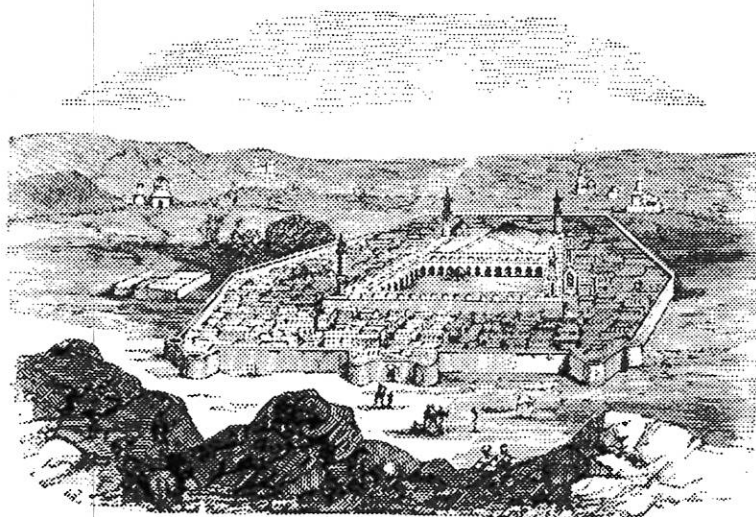
should be phased out in order to foster a cross-curricular approach to Islam. The school should aim to provide an environment wherein attitudes and values based on Islam underpin the whole enterprise, conveyed through the structured and unstructured curriculum. In short, there must be a holistic approach to the educational experience with Islam at the core. Good practice from other sources should be encouraged but it must not be allowed to influence the school so much that it is detrimental to the Islamic ethos.

In keeping with Muslim schools' commitment to excellence, good practice and professional development requires that all teachers have adequate time and facilities to keep abreast of relevant education initiatives. Good teaching should aim to draw the best out of every pupil.

Prophet Muḥammad (peace and blessings be upon him) has said that the "first *madrasah* [school] is at the mother's knee", indicating the heavy responsibility mothers and the home environment have for the education of young Muslims. No matter how much good teaching is carried out in a Muslim school, if the home environment is not supportive, much of the good work will be wasted. It is important, therefore, to develop a programme to educate parents and prospective parents in the aims and objectives of Islamic education and the vital role they have to play in the whole process. Schools that ignore parental involvement, either through a lack of decisive leadership from the governors down, or simply through indifference to the potential benefits parents can bring to the education of their children, are doing themselves, their staff and their pupils a major disservice.

The education of young people is an *amana* (trust) from Allāh.

Those involved with Muslim schools have a duty to ensure that every possible effort is made to provide the best possible education, resulting in maximum learning. Anything less and we are failing.



MAULUD - CELEBRATING THE PROPHET'S BIRTHDAY

Jasmine Ansari

The MWA celebrated the Birthday of the Prophet, PBUH on September 13th - please see Minutes for full details of the evening. In tradition with the aims of the Association, this day has always been celebrated as a family occasion where children in particular are encouraged to participate in a program that includes a short lecture, *naats* and recitation from the Holy Qur'ān. The President of the MWA has always emphasized the importance of educating our youth about Islam. One of the ways this can be done effectively is organising programs such as the *Maulud* that inform as well as entertain our youth about their religion. On this occasion the MWA invited Sister Maleha Malik a lawyer and lecturer to speak about Prophet Muḥammad's life (PBUH.)

The *Maulud* provides us an opportunity to be reminded about the life of our Noble Prophet. His early childhood as a shepherd boy, his teenage years as an honest and hardworking person, his middle years as a gentle and just person, and the last part of his life as a Messenger, Statesman and Soldier. Prophet Muḥammad lived for many years among the Quraish and he played an active role in the community. His actions gained him respect from the Bedouin tribes. At every stage of his life he acted justly and honorably despite the strong campaign of hostility and hatred that was targeted towards him when he began to propagate the word of Allāh. His own family and whole tribes turned against him as his message posed a threat to their way of life. The teachings of

AN APPEAL

Madina House

A MUSLIM HOME FOR CHILDREN IN NEED OF CARE IN LONDON

Madina House is a Muslim home for children in need of care, established in 1981 under the auspices of the Muslim Women's Association (a registered charity which has been functioning since 1962)

From its inception the organisers worked closely with the Department of Health and Social Security and all other Social Services Agencies in order to comply with the current guidelines on the running of Children's Homes. Subsequently Madina House was registered by the Department of S.S.I. under the Child Care Act.

