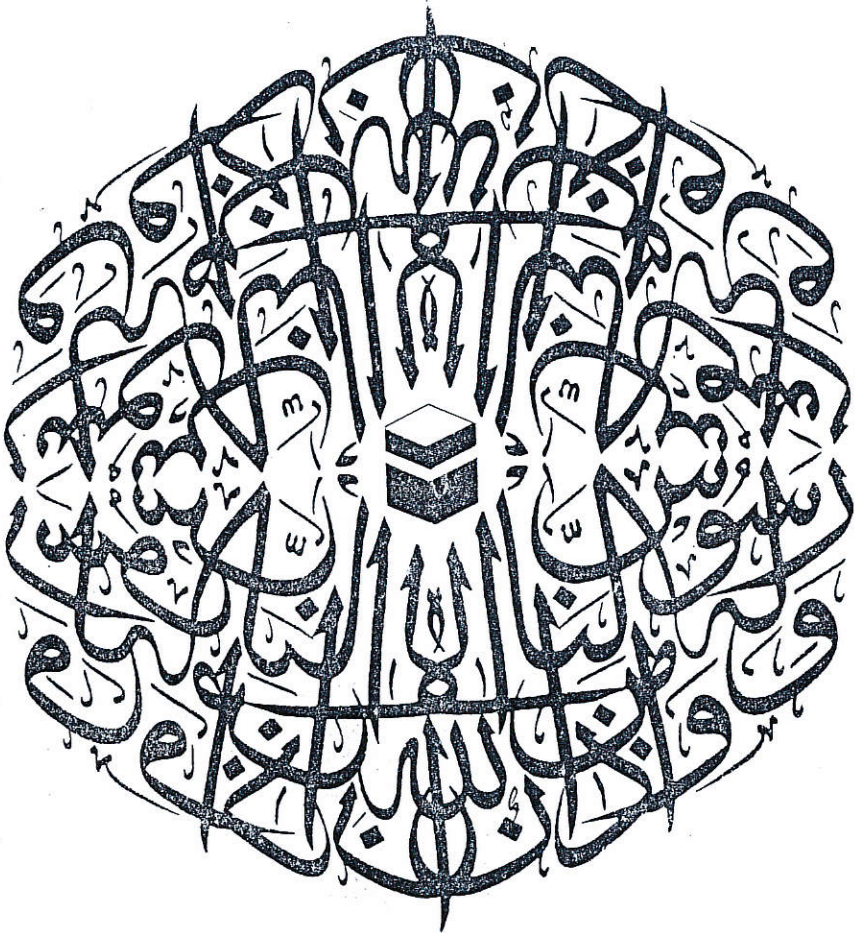


بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

The MUSLIM WOMAN

VOLUME 23/7-8 JULY/AUG 1993 HIJRAH/RABI-AL-AWWAL 1414



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**NEXT MWA MEETING Sunday, 8th August 1993
at 4.30 pm at the Islamic Cultural Centre, 146 Park Road,
London NW8**

MWA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

PRESIDENT	Mrs Khanam Hassan
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MEETINGS OF THE MWA TAKE PLACE ON THE SECOND SUNDAY EACH MONTH

The Family

'Those who show the most perfect faith are those who possess the best disposition and are kindest to their families.' (Hadith).

The most important thing a human can possess, after the awareness of the care and love of Allah, is the warmth and affection and support to be found in the loving environment of their own family. A household in which there is love, peace and security is valuable beyond price, and it does not come about by accident. It has to be worked for by all its members, and requires a strong commitment to patience, forgiveness, tolerance, and a keen sense of duty. All these things are regarded as vital, and the key person in the household who sets the tone and does most of the work is undoubtedly the mother.

To be a good mother is so important in Islam that she is considered to be the most precious treasure in the world, and her role is the decisive factor in the family.

If a person has suffered a broken family, as a result of death or disaster, or maybe because of divorce, then they have truly known a loss and a suffering that those who have grown up in security cannot fully appreciate.

The welfare and stability of any society lies in the value it place upon the institution of the 'family'. If a person's family is insecure or disturbed or unsuccessful in any way, it has a radical effect not only upon the people in it throughout the rest of their lives, but also upon the whole framework of contacts that family is going to make.

