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MEMBERSHIP

The Muslim Women's Association
is open to all Muslim Women.

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to *The Muslim Woman*) are: Annual UK £15 Overseas
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ALL CORRESPONDENCE

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THE MUSLIM WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

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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

NO MEETING

in January 1999

See Calendar of Events on page 25

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE BENEFICIENT, THE MERCIFUL

EDITORIAL

Dear Readers & Members

Assalamu Alaykum

Ramadhan the Holy month of fasting is here and we have another chance to help those less fortunate than ourselves. Most people are already preparing to give Zakaat to various charities, and there are not thousands but millions of people in need. However, let me remind you about *Madina House*, the home for children in need of care established in 1981. More than 400 children have been looked after during this period of time in this place under the auspices of the Muslim Womens' Association which was founded in 1962. We work closely with the Department of Social Security in caring for these children - Please give generously for buying new premises.

Please also help us in our fundraising events by sending in your ideas.

Children need care and protection all over the world. They are the innocent victims of circumstances. Every adult is responsible for their care. If a child has lost its parents due to any misfortune everyone who can must provide protection.

Our beloved Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him) has given clear guidance on the care of orphans.

He himself was an orphan, and knew what it feels like to be one. *And loan to God a beautiful loan, and whatever good you send forth for your souls you shall find it in Allah's presence, Yes, better and greater in reward.* Surah Al Muzzammil (73:20)

THE LIFE OF MUHAMMAD

Milad an Nabi: September 1998

By: Maleiha Malik

I HAVE BEEN ASKED to speak about the life of the Prophet Muhammad (sws). I trust that I can assume that the essential salutation of peace can be automatically applied each time the name of any of the Prophets is taken. The main part of this lecture gives a general overview of the life of the Prophet. It concentrates on the theme of the affirmation of the essential truth that there is one God. My reason for choosing this particular theme is partly motivated by the contemporary situation. At a time when a commitment to Islam is so often represented as irrational and unreasonable, I think it is useful to remind ourselves—and others—that in adhering to the truth of their religion, Muslims are in fact defending a long standing tradition of monotheism.

ABRAHAM

According to the Qur'an, the last Prophet to be sent to guide mankind was Muhammad. There have been many prophets that have been sent to guide mankind to the truth and the right path, and they have all affirmed the same message: that there is only one God and that man should worship God alone. The essential message of monotheism is shared by Jews and Christians. What is unique about Muslims is their affirmation of the prophecy of Muhammad. Muhammad was a descendent of Abraham through his son Muhammad. Muhammad was a descendent of Abraham through his son Ishmael. To be able to understand the status and importance of Muhammad it is important to understand a little bit about the life of Abraham.

Abraham lived nearly four thousand years ago in a town called Ur in the valley of the Euphrates, which is in the contemporary Middle East. The people in his village once worshipped God (Allah). However, as time passed they started worshipping other objects and idols and they forgot the religion of Allah. Even as a small child Abraham could not understand how his people, and especially his father, could make these images with their own hands, call them Gods and worship them. He refused to worship these statues even when his people worshipped them. He would leave town and think about the world, and reflect and search for truth and the right path. One day Abraham felt himself totally at peace. He realised that Allah is God, that he is one, that he is most powerful and that he created the heaven and earth. He knew that he had found the truth.

Surah twenty-six of the Qur'an, sets out this transition for us:

*“ Recite unto them the story of Abraham:
When he said unto his father and his folks:
What do you worship?
They said we worship idols, and are ever devoted unto them.
He said Do they hear you when you cry?
Or do they benefit or harm you?
They said: Nay but we found our fathers acting in this manner.
He said: See that which you worship,
You and your forefathers!
Lo! They are (all) an enemy to me, except
the Lord of the Worlds.
Who created me, and He guides me,
And Who feeds me and waters me.
And when I sicken, then He heals me.*

*And Who causes me to die,
then gives me life (again)
And Who, I ardently hope, will forgive me
my sin on the Day of Judgement.” (26: 70-82)*

Abraham encouraged the people in the town to worship only Allah. The people banished Abraham and he was forced to leave his home, family and all that was dear to him. He was forced into the unknown wilderness. Later on in his life, after many years had passed and Abraham had a family, wife and children. Later Abraham and his son Ishmael were commanded by Allah to rebuild the Kabah, which was the very first place where people had worshipped Allah, the one and only God.