Aim—The main aim of Madina House is to provide an alternative home for children who for whatever reason, are temporarily unable to live with their parent/s. At Madina House we provide a stable, caring background, founded on Islamic principles and practices. Since its founding we have cared for over 400 children.

The present home does no longer comply with today's regulations and we have been asked to find more suitable accommodation. Thus, we are in desperate need of finance to buy an appropriate building. Failing to do so, the future of Madina House is in question.

Please help us by giving generously to continue to care for our children in need.

Donations, whether by Cheques or Banker's Orders would be greatly appreciated.

AN APPEAL

Madina House

"You shall not attain righteousness unless you spend on others of that which you love, and whatever you spend, verily God has knowledge of it."

The Qur'an 3:92

From.....

Name.....

Address

Telephone

I would like to make a donation/Zakat and enclose a cheque for the amount of £..... payable to Muslim Women's Association 'Account Madina House'.

To be send either to:

MWA, P.O.Box 6119, London SW20 0XG

or direct to:

The National Westminster Bank, Royal Garden Branch, Kensington High Street, London W8 5EQ

Account Number 25941364; Sort Number 50-30-10

Islam directly opposed the bedouins way of life and they were not prepared to forgo their idols at any price! The Prophet until his last breath preached the word of Islam and left a message for all of humanity until the Day of Judgment in the example of his life which was an embodiment of the Qur'ān.

In our daily prayers we bless Prophet Muḥammad (and his family) for the sacrifices and suffering he underwent on behalf of his *Ummah*. The *Maulud* just presents us another occasion to celebrate his name. May the MWA celebrate many more *Mauluds*!



PRESS RELEASE

On 26 July 1998 the UMO Youth Council of UK & Eire convened the Sixteenth National Muslim Youth Conference at St Catherine's College, Oxford University. The Conference theme was *Impact of Western Influences on Muslim Youth* and the event was chaired by Dr Syed Aziz Pasha, General Secretary, UMO,

Mr Yoonus Loonat volunteered to act as raporteer. Nearly 150 Muslim Youth and guests attended.

The conference commenced with a recitation of the Holy Qur'ān by Maulana Muhammed Qasim, Imam of Jamia Mosque. Oxford.

LETTER

Respected Sister Khanam Hassan & all Sisters of The Muslim Women's Association

Assalam Alaikum

Please refer to my previous communication about orphan boys & girls of Surti Orphanage and Darul-Uloom.

I am enclosing herewith some photographs for these unfortunate children of Ummah.

Single picture with some information on the back of the photos.

I have requested to the Committee of the Orphanage & Darul-Uloom for more photos.

However, I am going 2nd weeks of Nov. 1998, before Eidul-Fitr to arrange uniforms for these orphans & poor children. Insha Allah, we will provide you further development.

With my best regards, for & on behalf of Orphanage & Darul-Uloom.

signed

* Surti Orphanage — home for orphans, widows, destitutes & homeless; situated: Village Dih-Sarsauna, Dist. Samastipur, N. Bihar, India.



KITCHEN TALK

*Gado Gado — Indonesian Vegetable Salad**

INGREDIENTS:

Sauce (to be prepared first):

- 1 medium onion, minced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 155 g (5 oz) roasted peanuts, crushed
- 2 teaspoons dark Soya sauce
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 1 heaped teaspoons chilli powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon tamarind
- 3 *daun salam* or bay leaves (optional)
- 3 tablespoons coconut or vegetable oil
- 3/4 cup thick coconut milk
- 1 fresh red chilli, finely chopped

Fry all ingredients from onion to *daun salam* or bay leaves in the coconut or vegetable oil for 5 minutes, stirring frequently. Add coconut milk and simmer until sauce is thick and aromatic. Add chilli and leave to cool.