Islam teaches that the family is actually the cornerstone of the whole social system, and that society's progress or breakdown can be traced directly to its strength or weakness. It cannot possibly be valued too highly. Moreover, it is not casual or spontaneous institution, but is divinely ordained. It is therefore regarded as a noble and sacred.

'It is He who created you from a single cell with a mate of like nature, in order that you might live together.' (Surah 7;189).

'The family provides the environment within which human values and morals develop and grow in the new generation. The family system and the relationship between the

sexes determines the whole character of society and whether it is backward or civilised.' (Sayyid Qutb).

Basic Objectives of the Family in Islam

To people who do not value their families, or perhaps regard them as just the assortment of relatives they happened to grow up with, the following ideas and objectives might seem rather strange, or laboured - but they are regarded as very important in Islam.

The first objective has been defined as 'the preservation of the human race by procreation in happy and secure units', a rather pompous statement that actually means so much. Happiness and security are commodities that cannot be bought. They are not automatic. So often people do not value what they have until it is too late.

Love while you have the Chance

It is a tragic fact that many people, when a loved one dies, feel strong pangs of guilt because they had not fully appreciated that person while alive, had not done everything they possibly could, had not let them know how much they loved them. It is so easy to be irritated with our nearest and dearest, and to forget that Allah might take back their precious souls that very night, and catch us out! Awareness of Allah, and our mortality and dependence upon Him should make us draw closer to our own loved ones - because they are not our possessions, only gifts from Allah loaned to us for a time!

Other Objectives for the Family

The family is also regarded as the prime means of protecting the morals of individuals and society, satisfying emotional and psychological needs, providing a secure background for the raising of children, and providing social and economic security. It motivates individuals to work hard, sacrifice their own welfare for that of others, and be generous. It provides a stable framework for the bringing up of children in the faith of Islam.

Who is Included in the Family?

The Family is not just the mother and father plus a couple of children, as is so common in the West. Where birth control is limited, there are usually far greater numbers of children born and where health conditions are primitive, there are far

greater numbers of deaths of both young and old. Hard conditions make people more aware of mortality, and the fact that death is no respecter of persons. It can strike down the least likely person in a moment. No one can know for sure how long they will live; the Muslim tries to be ready at all times to face death and accept it graciously and with faith.

This kind of awareness of mortality also encourages a strong bond between family members. The Muslim family, therefore, has a much wider aspect, and includes all the persons who are involved in the 'unit'.

If a tragedy befell any relative, or even a member of a neighbour's family - it would be expected that the family would rally round and give support during the time of need. A stable family can take care of children who have lost their parents for whatever reason, a common occurrence in some societies. Muslim society places kindness to all children as a very high priority, and whether a child's parents are alive or dead, present or absent, children must be provided for with the best possible care. 'Worship none but Allah, and treat with kindness your parents and kindred, and orphans and those in need; speak kindly to them, be steadfast in prayer, and give your charity regularly.' (Surah 2:83).

Concerning Children

It is natural for parents to hope that their children will be a source of pride for them, but sometimes can 'put them on a pedestal', or overestimate their talents and qualities - and this can cause enormous stress. Parents should therefore be on their guard against anything which might spoil or distress the child.

Parents should avoid being over protective, over indulgent or too proud of their children. They should not push their children beyond their abilities, or be disappointed with them if they cannot do all the things they had hoped. No single child in a family should be made the favourite, but all should be treated equally, and with firm but fair discipline.

'Do not ask me to be a witness to injustice. Your children have the right to receive equal treatment, as you have the right that they should honour you.' (Hadith)

'Fear Allah, and treat your children with equal justice.' (hadith)

All Individuals

Muslims are expected to treat all people as individuals, and not to try to force their children to be something they are not. They should accept their natural qualities, encourage their good points, and gently steer them away from bad characteristics.

The most important thing a parent can do for a child is to set a good example, so that the child grows up devout, kind, mature, independent, and able to help others.

They should give the child the best possible education, not just to be clever but so that they may be able to earn a living and be independent. They should help them to make happy marriages, so far as it lies in their power. They should neither be overprotective nor negligent, but train them in a good way of life.