Abraham and Ishmael were told exactly where and how to build this house. They worked very hard to build it; they built it as a square cube; and in the eastern corner they placed a stone which had fallen from heaven to earth called the Hajr e Aswad. As they built the house they offered the following prayer to Allah to send them a Prophet from among their descendants:

*“Our Lord! Make us submissive unto
Thee and of our seed a nation submissive unto
Thee, and show us our ways of worship, and turn
toward us. Lo! Thou, only Thou, art
the Relenting, the Merciful.
Our Lord! And raise up in their midst
a messenger from among them who shall recite unto
them Thy revelation, and shall instruct them in
the Scripture and in wisdom and shall make them
grow. Lo! Thou, only Thou, art the Mighty, Wise.” (2:127-9)*

When this house—called the Kabah—was completed, Allah commanded Abraham to call mankind to pilgrimage to His Holy House. Abraham wondered how anyone could hear his call. Allah said, You call and I will bring them. This was how the pilgrimage to the Kabah began. Ishmael chose to live close to the Kabah, summoning people to worship the one God. Within a short space of time this became a flourishing place for caravans and grew into the city of Mecca. To this day, when Muslims make the pilgrimage to Mecca they continue to answer the age old call of Abraham. They also remember and bless the prophet Abraham in their daily prayers. In this way Muslims connect themselves to a long-standing tradition beyond their own limited personal history, and become part of the unfolding of human history as revealed in the Qur'an. Finally, Muslim pray in the direction of Mecca. Wherever they are, whatever nationality or race, when Muslims pray it is as one community (ummah) which is ringed around this one place

THE BIRTH AND EARLY YEARS OF THE PROPHET

The descendants of Abraham became tribes and spread out. One tribe which continued to stay in Mecca was the Quraysh. As with the people of the village of Abraham, with the passing of time, the people of Mecca turned away from the truth that was taught to them by Abraham: to worship only one God. They started to worship idols which they placed around the Kabah.

One of the members of the tribe of the Quraysh was called Abd al Muttalib, whose functions it was to show hospitality to pilgrims. He had a son called Abd Allah, who married a girl called Amina. Abd Allah died before their child was born. On the twelfth day of the month of Rabi al-Awwal in the Year of the Elephant,

Aminah gave birth to a son. It was the wisdom of God that this child was Muhammad who would grow up to be a prophet.

Muhammad was bought up in Mecca among his mother and uncles. By the time he was twenty five years old he was well known for his honesty, character and he was respected by all people. The purity of his nature increased with the years. He had an inner knowledge: he was the kindest of people, he was truthful and reliable. He was known as Al Amin (the Trustworthy) because of the good qualities which Allah had given him.

In Mecca there was a respected widow called Khadija. She had heard of Muhammad's good character and they were married. Their marriage was a joyful one. They had a number of children of whom four daughters survived past: Zaynab; Ruqayyah; Umm Khulthm and Fatima. For a few years Muhammad lived a calm and happy life as a merchant with his family.

Muhammad would often leave the city to be alone and contemplate. In his fortieth year, Muhammad left Mecca during the month of Ramadan to retreat to a cave. In the second half of Ramadan, Allah began to reveal his message to Muhammad. The Archangel Gabriel came to Muhammad and said: Read. Muhammad replied that he could not read. This happened again and a third time. Then the Archangel Gabriel said:

*"Read: In the Name of the thy Lord who createth,
Createth man from a clot.*

*Read: And thy Lord is the Most Generous
Who teacheth by the pen,*

Teacheth man that which he knew not." (96, 1-5)

Muhammad repeated the verse just as the Archangel had said them. When the Archangel was sure Muhammad knew them by

heart, he went away. From that day on, the Archangel Gabriel came often to the Prophet and the verses he taught them, the message from Allah to man, was later written down. This message is still available to us and is known as the Qur'an. This is the Divine message which allows the separation of truth from error.

After this momentous day, the revelation came often to Muhammad. He knew that he had to be brave and strong: for people often refused to listen to the message of Allah. Khadija was the first to believe in the message of Islam. With her help, Muhammad began to spread the message of Islam. One day the Archangel Gabriel taught Muhammad how to purify himself and perform the ritual prayer. Muslims have followed these movements and prayers as they were first performed by Muhammad. Shortly afterwards the Prophet's cousin Ali embraced Islam, followed by Zayd, Abu Bakr (ra) and Bilal.

As the years passed and Muhammad carried on preaching the truth of Islam, the leaders of the tribe of Quraysh became angry. In order to be rid of Muhammad and his followers. They started to persecute the Muslims who were poor and weak, or who did not have powerful friends. As the followers of Islam grew, so also the enemies of Islam became more angry.

