

## In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful

The following is a summary of the Concluding Address that Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (atba) delivered to the Lajna Annual Ijtema, UK on 19<sup>th</sup> November, 2006.

After the recitation of the Surah Al-Fatiha, Huzoor said, “Today you are gathered here to participate in the Annual Ijtema, of which it is the last day. The purpose of these Ijtemas is to enable members to benefit from the educational and spiritual programs and speeches and to rid themselves of any shortcomings they may have. Also, the younger and older girls may participate in various educational competitions to improve their knowledge and sharpen their spiritual capabilities. These gatherings provide an atmosphere that promotes discussion and identification of ways and means of self improvement. Any society, whose young girls and ladies gather in one place with the intention of spending their time in a purely spiritual atmosphere and engage in activities for self improvement, the future generations of that society are safeguarded, also it does not suffer from a decline. And, today, if there are any women who get together purely for the sake of Allah, they are Ahmadi women. Therefore, always keep your status in mind. Make the most of the spiritual food that you have enjoyed in this gathering for your life depends on it. The life of your future generations depends on it. The life and honor of your families depends on it.”

Huzoor said, “You should never be so selfish that you care only about your self, care only about your own needs, care only about your own feelings. You should also care for others. You should be ready to offer sacrifices to fulfill the needs of others. You should be sensitive about others feelings. You should not think only about your own honor. You should always be mindful of the honor of your family and the Jama’at. We should also keep in mind at all times, that my God is All Seeing. He watches me every moment of time. My God is All Knowing who knows my deepest thoughts. He is aware of all my secrets. I can not hide anything from Him. Being aware of this when You proclaim that you are an Ahmadi woman then you should pay attention to those commandments that Allah has conveyed to us through His beloved, the Holy Prophet (saw). If you sometime forget some of those commandments and are reminded of them from time to time, then you should deal with them in a manner befitting a pious person. In the Holy Quran, Allah says about such people, “*And those who, when they are reminded of the Signs of their*

***Lord, fall not down thereat deaf and blind;***” (25:74). Surely, an Ahmadi woman in whose heart the seed of spirituality has been sown that keeps her in the fold of Ahmadiyyat, who is a picture of faithfulness, who knows about offering sacrifices for the sake of her faith, who is deeply in love with Khilafat-e-Ahmadiyya, when she is admonished, she does not treat it like the deaf and the blind. If she is a true Ahmadi, it is expected that like all true Ahmadies she will try her utmost to act upon the advice she is given.”

Huzoor said, “True Ahmadies should always be inclined to act upon the advice that is given them in accordance with the commandments of Allah and His Prophet (saw). This is the mark of a true believer. You have taken an oath. Always keep it in mind. When the Holy Prophet (saw) took an oath of Bait from the women, there were extra conditions in it compared to the oath of Bait taken from men. These extra conditions are described in the Holy Quran. One of them is to refrain from associating partners with Allah. Another is to stay away from evil and indecencies. Another is to pay attention to good upbringing and training of the children. And then Allah says, ***“nor disobey thee in what is right”*** (60:13). Allah is not compelling us to do anything. However, if you have chosen to become a Muslim then you have to obey the conditions that are necessary to come into the fold of Islam. Hazrat Masih Maud (as) also gave the same advice when he used to take an oath of Bait from the women.”

Huzoor said, “It has become more frequent recently, under the influence of the society today, that some people begin to think that they are free. You should remember that you are free, but only to a certain extent. As far as the practice of your religion is concerned, you are not free. If you include yourself in the Jama’at then you are, under all circumstances, bound by those conditions that are necessary for an Ahmadi. We see that, in the early days of Islam, when the women took an oath of Bait, the society at that time was totally free of any kind of rules and regulations. It was more corrupt than today’s society. It was lacking in education. There were only a handful of moderately literate people. There was no concept of the existence of God. They were only familiar with the idols that they worshiped. They were not aware of the All Seeing, All Knowing God. When those women took an oath of Bait, they brought about a total transformation in their lives. When a woman stepped out of the darkness of ignorance into the light of Islam, she became the source of knowledge that many benefited from. She taught many a noted companions intricate matters of the religion while staying within the boundaries of ‘Purdah’. She acquired this certificate from the Holy Prophet

(saw) that you can acquire half of your religious knowledge from Hazrat Aisha (ra).”

