

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

HAZRAT AMMA JAAN (MAY ALLAH BE PLEASED WITH HER) A TRUE MODEL FOR WOMEN

This speech is about Hadrat Sayyedah Nusrat Jahan Begum^{ra} (1865-1952) who was the daughter of Mir Nasir Nawwab Sahib whose paternal ancestry was from Khwaja Mir Dard and then it can be traced all the way back to Hadrat Abu Talib^{ra}, (the Holy Prophet's^{ssa} uncle).

She is the virtuous wife of Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian– the Promised Messiah^{as}. She was affectionately known as “*Hadrat Amman Jan^{ra}*” (loving mother). Indeed her birth name, the literal meaning of which is “*Helper of the World*”, was to be a Divine intimation of the profound impact this pious lady was to have upon the world as the devoted life companion of our most recent prophet.

She was a spiritual and physical mother, a mentor, a carer of orphans and a guardian of the vulnerable and the sick. She was a personification of Islamic values, a pillar of support for the Promised Messiah^{as} and faithful to the institution of Khilafat from its early inception. Her influence has rippled through the blessed progeny of the Promised Messiah^{as} like a strong but imperceptible undercurrent. Her values and moral training influences the Jama'at even today, as she was the female head of a blessed progeny, that includes 4 of 5 of the khulafa of the Ahmadiyah Muslim Community to date.

Hadrat Amman Jan^{ra} is the best modern day example of a “*Mo'minah*” - a true believer, because her every act was motivated to win the Pleasure of Allah Almighty. Performing good deeds was the principal occupation of her life, and as Hadrat Khalifatul Masih V^{atba} highlighted in his Khilafat Centenary speech; “*...faith and good deeds are an integral part of one another. Without faith, deeds are nothing and without good deeds, faith is incomplete*”.² Hadrat Amman Jan^{ra} most clearly understood this.

Her exemplary conduct is an inspiration for us all, particularly for the ladies burdened with the difficult but most rewarding task - the moral training of children. Hadrat Amman Jan^{ra} shared our responsibilities and concerns and demonstrated how to effectively raise a righteous progeny, primarily by her own excellent example.

Her moral conduct was influenced by two fundamental factors in her life; firstly, her complete obedience and devotion to her Creator – Allah Almighty, and secondly her firm faith in the truth of the Promised Messiah^{as}, - as the Messiah of the Age.

Learning about Hadrat Amman Jan^{ra} should personally affect us. It should raise our own standards of personal conduct even in small ways; such as aspiring to remember Allah Almighty more during our daily routines, exhibiting greater self-control, striving to help others, and making greater financial sacrifices. I now better appreciate the gateways to Paradise that have been reopened for us by the advent of the Promised Messiah^{as}, an individual with such a pure soul that it spectacularly cleansed the souls in its vicinity, like that of Hadrat Amman Jan^{ra}.

This account indeed corroborates the well-known hadith; “*Al Jannatu tahta Aqdamil Ummahati*” ie. “*Paradise lies under the feet of your Mothers*” (Bukhari). One reason for this is that the profound influence of a mother can pave the way to heaven for a child. Mothers are fundamental in the upbringing of children...reminding us of the deep impression mothers can make upon their offspring.

The moral training of children is not an easy task but certainly the worthiest, by which both mothers and their progeny can attain paradise.

Hadrat Khalifatul Masih I^{ra} was to once ask Hazrat Mir Nasir Nawab Sahib that how he had procured such an elevated son-in-law. He replied that it was with the blessings of Allah Almighty, but that also; “*since this daughter of mine was born I have never missed a namaz (prayer) in which I have not prayed that; O Allah Almighty, whichever man is most agreeable and suitable in **Your** eyes, make my daughter's marriage knot with him*”.

Through this relationship with Hadrat Amman Jan^{ra}, part of the Promised Messiah^{as}'s mission was to convey the rights of women in Islam, be they daughters, wives or mothers. India at this time was a traditionally patriarchal society in which a man's strength and credibility were measured by his dominance over his wife and household. Any sign of softness in a man was considered a weakness. Physical force was regarded as necessary and inevitable in order to subdue women. In this society the Promised Messiah^{as}'s partnership with Hadrat Amman Jan^{ra} was truly revolutionary, because it showed that men and women should coexist harmoniously, with mutual respect and love. The Promised Messiah^{as} and Hadrat Amman Jan^{ra} were a union of souls as well as bodies.