The Muslims in Mecca were still suffering and being persecuted. Therefore, the Prophet told his friends and followers to go to a town called Yathrib where they would be safe. The Prophet stayed in Mecca. Despite the persecution, he was not allowed to fight his enemies. Allah told him to be generous and compassionate and to forgive those who insulted him and would not listen to his message. Eventually, once it was clear that the Quraysh had closed their hearts to the message of God, the

Prophet was given permission from Allah to fight only those who tried to harm him or his fellow companions. The Quraysh realised that Muhammad was growing in strength; they saw that he had people in Yathrib to help him. So they decided to kill the Prophet in the hope of putting an end to Islam once and for all. Their plan failed and the Prophet escaped death. He went to Yathrib. The Prophet's journey from Mecca is called the hijrah, or the migration. This was the first step towards the spread of Islam throughout the whole world. Since that day there are now Muslims in all the continents and corners of the world, of all races and nationalities, who believe that there is only one God and that Muhammad is the messenger of God.

THE TIME IN MEDINA

The Prophet joined his companions in the city of Yathrib. The city was renamed Medina. A mosque and a place for the Prophet to live was built in the city. Here the Muslims would pray, meet, consult with each other and make important decisions. In the early days of Islam the time for prayer was not announced. Later, the Prophet ordered Bilal to call people to prayer using the adhan under his instruction. This is the same call to prayer that we still hear today from minarets and mosques all over the world.

THE FAREWELL PILGRIMAGE

In the ensuing years, the Prophet and the Muslims worked and persevered to spread the message of Islam. The Prophet had become the most powerful leader in the whole of Arabia. After the idols in the Kabah had been smashed, the Quraysh had become Muslims. Later, most of the other tribes in Arabia came to declare their Islam. The Prophet subsequently went on a pilgrimage to Mecca which was to become his final and farewell pilgrimage.

The Prophet and the pilgrims approached Mecca. All of them for the first time in centuries worshipped only Allah, the one God. The Prophet performed the prayer at Mecca. Then at the Mount of Mercy at Arafat the Prophet made a speech which has come to be known as the Farewell Sermon. In this speech the Prophet said: surely you will meet your Lord [after death] and He will question you about your works. He asked the Muslims to take their guidance from the Qur'an and from his own example. He said this was the best way to live. He ordered them to cease living as they had done before Islam. He commanded that every Muslim is a Muslim's brother. After each point the Prophet asked: have I explained it well? Is it perfectly clear?, to which the reply was yes. These were the people who would have to pass on the Prophet's message and instructions to those who were unable to be present that day and to future generations.

Finally, and most importantly, the Prophet said: I have left two things. If you hold on to them you will be saved. They are Allah's Book and the words of your Prophet. Then the Prophet ended with words of the Qur'an, which included the following:

*"This day I have perfected your religion for you
and I have completed My favour unto you, and
have chosen for you as a religion Al Islam [...]" (5.3)*

Many Muslims shed tears, knowing that if the Prophet had completed his message, his life must be near its end. Soon after that, one night after his return to Medina, after the Prophet had prayed he turned to Abd Allah and said I can choose all the riches of this world, a long life, and then Paradise, or meeting my Lord and entering Paradise now. Abd Allah begged him to choose a long, rich life, followed by Paradise. However, the Prophet told

him that he had already chosen to meet his Lord Allah now rather than remain in the world.

Later on, the Prophet died. When the people heard that he was dead they were filled with grief. Abu Bakr spoke gently to them. He said All praise belongs to Allah! O People, whoever worshipped Muhammad, Muhammad is dead. But for him that worships Allah, Allah is living and never dies.

The Prophet was buried in a grave in the house next to the mosque. The spot became known as the Haram al Nabawi and Muslims all over the world go there to pray and to give their blessings and greetings of peace to the Prophet Muhammad.

THE RELEVANCE OF THE PROPHET

Reflection on the life of the Prophet in the yearly celebration of the Milad an Nabi is of pivotal importance to Muslims. Devotion to Allah who reveals himself through the Qur'an requires devotion to Muhammad who is Islam humanly embodied. All the three monotheistic religions - Judaism, Christianity as well as Islam - believe that there is only one God. It is the distinguishing characteristic of Muslims that they are committed to following the guidance of the Prophet Muhammad. In this way, they affirm both parts of the Shahada which is the basic declaration of faith of Muslims.