'He who has no compassion for our little ones and does not acknowledge the honour due to our elders, is not one of us.' (Hadith)

From 'Moral Issues in Six Religions'; Heinemann Press, 1992

MOSES' PRAYER

"My Lord, ease my breast for me!
Make my task easier for me,
and loose the knot from my tongue
so that they may understand what I say.
Grant me a helpmate from my own people,
Aaron my brother.

Support me by means of him,
and let him share in my task
so that we may glorify You frequently
and mention You often, since You
have been so Observant of us."

MWA BUSINESS

by Nisa Ali

Our July meeting took place on 11th July. It was opened by Dr. Zubeda Osman who recited verses 1-5 from Sura Al-Malk.

Apologies were received from Mrs. Azra Rekhi, Mrs Sharifa Sharaif, Mrs. Saeeda Sherif and Mrs. Gul Amin.

Mrs. Amina Ali from the Women Refugee Centre of West Acton told us about the work of the Centre and the many activities they do at the Youth and Community Centre.

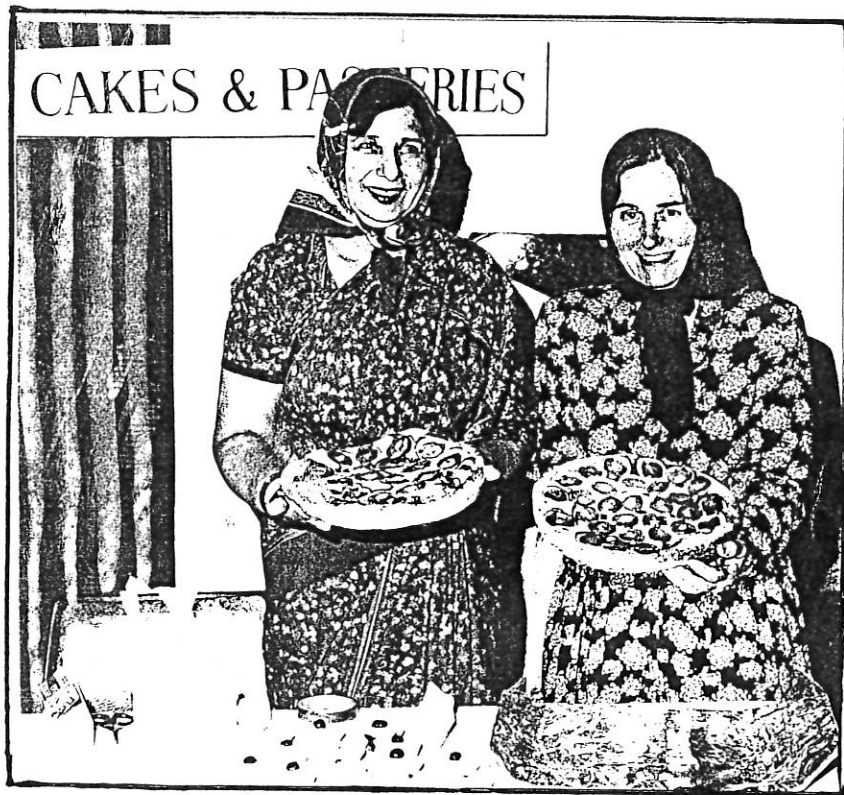
MWA Annual Bazaar

Our Annual Bazaar took place on 17th July. It was in aid of Madina House, Bosnia and the sponsored children. The Bazaar realised 1690.00.



Mrs. Khanam Hassan , President MWA (left) talking to Dr. Zubeda Osman at the Pottery stall.

As usual each of the food stalls enticed us to the delights of their country of origin; such a variety! There was a great choice of clothes at the clothing tables, and the great attraction on the Bric-a-Brac stall were the beautiful hand made pottery which were sold 'like hot cakes'.
 Many thanks to all the stall holders and their helpers. It is difficult to name each and everyone of you. I hope you accept our appreciation of your hard work. We feel very grateful to the ladies from the Khawateen for their support.



Mrs. Tahira Khan and Mrs. Samina Hasan at the Cakes & Pastries' stall



Mrs. Firdaus Arif and friends serving Pakistani food.