They practically illustrated how both men and women can attain great spiritual heights. In their 24 years of marriage everyone close to them (including their children), commented that there was never a raised voice let alone an argument between husband and wife. So harmonious was their household that it was like a heavenly earth, fulfilling the revelation that the Promised Messiah^{as} and his wife would live in an earthly “*heaven*” together.

Hadrat Amman Jan^{ra} left Delhi in a very simple manner, despite the fact that pomp and festivities at weddings were customary to society there. She did not complain at the simplicity of her *nikah*, when the Promised Messiah^{as} brought neither clothes nor jewellery for his bride (traditionally organised by the ladies of the groom's family), because of his family's hostility to the marriage. (He did however give money to Hadrat Mir Nasir Nawwab for Hadrat Amman Jan^{ra} to buy whatever she wished).

However, the Promised Messiah's exemplary behaviour and kind regard was to make what seemed like a bleak beginning into a uniquely blessed future for the couple. Both were indeed to endure worldly opposition, material sacrifices, political unrest, health problems and the tragic loss of five children. Marriages have failed for far lesser reasons, yet the couple was to gratefully endure all trials and tribulations, steadfast and absolutely focused in their one supreme goal, - winning the Pleasure of Allah Almighty.

This marital paradise was created by mutual patience, good manners, forbearance and the quality to overlook the human flaws of others. These qualities were practised by both Hadrat Amman Jan^{ra} and the Promised Messiah^{as}.

Hadrat Amman Jan^{ra} was a constant pillar of support and loyalty throughout their lives. Their united outlook on life is beautifully summed up in Hadrat Mirza Bashir Ahmad's analogy of them as being “*one heart beating in two chests*”.

What is remarkable about Hadrat Amman Jan^{ra} is that the true passion of her life was worship. She was fully aware that the first command ordained to us by Allah Almighty in the Holy Qur^{an} is;

“Oh ye men, worship your Lord Who created you and those who were before you, that you may become righteous.” (Al-Baqarah 2:22)

Likewise, that the Holy Prophet^{sa} said;

"The comparison between a person who remembers his Lord and the one who does not do so, is like that of the living and the dead."(Bukhari)

Hadrat Amman Jan^{ra} is the first modern day female example of a true "*Salihah*", that is a righteous servant of Allah Almighty, within the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community.

However, as ladies some may feel that we cannot attain to such exalted levels, or may consider that pious ladies of such high calibre are now the remnants of a bygone era which can never be achieved (eg. such as the wives of the Holy Prophet^{sa} or Hadrat Maryam, mother of Hadrat Isa^{as}). Yet this has been disproved by the blessed personage of Hadrat Amman Jan^{ra}.

Like all ordinary women she had domestic responsibilities; a large family and in-laws, guests, ladies to meet and greet widows, orphans, the poor and students. She also had the everyday household tasks of cooking, cleaning, washing and sewing to perform. However, she proved that multitasking is not a modern day phenomenon for women. More importantly, she showed how these routine responsibilities should not divert us from the worship of Allah Almighty. In fact they can become the tools of worshipping every minute of the day. By fulfilling her responsibilities and showing infinite compassion for Allah Almighty's creatures, Hadrat Amman Jan^{ra} was in fact engaged in practical worship much of her day. Her every utterance that was not directed at others was in fact the remembrance of her Creator, or verbal prayers to Him.