Huzoor said, “It was a woman who set an excellent example even on the battlefield when she was able to, all alone and remaining within the bounds of ‘Purdah’, get her brother freed from the Roman camp. History remembers her by the name of Hazrat Khaola (ra). When Medina came under attack and the men were defending it by digging the ditch on one side, the women took charge of guarding the homes. And when the Jews sent a man to spy and find out if they could attack Medina from the rear, it was not a man who confronted him. Rather a woman who fought the spy and wounded him and drove him away. In the battle of Uhad, when the Muslims began to retreat, it was the women who set a shining example in the love of the religion and of the Holy Prophet (saw). Those women acquired this strength, courage, fidelity, and the knowledge by following the teachings of Islam and making them a part of their lives. So always remember that if you will unconditionally adopt the teachings of your religion, will try to obey Allah’s commandments, will pay attention to the worship of Allah, then you too will be endowed with the love and sincerity for the religion. It will also free you from all kinds of complexes. Otherwise you will find yourselves drowning in the material pursuits like other worldly people. So, like the women of the Holy Prophet’s (saw) era transformed themselves and totally submitted themselves to God, became believing women, became obedient women, always turning to God, and devout in worship. If you want to reach the same heights, then treading in their footsteps, you must follow the teachings of Islam. If you do not do this then you can not call yourselves Muslims. If you do not strengthen your faith and do not save yourselves from the evils of this society then you can not call yourselves believing women. If you do not set high standards of obedience then you can not call yourselves obedient women. If you do not pay attention to repentance and worship then you are not the one who are always turning to God or devout in worship.”

Huzoor said, “Examine yourselves and determine whether your actions match your claims. You must assess yourselves. Always keep in mind the purpose for which mankind has been created. Your goal should be to win the pleasure of God. You must set yourselves higher goals that you have to achieve. Determine lofty standards to which you have to march. When you have lofty standards in your sights, you will make the extra effort to reach them. Mothers should assess themselves and daughters should assess themselves. This way you can reform yourselves and safeguard your future generations as

well by better training of your children. Today, Islam is under attack from all directions. It is essential that, in order to defend Islam, every Ahmadi girl and every Ahmadi woman should jump into the field of action just as the women of the first era of Islam did. Otherwise you will be held accountable for not performing the task that you were entrusted with. You will be questioned that your actions did not match your claims.”

Huzoor said, “With reference to women, the attacks that are being levied against Islam these days relate to the issue of ‘Purdah’, or wearing of the veil or a scarf. Men can present countless explanations and justifications in support of the institution of ‘Purdah’ in Islam. However, if anyone can answer this attack, it is a practicing and a God fearing Ahmadi woman who can demonstrate the proper answer. Therefore, instead of becoming the victim of any complex, like a brave Ahmadi Muslim woman, with your practice and with your arguments, convey this message to your friends and in your society that this Quranic teaching is to safeguard your chastity. It is there to restore your lost honor. It is not an imprisonment.”

Huzoor said, “Look at these people who, on the one hand attack Islam that there is compulsion and hardship in it, while on the other side they are guilty of interfering in others personal matters. Why does it bother them if a woman wants to wear a scarf or a veil? A majority of Muslim women, due to the lack of practice among those who have not accepted Hazrat Masih Maud (as), do not observe ‘Purdah’. There is no punishment for them in Islam. There is no worldly law that punishes them for this lapse. However, what right do the followers of other religions have to draft such laws that forbid those who wish to practice their religion and observe the ‘Purdah’ by wearing a scarf or a veil. Tomorrow these people might say that the dress is not proper and they should not wear the shalwar (long baggy pants). Instead they should only wear frocks, or jeans, or skirts. Later they might demand that the women should wear short pants or skirts or even bear themselves. They have no right to play with your honor in this manner. It is you who have to answer these people and tell them that they have no right to interfere in others personal matters. Someone needs to inform them that they are, in fact, depriving others of their freedom of choice. The way someone dresses is a matter of personal choice. Why are they trying to dictate the dress code that must be followed. Only because they are in power, they think that they are being very wise while, in fact their actions are extremely foolish and unwise.”