Of course, Muhammad is mortal like other humans but—and importantly - at the same time he is unique for Muslims. There are major differences between him and other people. He is the Prophet of God who is God's perfect servant. Muslims believe that human beings have a trust with God (the idea of Al Amana) and that they are the vice regents of God on earth (the idea that they are khalifat al Rahman). This trust is a divine trust which

separates out human beings from other creatures of God. A trust is something special which one person holds for another person and on the appropriate occasion they will be asked to give it back to the owner. Muslims also believe in the idea of alast, that each of us has the idea that we are in a relationship of trust with God deep in their souls. It is special and it is a matter of our choice whether we accept and live up to its consequence. It is very hard for people to live up to this responsibility and trust

The example of the Prophet provides the means by which the realisation of Islam in our daily lives can take place. He is the guide to the truth.

What distinguishes Muhammad from others is that he has lived up to the responsibility of what it means to perfect this relationship of trust with God. He has done so with God's mercy and guidance. He carried and perfected the trust and the whole world has benefited as a result. The Qur'an says: *'We have not sent thee save as a mercy to all the world's inhabitants'* (21:107). In this way he is the perfect example of the way in which a human being can accept the obligation of being the servant and representative of God. The Qur'an makes it clear that Muhammad is a model who is to be imitated. Following his example is in fact one way in which we can remember God: *'Whosoever obeys the messenger thereby obeys God'* (4:80).

Imitation of the Prophet takes a number of forms. For example, it requires emulating the Divine attributes which he manifested in his life. The qualities which Muhammad manifested in his own life represent the highest concentration of the Divine names and attributes which Muslims call the beautiful names of God (asma al Husna). God's two most important and oft repeated

Divine names are al Rahman (the infinitely compassionate); and al Rahim (the merciful). In addition, the other names include al Adl (the just); al Barr (the doer of Good); al Ghaffar (he who is full of forgiveness); al Karim (the Generous); al Sabur (the Patient) and al Wadud (the loving kind).

The life and traditions of the Prophet reveal absolute piety in terms of a total and whole hearted attachment to God in the spiritual realm. His life also reflects earthy and social spheres: marriages, children, war, politics and administration which shows the integration of the private and collective human life into the spiritual realm. His example suggests that we should aim for sobriety in our dealings with the world; nobility in our understanding of our role; and truthfulness through knowledge of God. Imitation of the Prophet means worshipping God, balancing our normal tendencies, living up to the requirements of good character in ourselves and our dealings with other. It requires strength and discipline as regards ourselves. It requires compassion and generosity as regards others. Finally, it requires serenity through worship, piety and attachment to God and his will.

On this occasion we should also remember that as well as obedience, we should also love the prophet of Islam. In the third Surah of the Qur'an Muslims are told: 'Say (O Muhammad to mankind): If ye love Allah, follow me; Allah will love you and forgive you your sins. Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.' (III: 31-32). The connection that the Qur'an makes clear in this verse between love of God and following the Prophet is very important. Given the role that remembrance and love of the Prophet Muhammad has played in Islam throughout its history, it is unfortunate and

surprising to find some modern tendencies which decry the devotion of the prophet and the celebration of the Milad an Nabi in the name of purity and authenticity. This modern tendency undermines a traditional and time-honoured act of religious love and devotion by Muslims. I am delighted that the Muslim Women's Association has always given priority to the Milad an Nabi. I am deeply honoured to have been a participant in these proceedings and join all of you in blessing our beloved Prophet (sws) by ending this lecture with the words of Surah thirty-three of the Qur'an:

'Lo! Allah and his Angles shower blessings on the Prophet. O ye who believe! Ask blessings on him and salute him with a worthy salutation.' (XXXIII:56).

Ms Maleiha Malik
London
September 1998

The substance of the life of the Prophet is taken from Azzam and Governor: *The Life of the Prophet Muhammad* (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1985). I am indebted to the publishers for their permission to draw on this work.



POETRY

SUPPORT

Yesterday so many tears
Where shed, as we spoke of our fears
A lonely heart we have torn
And hurt each other like a thorn
But sat we did and looked inside
Looked at ourselves and what we hide
And sure enough we all did feel
That our friendship we must heal
So with new hope we all agreed
To never let a Muslim bleed
And pain we all shall never give
But as real friennds we'll start to live
And thank Allah for it is He
Who joined our hearts so happily
And by His Grave and Mercy too
That day has passed and we pulled through
So my dear sisters, let us come
To stand as servants — all as one
And fill our days with love and kindness
Showing mercy you will find us
And from this day, to never stray
As lovi ng sisters stay.