Hadrat Mirza Bashir Ahmad^{ra} said concerning the extent of his mother's piety and righteousness that it was difficult to express it in few words. It was however apparent through her regular and punctual observance of the five daily prayers and extra "*Nawafil*". She was also very regular in "*Tahajjud*" prayers. The remarkable nature of Hadrat Amman Jan's prayers was such that the passion and ardour with which she supplicated would inspire those around her to engage in "*Salat*" as well. The greatest testimony to the weight and importance Hadrat Amman Jan^{ra} gave to the observance of prayers on time is Hadrat Amman Jan's astounding behaviour at the time of the death of her son "*Bashir-e-Awwal*". Few mothers could even contemplate thinking of anything else but their child if he happened to be critically ill. Only a believer of the highest caliber could fulfil the command to Muslims to sacrifice their children for the sake of their faith, and more specifically for their community, as Ahmadi Muslims do. Yet this is what Hadrat Amman Jan^{ra} consistently did throughout her life. Hadrat Amman Jan's character was truly exemplary. Her son's condition was absolutely critical but she still thought not to miss her prayers, when the time arose. Hadrat Amman Jan^{ra} did her ablutions and performed her prayers with perfect serenity, happy to be fulfilling Allah Almighty's Commandments. She physically dissociated herself from the tense situation. After completing the prayers she enquired how her son was, to be told that the little one had taken his last breath. Hadrat Amman Jan^{ra} responded "*Inna lillahi wa inna ilaihi rajiun*". After this she was silent. There was no wailing or weeping. There were no shrieks or lamentations of regret at the loss of her child, - a true indication that she was indeed one of Allah Almighty's loyal servants.

Hadrat Amman Jan's daughter never recalls seeing her mother rush her prayers. She continues that Hadrat Amman Jan^{ra} not only observed "*Tahajjud*" prayers regularly but also "*Ishraq*" apart from the five compulsory daily prayers of a Muslim. Often one could hear her supplications as she exclaimed with such fervour, intensity, pain and restlessness. Hadrat Amman Jan^{ra} truly embraced the meaning of "*Salat*" which means "*fire*". She felt this heat and fervency in every supplication she made.

Hadrat Amman Jan^{ra} used to pray alongside the Promised Messiah^{as} when he felt indisposed or too weak to visit the mosque. Contrary to popular belief that a woman cannot pray alongside a

man, the Promised Messiah^{as} would request his wife to stand on his right hand side, in case he felt weak and needed physical support.

At the commencement of the “*Adhan*” she would remind the girls in her household (daughters and daughter-in-laws, helpers, orphans in her care etc.), that it was time for prayer. It is noteworthy that she would also remind them about “*tahajjud*” prayer, which is not compulsory but a highly commendable way of procuring Allah’s Pleasure. Its value has been conveyed in the Holy Qur’an and in numerous “*Ahadith*” (sayings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa}). Its regular observance is also a stipulation of the Third Condition of “*Bai,,at*”.

On one occasion a lady visited Hadrat Amman Jan^{ra} with her newborn daughter. She relates that she waited some time until Hadrat Amman Jan^{ra} had completed her prayers. Hadrat Amman Jan^{ra} then enquired of the ladies visiting if they had offered their prayers. The lady with the child excused herself, explaining that her baby had wet herself and that she would go home and offer prayers after changing her. At this point Hadrat Amman Jan^{ra} expressed some wise words. She said;

"Never omit prayers using your children as an excuse. In this way, your children become a cause of Allah Almighty's Wrath, when really they are a reward from Allah Almighty".

In this concise manner Hadrat Amman Jan^{ra} directed mothers to both appreciate their children but also never to commit “*shirk*”, ie. to associate them with Allah Almighty, by putting their needs before Allah's Commands.

Her worship consisted of two elements; firstly, her strict adherence to the five daily prayers; and secondly the abundant recitation of the Holy Qur’an. During illness and when her eyesight had diminished, Hadrat Amman Jan^{ra} would request someone to recite the Holy Qur’an to her.

Whenever Hadrat Amman Jan^{ra} felt restless or burdened, she found solace in the Holy Qur’an. Hadrat Amman Jan^{ra} often asked someone of her household (often one of her grandchildren), to recite the Holy Qur’an to her several times during the day. This was usually after *Fajr* prayers, in the afternoon and evening. Likewise, she would also ask someone to narrate some “*Ahadith*”.