Huzoor said, “An Ahmadi woman has to establish her honor and has to be prepared to answer all such attacks. Some women, even though they call themselves Ahmadi, fall victim to some type of a complex. One such woman is reported to have said that if her daughter does not cover her head or wears jeans or other such dress then she should not be admonished, she is very decent. Why is she decent? Because she does not have any boyfriends. She is free and knows her right from wrong.” Huzoor said, “This is a case of improper training of your children. If the girl does not have a boyfriend today, tomorrow she may have one. If she is not doing anything wrong today, tomorrow, taking advantage of this freedom, she may take improper steps. If she is free today, she knows her right from wrong, she is free to act upon or ignore a Quranic commandment, then know that the Jama’at is also free. The Khalifa of the time is also free and has the absolute right that he should excommunicate such people from the Jama’at who will not obey the teachings of the Holy Quran. If you join any worldly organization, it has some rules and regulations. If you do not follow those rules, your membership is terminated. The religion is a matter relating to God. It is a bond with God. It is an oath of Bait with God. If your actions are contrary to God’s clear guidance, if you refuse to act according to His teachings, then know that if you or your daughter has the right not to observe ‘Purdah’ then, by the same token, I also have the right that I should excommunicate such disobedient people from the Jama’at. I will be doing this according to Allah’s commandments therefore no one should complain about such actions.”

Huzoor said, “Let me impress upon the Jama’at administration that as a first step they should determine that there should be no woman office bearer who does not observe ‘Purdah’. If they do not find any women in a particular chapter who are fully observant, then attach that chapter with another nearby chapter or assign the offices to those who are observant even though they may be less knowledgeable. In case there is no one in a chapter who is observant and there is no other chapter nearby, then disband that chapter altogether. I hope that, by the Grace of Allah, this extreme situation will not be found any where. By the Grace of Allah, there are many pious women in the Jama’at who vie with each other in good deeds. If not in older women, I see many among the younger women who are free of hypocrisy. Some have been influenced by their family circumstances but a large number are such who are treading the right path more so than their elders. They try to cover their heads and maintain their modesty.”

Huzoor said, “In an MTA program that was being recorded recently, I heard a young lady who is a teacher say that she will cover her head in the school also because she did not want to teach the children that she is a hypocrite or that she has a double standard in that outside the children can see her wearing a scarf. They can ask her why she does not wear one in the school and cover her head in the school. In any case, ‘Purdah’ is an Islamic injunction. Part of the discussion in that MTA program was that in an elementary school where there are only very young children is it necessary to cover your head. Huzoor said, “There is no harm in that case but it is possible that there were older children in the school where this young lady was a teacher. In any case, ‘Purdah’ is an Islamic injunction and a distinctive mark of an Ahmadi woman. It bestows honor to an Ahmadi woman. Remember that along with the scarf, the remainder of dress should be loose fitting. Allah’s commandment is that your beauty should not be revealed. Some non-Ahmadi girls can be seen wearing a scarf in reaction to this prohibition on the wearing of a scarf, but they are wearing tight jeans and blouses. Such ‘Purdah’ is of no value. It is total hypocrisy. ‘Purdah’ should be such that is truly ‘Purdah’ and is befitting your honorable status.”

Huzoor said, “I have come to find out that at a gathering of some women, an office bearer said that we should relax the ‘Purdah’ in the light of today’s circumstances, we should not be so strict.” Huzoor said, “O.K. you can use your right to relax and I will use my right. It can not be that you keep on using your rights and tell me that I should not use my rights. I have to, under all circumstances and by the Grace of Allah, enforce compliance with Allah’s commandments that He has taught us through the Holy Quran. Otherwise, as I have stated, the door is open. Whoever wants to leave is free to go. I do not understand the reason behind this complex. There are local British ladies who have joined the fold of Ahmadiyyat. Also, there are those in the rest of Europe. Some of them are young girls. They have started to wear scarves, they have started to cover their heads, and there are some among you who have fallen prey to inferiority complex. Only yesterday, I met an English girl who became an Ahmadi a few days ago. She had never worn a scarf or a veil before but she was covering her head very well. These people are accepting these beautiful teachings and practicing them and some of our ladies are victims of inferiority complex. What can we other than “***Surely, to Allah we belong and to Him shall we return***” (2:157).