Anon (From: Trends, vol. 7 issue 5)

THE ORIGIN OF TOBACCO

THE PROPHET WAS TAKING a stroll in the country when he saw a serpent, stiff with cold, lying on the ground. He compassionately took it up and warmed it in his bosom. When the serpent had recovered, it said:

"Holy Prophet listen I am now going to bite thee."

"Why, pray ? " inquired Mohammed .

"Because thy race persecuted mine and tries to stamp it out."

"But does not thy race, too, make perpetual war against mine?" was the Prophet's rejoinder. "How canst thou be so ungrateful and so soon forget that I saved thy life?"

" There is no such thing as gratitude upon this earth," replied the serpent, "and if I were now to spare thee, either thou or another of thy race would kill me. By Allah, I shall bite thee! "

"If thou hast sworn by Allah, I will not, cause thee to break thy vow," said the Prophet, holding his hand to the serpent's mouth.

The serpent bit him, but Mohammed sucked the wound with his lips and spat the venom on the ground. And on that very spot there sprung up a plant which combines within itself the venom of the serpent and the compassion of the Prophet.

Men call this plant *Tobacco*.

Conte Arabe



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

JUNIORS' CORNER

Assalamu Alaykum Sisters and Brothers.

We are gathered here today because of events that occurred on the 12th of Rabi al Awwal around 1500 years ago. A great man died, and 63 years before, he was born. But we aren't here to celebrate his birth or mourn his death - Allah (swt) has prevented this by placing his birth and death on the same day. So why are we here? We are not here just for those two 12th of Rabi al Awwals, 63 years apart, but for all the years in between. We are here to mark the life of this great man. Today is not a day for a party or a day to grieve. Milad al Nabi is a time to reflect and learn from the Prophet's life. For the Prophet was a role model, his life was truly a blessing from Allah (swt). Life is so hectic these days that often we don't have a chance to think what our own role in life is. The Prophet's ultimate role was to deliver Allah's message. But he was everything from a shepherd to an iman to a leader. And so he showed us that everyone plays an important role in society. Without the shepherd the iman cannot eat that lovely roast lamb he so enjoys. But without the iman the shepherd cannot pray Janaazh for his dear friend that passed away. We all have a role to play. We all need each other and no one role is more important than another. Allah (swt) has given each one of us different attributes. He says in the Qur'an:

"It is We who portion out among them their livelihood in the life of this world, and We raise some of them above others (from the standpoints of possibilities and capacities) in degrees, so that some might obtain labour of others." (43:2)

And so, on Allah's bidding, one person will become a doctor and

one will be a builder. But if all builders were to become doctors, then where would the doctors treat their patients? Everyone cannot have the same role, what sort of a play would it be if everyone were to be Romeo? And the Prophet (PBUH) has shown us that every job is respectable.

It is related that while on a journey, the Prophet (PBUH) ordered his companies to prepare a sheep for food. One man said, "I will slaughter it, Messenger of Allah (swt)." Another said, "I will skin it." A third said, "I will cook it". The Prophet said, "I will gather the firewood." To this they all said, "Messenger of Allah, you don't need to work; we will do whatever is to be done." "I know that you will do for me whatever is to be done", replied the prophet, "but I do not like to be set apart from you. Allah does not like His servant aloof from his companions." We all need to co-operate, but not just so that we all get to eat. Allah (swt) says in the Qur'an: "Co-operate with one another on the basis of righteousness and God-consciousness, and do not co-operate on the basis of sin and transgression. "

There is a parable told by the Prophet that deals with the need to co-operate for common good. It is related that he said:

The case of those who observe the limits set by Allah (swt) and those who are careless about them is like passengers on a ship who cast lots to determine who should occupy the upper deck and who should be on the lower deck and disposed of themselves accordingly. Those who were on the lower deck passed through those of the upper deck whenever they had to fetch water. So they said to the occupants of the upper deck: If we were to bore a hole through part, we would not then have to trouble you. Now, if the occupants of the upper deck were

to leave the others to carry out their design they would all perish together, but if they were to stop them from carrying it out they would all be saved."

As you can see, we have to work with each other in life. I am sure many of you have heard the story of the man who lead his life as a hermit, away from the community, praying to Allah (SWT) all day long. But the Prophet (PBUH) related that this was not a good choice. Instead of staying away from the evil in society he should have joined the community and helped them to lead better lives. That was his role. Of course everyone's role is different. So let us take some time to reflect and learn from the life of Muhammad (PBUH), a cherished gift from Allah (SWT), and let us also take some time to think about ourselves.