Her request one hour before her demise was “*Recite the Holy Qur’an to me*”, after which her nephew Mir Mahmood Ahmad Sahib obliged Hadrat Amman Jan^{ra}. Even after this Hadrat Amman Jan^{ra} still had the strength in the final minutes of her life to raise her weak and trembling hands and exert her frail voice, to instruct everyone in the room to “*pray*”. All joined Hadrat Amman Jan^{ra} in a silent prayer. Just as Hadrat Amman Jan^{ra} had spent her life in worship, Allah Almighty blessed her with the opportunity to die occupied in this favourite act - of worship. Indeed, this was the most privileged and honourable way to pass from this life into the Hereafter.

Hadrat Amman Jan’s Financial Sacrifices

Hadrat Amman Jan^{ra} was always at the forefront of making financial sacrifices for the Jamat. A most remarkable example of this was when on May 28, 1900, the Promised Messiah^{as} made an appeal to raise funds for the building of Minar-a-tul Masih in Qadian. He estimated that 10,000 rupees would be required and so appealed for 100 people to ideally contribute 100 rupees each to fulfil this target. Hadrat Amman Jan^{ra} immediately responded by selling the property of her inheritance in Delhi. She gave 1000 rupees for this noble cause, excelling others in fulfilling this appeal- a great proof of her faith in the Promised Messiah^{as}

The Promised Messiah’s own knowledge of Hadrat Amman Jan’s great capacity for material sacrifice is illustrated on one occasion at the time of an early Jalsa. These initial gatherings were personally funded by the Promised Messiah^{as}. One day Hadrat Mir Nasir Nawwab informed the Promised Messiah^{as} that there was no food for the guests that evening. He immediately told Hadrat Mir Nasir Nawwab^{ra} to go to Hadrat Amman Jan^{ra} (his own daughter), and ask her to spare some

jewellery and sell it. Hadrat Amman Jan_{ra} instantly gave some jewellery to her father. Hadrat Mir Nasir Nawwab_{ra} sold it and subsequently the money was used for the catering of Jalsa guests. Hadrat Musleh Maud_{ra} has mentioned how his mother sacrificed all her personal desires. For example, he mentioned that when he had made an appeal for contributions for the *Al-Fazl* newspaper, Hadrat Amman Jan_{ra} sold some of her land for this cause and gave nearly 1000 rupees for it. It was perhaps in tribute to Hadrat Amman Jan_{ra}'s extensive financial sacrifices that the first mosque to be built in Scandinavia in Copenhagen, Denmark, was named the "*Nusrat Jahan Mosque*". This mosque was purely funded by contributions from the Lajna Imaillah at the time. It was the third mosque in Europe to be financed by the ladies, partly inspired by the exemplary financial contributions Hadrat Amman Jan_{ra} had made throughout her life. Indeed, from the multitude of accounts of Hadrat Amman Jan_{ra}'s good deeds, it is evident that she was a true humanitarian. She helped others sincerely and without any ulterior motives, except to please Her Creator. It was an acknowledgement of Hadrat Amman Jan_{ra}'s lifelong commitment to serving humanity that Hadrat Khalifatul Masih III_{ra} was to name a pioneering scheme "*The Nusrat Jahan Scheme*" in 1970. By launching it, Hatur desired to open a substantial number of schools, hospitals, clinics and missions in West Africa,

Hadrat Amman Jan's Appearance

Hadrat Amman Jan's appearance can be described as purity and simplicity personified. Her attire was simple and graceful. Hadrat Amman Jan's dress was also very conducive to maintaining modesty. She did not dress according to fickle fashions and always kept her *kameez* (tunic) length at a chaste knee length. She took care that the material was never transparent, if so she would wear a slip underneath. She often wore a shawl across her shoulders. She never left the house without her hair fully covered and an outer garment.

Hadrat Amman Jan's Moral Training of Children

Hadrat Khalifatul Masih IV_{ra} reminisces that he had the blessing of knowing Hadrat Amman Jan_{ra} for 24 years. He recalls that her guidance was in "*simple and yet impressive words*" that affected people. The ways of pretence and "showing off" were unknown to her..."*her speech was filled with love and fragranced with truth*".