Salad:

- 2 small carrots
- 2 medium potatoes
- 100 g (3 1/2 oz) cabbage, shredded
- 155 g (5 oz) beans, sliced
- 250 g (1/2 lb) beanshoots
- 12 lettuce leaves

- 2 medium tomatoes
- 3 hard-boiled eggs
- 1 small cucumber
- freshly fried *krupuk* (prawn crackers)
- dry fried onion flakes

Scrape carrots and slice thinly, or grate. Peel potatoes and cut into 1 cm (1/2 inch) dice or thin slices. Drop into boiling, slightly salted water and cook for 10 minutes. Add carrot and cook for 1 more minute. Drain and set aside. Sauté cabbage and beans in a very little oil and water until partially cooked but still crisp. Put beanshoots in a strainer and pour on boiling water, or steep in a pot of boiling water for 2 minutes to soften. Drain. Wash lettuce and dry carefully.

Line a wide plate with the lettuce, top with carrot and potato pieces, then add beans and cabbage. Stack beanshoots on top. Cut tomatoes into thin wedges. Peel and slice cucumber. Slice boiled eggs. Arrange tomato, cucumber and egg slices attractively round the edge of the salad.

Pour on sauce and sprinkle with onion flakes. Decorate with freshly fried *krupuk*. Serve slightly chilled.

* Passmore, Jacki; *Asian Cookery in Colour*, Summit Books, Paul Hamlyn Pty Ltd, 1979, p.34.



JUNIORS' CORNER

FORGIVENESS*

I will tell you about the wife of Abū Sufyān, called Hind. She was a very cruel person to anyone who had anything to do with Islam. She was in Makkah at the time when the Prophet Muḥammad entered and took the city over, making it free for all Muslims to pray there in peace.

Hind had heard that Muḥammad had destroyed the idols, and she thought, "I wonder what he will do to me?" Do you know why she asked herself this question? It was because she knew that she had done some dreadful things at the battle of Uhud.

It was here that the Prophet's uncle called Hamzah had been killed. She had seen him lying there dead, but that was not enough for her. She went and did terrible things to the body. So great was her hatred that she had acted like a mad woman. And now here was the Prophet Muḥammad who was this man's nephew. Right here in the city where she was. "Well, surely he would punish her," you would think.

No, dear Children, he forgave her.

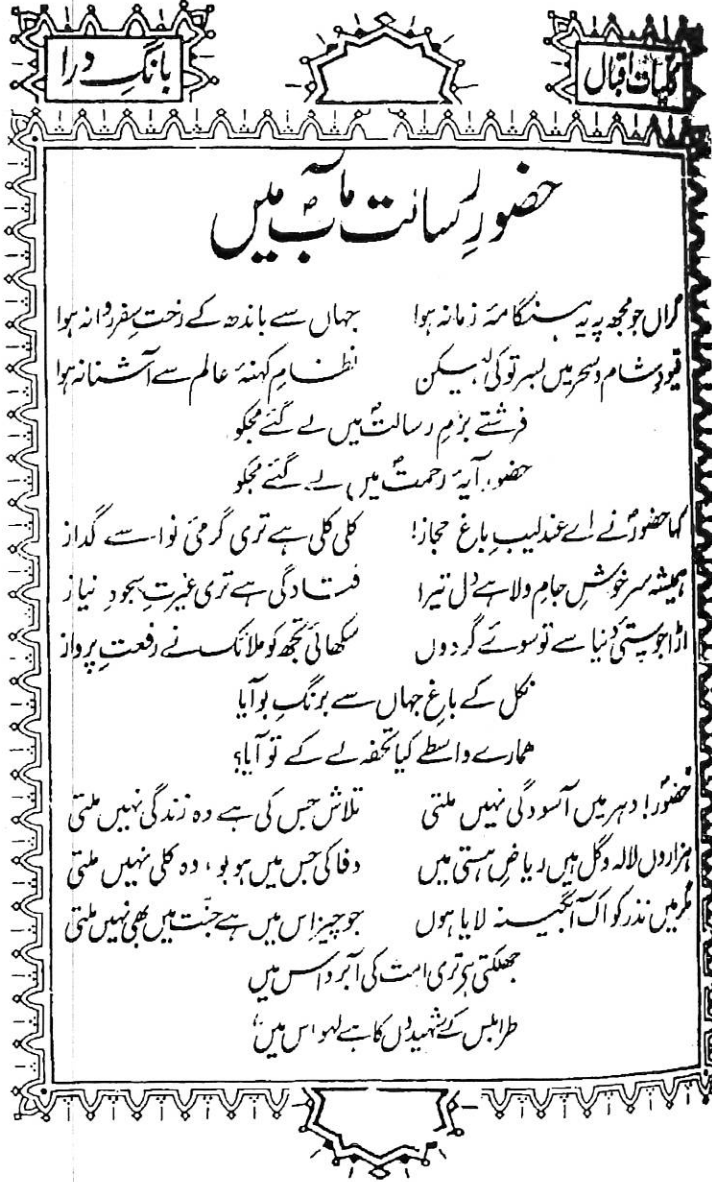
Some wicked men were brought before the Prophet. He looked at these miserable creatures who had suffered a lot through fear and were now shivering before him, because they were the men who eight years before had driven Muḥammad from Makkah. He said to them, "What kind of treatment do you expect from me?" And do you know what they had the cheek to say? I will tell you — it was this, "Mercy, O generous brother!" I ask you, had they