Assalamu Alaykum Sisters and Brothers.

Misbah Arif

September 1998



KITCHEN TALK

Pastel Cordobes— an Andalusian Pastry

INGREDIENTS:

500 grams (1 lb) flour
100 grams (3 1/2 oz) veg. shortening
300 grams (10 1/2 oz) butter
A scant 1/2 litre (7 oz) water
A small squirt of vinegar
One teaspoon salt
2 beaten eggs
500 grams (1 lb) cabello de angel (grated candied pumpkin)
Sugar and Cinnamon

METHOD:

Knead the flour, water, vinegar, shortening and salt into a homogeneous dough, adding the water gradually to make sure it does not become too soft or liquid. Roll the dough out with a rolling pin and spread the butter evenly on top. Then fold it and roll it again like a puff pastry. Repeat six times. Divide into two equal parts and roll them out into two rounds. Cover one round with the grated pumpkin. Place the other round on top. Painting the edges with a little of the beaten egg, pinch to seal the two rounds together with a braided effect. The two layers together should be no more than two to three centimetres (1 in). thick. Put it in a preheated oven at 250 degrees Celsius (475°F for 35 minutes. Just before it is done, dab the crust with the rest of the beaten egg and sprinkle sugar and cinnamon on top. Serve hot or cold.

Aramco World, September-October 1989, p. 30.

MWA BUSINESS

MINUTES

Minutes of the monthly MWA meeting which was held at the Islamic Cultural Centre on Sunday 8th November 1998.

REPORTS

President's report — recount of activities for the year: Milad, Eid dinner, Sponsorship, money for victims in Bangladesh and Afghanistan, to name but a few.

Madina House — Mrs Hassan has been sending invoices to Social Service Departments for children in Madina House. We are now in a healthy position of having enough money to cover two months salaries for the staff at Madina House.

There are now 3 children at Madina House. We have increased the fees to a realistic amount so that we are now breaking even, al-hamdu lillah, things are beginning to look healthier.

The focus now needs to be on raising funds for the new house for Madina House, but it is not possible within a 3 month timescale.

All trustees need to do their best to raise funds. The need is for a substantial lump sum. The 3 month timescale had been suggested because of some properties that had been suggested as prospective homes but the 3 month limit is unrealistic.

Lubna Ilyas suggested we advertise on *Sunrise* Radio. Advertisements are approximately £50 an ad. Swadeka Ahsun suggested *Spectrum* Radio. Lubna Ilyas further suggested we

approach businesses to advertise in the monthly magazine, *The Muslim Woman*.

A list of rates, for half a page, a whole page, and so forth, will be drawn up by the President. If need be the number of pages can be increased to 30.

Other ideas were holding jumble sales and car boot sales at a local level to raise funds for Madina House.

All excellent ideas but we need to remember that what is really needed is a substantial lump sum of £350,000 - 400,000.

The President then thanked all the members who had worked tirelessly, in particular Firdous Arif and her family and Lubna Ilyas and her husband, who acted as the auctioneer at our Bazaar, and Kunza Shah, the secretary. Special thanks went to all the committee members who have been very supportive over the past 18 months when £65,000 was needed for Madina House (payment to the Inland Revenue and for compulsory repairs). Al-hamdu lillah, the MWA is no longer in debt.

The President, Mrs Khanam Hassan, confirmed that she will not be standing for any position at the next election. She will, however, remain a member of the MWA as a life member and as a legal trustee of Madina House. All positions will be up for re-election next year — November 1999.

The President has received telephone calls from a number of people expressing their appreciation.

Nomination forms will be sent 3 months before the election asking for nominations for all the posts. All forms will have to be returned to Mrs Hassan as she will be impartial.

MWA MEMBERSHIP

From January 1999 the annual membership will be due on the 1st of January of every year.

For the year 1998 only — any member who has paid after August and up to December 1998 may renew their membership on the 1st of January 2000.

Membership fees: UK— annual £15, life membership £100. Overseas — annual £20, life membership £200. Your co-operation in this matter will be appreciated. The new system will mean a more efficient manageable service.

If you are already a life member, then please ignore the above few lines.

EID DINNER

It was decided to ask Kanza Shah if she would be prepared to accept the catering for the Eid dinner as she has now started her own catering business. A sample of food and a price list will be requested for the next meeting.



The Executive Committee wishes all members, their families and friends, a blessed Ramadan.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Below is a list of meeting dates and functions for the period of 1998 /1999.