In the Indonesian Jalsa of July 2002, Hadrat Khalifatul Masih IV_{ra} addressed the Lajna and said that a good method for the successful moral training of our children would be to follow the excellent example of Hadrat Amman Jan_{ra}. He stated;

"If you wish to save your children from evil influences then follow the pure example of Hadrat Amman Jan_{ra}. This prescription is without fail; and whoever follows it will be successful

In this speech Hatur mentioned the following salient points: he emphasised that Hadrat Amman Jan_{ra} **firstly** insisted that her children must never lie despite fearing the worst consequences. She taught that falsehood is indeed a form of "*shirk*" (idolatry), because the perpetrator does it out of fear of an individual or punishments, which they perceive as greater than Allah Almighty. Hatur said that Hadrat Amman Jan_{ra} did not stress anything more in her children than "*developing repulsion for deceit*".

Secondly, like Hadrat Amman Jan_{ra} and the Promised Messiah_{as}, parents should ensure that their children feel that they have belief and confidence in them. This instils self-confidence and high self-esteem in them. Children believe that if their parents respect them so too will others.

Thirdly, Hadrat Amman Jan_{ra} emphasised the importance of prayer. She prayed continuously, day and night. Almost every utterance and action became a prayer on Hadrat Amman Jan_{ra}'s lips. For example, whilst eating with any of her grandchildren she would put a morsel of food in their mouth uttering; "*Oh Allah Almighty make his/her fortune good*". Also, if one of the children was leaving the house Hadrat Amman Jan_{ra} would bid farewell with a prayer; "*Go, and may Allah Almighty be your Protector and Helper*". She also instructed them to offer the greeting of "*Salam*", as they entered and left the house. During his childhood, Hadrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad_{ra} has also related another significant

lesson he learned from his grandmother. Hadrat Amman Jan^{ra} raised many orphans in her household. She would lay out a tablecloth on the floor of one of the larger rooms, and serve them all dinner. On one occasion Hudur refused to eat his meal with the orphans. Hadrat Amman Jan^{ra} responded simply but effectively, by not offering her grandson any food that day. This taught Hudur the lifelong lessons of equality and humility. We can best learn from Hudur's own words the great moral values his grandmother imparted to him. Hudur has related that Hadrat Amman Jan^{ra} taught him; *"All people are Allah Almighty's people, the teachings of religion have taught us to protect the human rights and dignity of all men. We should love and care for everyone. We should not look to see who is rich and who is poor, who is very influential, who an orphan child. All are equal in the eyes of Allah Almighty, and all are dear to Allah Almighty, and religion has taught us to love all. Your actions (ie Hadrat Amman Jan's) were always teaching us this lesson, and in our ears we would hear words that Allah Almighty will Insha Allah make Ahmadiyyat victorious throughout the world... "*

Hadrat Khalifatul Masih V^{atba} has said.

"A woman is an architect of the future generation. If a woman acquires the habit of telling lies, the whole generation will be involved in this evil habit.

By the Grace of Allah Almighty, four of the five khulafa' of the Ahmadiyya Movement to date, have been of the progeny of Hadrat Amman Jan^{ra}.

These spiritual successors were Divinely appointed by Allah Almighty, proving their exceptionally high moral standards and virtue. Their appointments also indicate that Hadrat Amman Jan^{ra} was successful in inculcating these important moral qualities in her offspring. Thus we too should take heed of Hadrat Amman Jan's conduct and values in the moral training of our own children.

One final piece of noteworthy advice suggested by Hadrat Amman Jan^{ra}, was that we should put our greatest time and effort into the training of our eldest child. If this child is instilled with good habits, he becomes an excellent role model for his younger siblings. Consequently, their moral training is less difficult. This wisdom explains why Hadrat Amman Jan^{ra} would take the eldest child of each of her children (those living within Qadian), and personally raised them within her own home.

We can learn so much from Hadrat Amman Jan's life. By adopting her values and conduct we too can also become the residents of "*lofty mansions*" in the Hereafter. May Allah Almighty enable us to instil faith and piety in future generations. As Hadrat Khalifatul Masih II^{ra} said, this great task is only achievable by women.

May Allah grant us the strength to emulate Hadrat Amman Jan's fine example. May He continue to exalt the status of this true "*Salihah*", whom I believe to be the most inspirational lady in the history of Ahmadiyyat. Ameen