Photos by Rashid Khan

JUNIORS' CORNER

Muhammad ﷺ : from childhood to manhood

Muhammad ﷺ was born the son of 'Abd Allah ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib and Aminah, daughter of the chief of the Zuhrah tribe, in 570 CE.

It was during Aminah's pregnancy that 'Abd Allah accompanied a caravan to Syria and fell ill on the return journey. He was taken to his grandmother's house in Yathrib (later renamed Medina), where he died.

Soon after he was born, Aminah, as was customary, began to make arrangements for Muhammad ﷺ to be nursed by bedouins. It was considered beneficial to both mind and body, and Aminah favoured the women of the Banu Sa'd ibn Bakr, whose lands lay to the southeast of Mecca.

It was usual for the woman who looked after a child to be rewarded for her labours; and Aminah found it difficult to find someone willing to take Muhammad ﷺ since she had nothing to offer in return. After first refusing, one woman called Ḥalima agreed to take the child. For her kindness, Ḥalima's household was blessed with good fortune in the following years.

Muhammad ﷺ grew fast and strong in the desert. During his early years he had an experience which only in later life could he describe fully. He recalled being confronted by two men who cut open his chest and from

his heart extracted a black clot, which they discarded. No outward scars were visible from this experience, which could not be explained at the time....

Soon after this event, Ḥalima returned Muhammad ﷺ to his mother to live in the city, but he was only six years old when Aminah fell ill and died, leaving him to the care of his grandfather, 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib. He was well loved by his grandfather and rarely left his side.

Muhammad ﷺ even accompanied him to meetings of the city assembly, and the pair became a familiar sight in the city streets. But 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib was an old man in his eighties; and two years after the death of his mother Muhammad ﷺ suffered a further bereavement when his grandfather also died.

Muhammad ﷺ was left in the care of his uncle Abu Ṭalib, a kindly man who welcomed him into his household as one of his own sons.

Muhammad ﷺ went with Abu Ṭalib when he journeyed to Syria to trade. He was also trained in combat, in which he excelled with the bow in particular.

As he grew to manhood he developed a reputation for kindness, common sense and honesty, which set him apart from the majority of young men in Mecca at a time when moral standards were in decline.

He journeyed far and wide with the caravans and took charge of the caravan of a merchant who had fallen ill whilst he was still in his early twenties. The venture was a great success and led to his being in considerable demand to carry out other trading missions. He became known as *al-amin*, which means the trustworthy, the honest; and his strength of character and honesty brought him to the attention of a wealthy merchant woman named Khadijah from the Asad tribe. She had

been twice married, but had been obliged to employ other men to handle her caravans since the death of her second husband. She offered Muḥammad ﷺ a handsome sum to take charge of her caravan.

This trading expedition was also very successful; and so impressed was Khadijah by Muḥammad's character and appearance that, despite being fifteen years his senior, she decided to arrange for a marriage between them. When Muḥammad ﷺ was approached he accepted willingly. Their marriage was a happy and blessed union, and Khadijah had six children, four girls and two boys. The eldest boy, Qasim, died before he was two years old and, tragically, the second son did not survive.

Muḥammad's advice was constantly sought by friends and neighbours who valued his common sense and honesty. He was thirty-five years old when the tribe of Quraysh decided to rebuild the Ka'bah. They feared to disturb the sacred building, however. The work was beset with problems and Quraysh took these as signs of Divine displeasure and were afraid to continue. Eventually, the rebuilding was finished but a disagreement arose as to which tribe should have the honour of replacing the Black Stone. Muḥammad ﷺ hit upon a solution: he asked that a piece of cloth be brought, then laid the Black Stone upon the cloth and told members of each of the four tribes to grasp the corners of the cloth and raise the stone whilst he himself eased it into its resting place.

Muḥammad ﷺ had reached the age of forty when he began to sense a deep unease. The reasons were unclear to him, for he had no way of knowing that the course of human destiny was about to be altered and that he had been chosen out of all humanity for this great task.

From 'The Arc - a Study of the Koran'
Published by al-Fouk Foundation, London