13th December 1998.....Ordinary meeting

January 1999.....No meeting
(Ramadan)

14th February.....Eid Dinner

14th March.....Ordinary meeting

11th April.....Ordinary meeting

9th May.....Ordinary meeting

13th June.....Ordinary meeting

25th July.....Bazaar

8th August.....Ordinary meeting

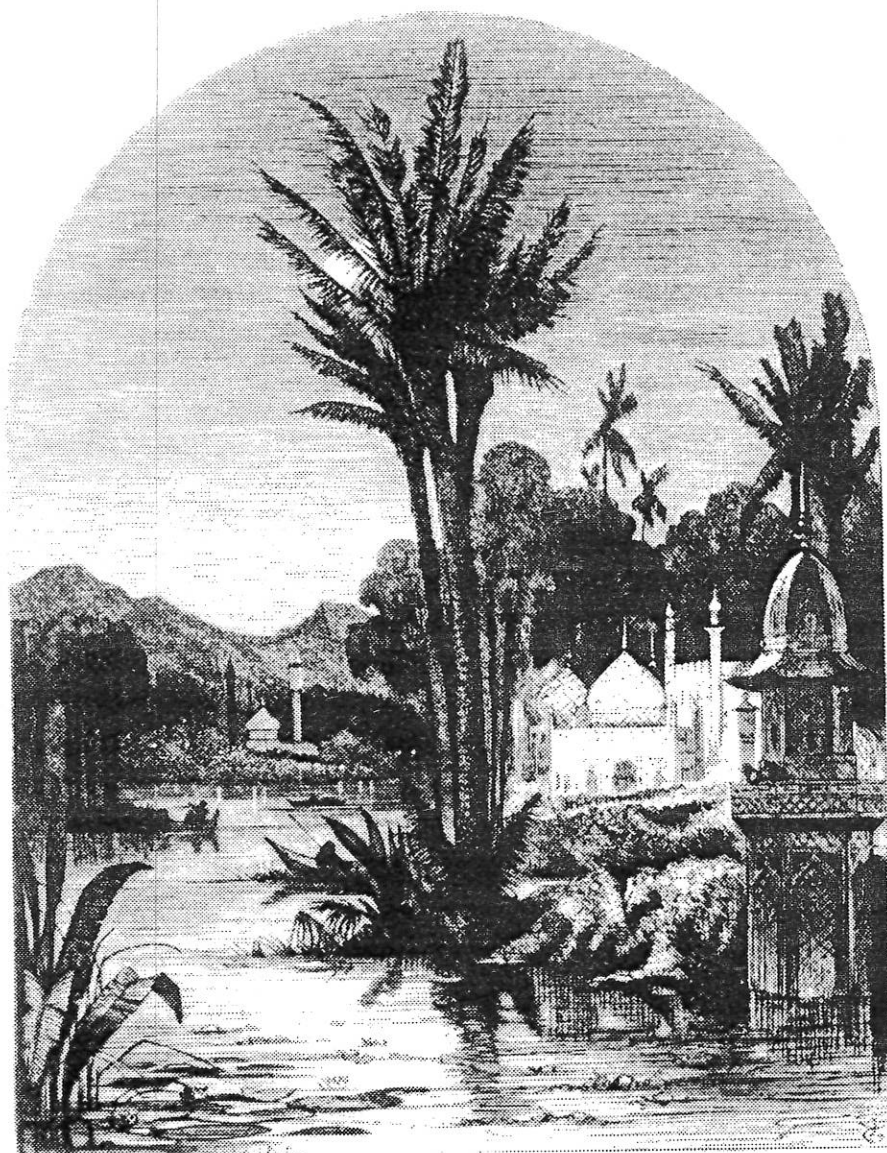
29th August.....Milad

12th September.....Ordinary meeting

10th October.....Ordinary meeting

14th November.....AGM

Election meeting



MINUTES

Minutes of MWA Meeting held on **13th December** at the Islamic Cultural Centre (London).

PRESENT:

Firdous Arif, Lubna Ilyas, S. Akhtar, Nisa Ali, Z. Usman, Jasmine Ansari, Swadeka Ahsun, Souraya Youssef, Kanza Shah.

APOLOGIES

Mrs. Hassan & Shirin Hassan were not present at the meeting due to the death of Mrs Hassan's brother, Khwaja Mahmood Ahmed. Meeting was opened by recitation of sura Al- Fathiha by Souraya Youssef.