shown any mercy or respect to any Muslim? And yet here they were asking for mercy. Now, this is where our Prophet showed his greatness. Personal feelings did not overcome him and he gave that wonderful answer which was, "Be it so. I say unto you as Joseph said to his brothers: 'There is no reproach on you this day'; go, for you are free."

What kind words to say! He did not even grumble at them., What a wonderful thing to do, and what a wonderful lesson for us all and that is: To forgive one when you have one at your mercy.

* Toto, Olive; *Children's Book on Islam and The Last Prophet of God, Muhammad*, Aurora Press Ltd, Wimbledon, 1973, p.78.





A SHORT STORY

This is a story about four people named Everybody, Somebody, Anybody and Nobody.

There was an important job to do. Everybody was sure that Somebody would do it. Anybody could have done it but Nobody did it.

Somebody got angry about that, because it was Everybody's job. Everybody thought Anybody could do it but Nobody realised that Everybody wouldn't do it.

It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody when Nobody did what Anybody could have done.

SCh News 3/96



Hasten to do good
before you are overtaken by
perplexing adversity,
corrupting prosperity,
disabling disease,
babbling dotage and
sudden death.
Hadith

MWA BUSINESS

MINUTES

Minutes of the MWA meeting/*Milad-un-Nabi* function which was held at the Islamic Cultural Centre, on Sunday 13th September 1998 at 4.45 pm.

As the Imam of the Islamic Cultural Centre was called away in an emergency, Mr Anas Hassan, the son of our President, opened the function with *Surah Duha*. He recited this *Surah* beautifully and accurately.

There were 250 ladies present. The President welcomed those present, and explained the purpose of holding this function every year. She also explained that she will not be standing for the Presidency in the 1999 election, although of course she will continue to act as President until the election next year. She will also stay as a Trustee of Madina House, even after relinquishing the Presidency of the MWA. She has served as President and Chair with dedication for 20 years, and by the Grace of Allāh Almighty the Association is making very good progress. We now have more than 500 members. She thinks that after such a long time in the post, someone else should have the opportunity to serve.

There followed a number of children's speeches, after which Miss Malika Malik, a University law lecturer, gave a speech on the life of the Prophet (PBUH). It was a very informative and interesting speech, and we thank her for accepting this invitation, as we know she is very busy.

Shirin Hassan, who introduced the programme, also gave the vote of thanks. Refreshments were served.

The Muslim Women's Association (U.K.)

P. O. Box 6119, London SW20 0XG, Registered Charity No. 264608

Date:

RENEWAL FOR MEMBERSHIP

Dear

Your yearly MWA-Membership (which includes the subscription to "The Muslim Woman") will be/was due for renewal on.....

We trust you have enjoyed the past meetings/functions and reading "The Muslim Woman". We look forward to your renewal of membership and request you kindly to pay the annual fee of £15.00 within the next thirty days (Life Membership £100.00).

Please fill in the form below and send it together with your payment to our Membership Secretary. (Please ignore this form if you are a life member, or if you have already paid this year's subscription). Thank you for your continuous support.

✉ MWA Membership Secretary,

In order to renew my Membership of the Muslim Women's Association (U.K.) and the subscription to **The Muslim Woman**, I enclose a crossed cheque/postal order for £ payable to the "Muslim Women's Association (UK)".

☞ Title (Miss, Ms., Mrs., other):Surname:

Forename(s):Telephone:

Address:

.....

.....

.....Post Code:

Signature:Date:

THE MUSLIM WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

P.O. BOX 6119

London SW20 0XG