EID DINNER

The Eid dinner was discussed. Mrs Youssef said the menu should be the same as last year as it makes things much simpler. Jasmine suggested that we have one vegetable dish. The menu is: rice & vegetable pulao, chicken curry or small pieces of tandoori chicken, spinach + 1 vegetable, raita. Dessert: zarda. Fruits (extra). Drinks: tea, cold drinks (orange squash).

Donations: £20 for paper plates etc. (Mrs Youssef), milk & sugar (Dr. Osman), orange squash (Lubna, Kanza), children's drinks (Firdous), tea (Jasmine).

People who have put their name forward so far as volunteers are: Swadeka, Zubeida, Kanza, Lubna, Shama, Shafqat, Samina.

The date set for the Eid party is 14th February. The executive committee will meet before that to finalise details. Date to be confirmed. The hall for the dinner has to be booked as soon as possible by the Secretary. Tickets/posters need to be printed. Everyone felt last time tickets/posters had come out too late.

Dinner will be served at 7pm (after Isha, but guests will be welcome from 5pm. Price for adults £5.00. Children £2.50.

Speakers name were suggested for the Eid Party. The Imam should be invited. Jasmine suggested Mrs Sherif as a main speaker. However she may return to Bosnia by February Members were asked to think of names of inspiring speakers and inform Mrs Hassan.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The members of the MWA wish to extend their deepest sympathies and prayers to Mrs Hassan and her family on the loss of her beloved brother. May his soul rest in peace.

Jasmine wanted to know if there could be an agenda for future meetings as she felt that she would benefit more by attending meetings if there were topics and speakers planned for each month. No meeting in January.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Jasmine Ansari attended a "Stress Management" workshop recently and she wishes to share her experiences with other sisters.

On Sunday, 8th November as I drove towards Willesden Green at 8.45 am, I had little idea about what to expect from the workshop. All I knew about the course was that the trainers were from Sweden and the course was about relaxation techniques. The workshop was organised in a Muslim Community Centre and as soon as I entered inside the hall, I was greeted by the organisers with salaams and hugs. Chairs had been placed in a circle and a colourful patterned sheet was spread on the ground and in the center of the cloth there was a vase full of beautiful

flowers lying on the floor. I noticed that there was scented oil burning on one side and the atmosphere already started to effect me and I felt relaxed.

The workshop leaders, Sister Yaquta Morton and Salma Omland are both professional councillors and acupuncturists from America who chose to settle down and practice in Sweden. The course was specially designed for Muslim sisters and it has been organised for the first time in London. There were about 20 participants of varying ages and diverse backgrounds. The initial session was one of introductions and the trainers encouraged participants to talk in pairs about their concerns/stresses in their lives and how they best coped with them. This was a difficult session as not everybody could vocalise their stress and a few sisters wept as they could best express their feelings through tears. We all felt vulnerable and a natural response was to hold hands together as we proceeded towards the next session on the agenda.

Session 2 was a short talk by Salma Omland on "Frontal/Occipital Holding" (F/O). There was a pack to go with the session. Salma highly recommended this exercise for alleviating stress and it consisted of holding the forehead, the back of the head and deep breathing. Holding the head and breathing helps to clear our thoughts and many of us may do this exercise unconsciously.

In a practical exercise we were asked to sit upright in our chairs and keep our feet flat on the ground and breathe deeply. This exercise immediately had a calming and energising effect on us. The leaders asked us to do the following: "First of all become quiet Then, be aware of yourself...Feel your feet pressing on the

ground, feel your arms and the blood in your hands,...be still, be aware...and know who you are...that you are! Perfect comes from perfect."

We were shown gentle massage exercises for the face and eyes which help to stimulate the muscles and for those who did not know smiling is good for us! The most interesting part of the course was to learn about some of the pressure points or "accupressure" in our bodies. We had 12 pressure points demonstrated on us by the trainers and then we practised them on a partner. Each pressure point have letters and numbers for example DU 20 which is a pulse point in the centre of the head, YIN TANG or 3rd eye which is situated in the middle of the forehead. Once these pulses are found and pressed by the fingers a lot of pain and tension is released and the person being treated feels immediate relief.

The workshop leaders pointed out that there are many elements in our prayers that we perform automatically without realising that they are spiritually and physically beneficial for us, like the sujud—the point where the forehead touches the ground is also the central channel which is connecting us to Allah according to religious doctrine. All the participants benefited from the course and it is hoped that it will be repeated again next year.



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, 63 Coombe Lane, London, SW20 0BD

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:

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