Huzoor said, “If any one thinks that if the Jama’at will go into a decline due to this strictness, that people will begin to go away from the Jama’at, they

should know that the Jama'at **WILL NOT** go into a decline. If all such women should leave, Allah has promised that He will bring forth new nations that will join the fold of Ahmadiyyat. The British women who have joined the Jama'at are very sincere and in the future also you will see the showers of love raining down from among them. They will love Islam and its teachings. There are many others sitting here in front of me like the lady I met yesterday. They accepted Ahmadiyyat and have made rapid progress in Ahmadiyyat. Your Lajna President here is not a Pakistani. She has no complex. She observes 'Purdah'. As I have stated earlier about the lady, who is an office bearer also, wants the 'Purdah' to be relaxed. The truth of the matter is that she wants to raise an objection against me that I am strict about 'Purdah'. These type of people show their hypocrisy by their disguised objections.

Huzoor said, "Pull yourselves together, and I say to these new Ahmadi women who are coming from the local population that if these born Ahmadi women do not want to live by the Islamic teachings then do not follow them. You should march forward and become an example for them. You should step forward and spread the beauty of Islam and Ahmadiyyat in your surroundings."

Huzoor said, "Purdah and modesty has been taught by all religions. At the time of Moses, we read in the Holy Quran about two women who were standing to one side and not watering their heard. They were doing so due to modesty that they will water their heard when the men have finished doing so and departed. Modesty is part of the faith. This is what we have been taught. In the early days, the Christian women used to observe 'Purdah'. They used to wear modest clothes. Many places in the Bible contain this teaching about 'Purdah'. If the Christians are not observing the 'Purdah' today and you are being influenced by them then know that they have abandoned their religion. If they cared about their religion they would be practicing it. They would rid themselves of many evils that are prevailing in their society. For the satisfaction of those who are suffering from any type of complex, I will give you some references from the Bible. Maybe you might have heard them before."

Huzoor said, "It is written in the Bible, "*Women must not wear men's clothing nor a man wear women's clothing for the Lord your God detests anyone who does this*" (Deuteronomy 22:5). Again, it is written in the Bible, "*Favor is deceitful and beauty is vain but a woman that feareth the Lord she shall be praised*" (Proverb 31:30). Again it is written in the Bible, "*I also want women to dress modestly, with decency, in propriety, not with braided*"

*hair, or gold, or pearls, or expensive clothes, but with good deeds appropriate for women who profess to worship God” (1 Timothy 2:9-10).*

Again, it is written in the Bible, *“Any man who prays or prophesizes with something on his head disgraces his head but if any woman who prays or prophesizes with her head unveiled disgraces her head. It is one and the same thing as having her head shaved. For if a woman will not veil herself then she should cut off her hair. But, if it is disgraceful for a woman to have her hair cut off or to be shaved, she should wear a veil. For a man ought not to have his head veiled since he is the image and reflection of God but the woman is a reflection of man” (1 Corinthians 11:4-7).* These people raise an objection against Islam. On a side note it is evident that these people consider the man to be superior than a woman. This is a side note that we can not discuss here.”

Huzoor said, “After seeing all this you should be strengthened that you are practicing the beautiful teachings of Islam and have a relationship with a living God. Whereas this western society is bankrupt as far as religion is concerned. They have forgotten their religious teachings. So you should tell them that instead of writing against us, passing laws against us, making statements against us, they should worry about themselves. Instead of baring our head that we cover of our own volition, they should cover the heads of their women according to their religious teachings. I say it again that instead of demanding a relaxation in ‘Purdah’, you should rid yourselves of your inferiority complexes and practice the teachings bestowed upon us by Allah.”

Huzoor said, “Allah has commanded both men and women to avoid sin. Man has been instructed, before the woman, to cast his eyes down. Then the woman has been instructed to do the same. The man is relatively more daring as compared to woman therefore, while the instruction to cast down the eyes and guard the private parts is for both man and woman, woman has been instructed that, due to the nature of man, it is in her interest to cover her beauty so that she may be saved from the evil glances of the man. Some people object that the previous Caliphs were not so strict about ‘Purdah’ so I am going to present some excerpts of theirs for your satisfaction.”

Huzoor said, “Hazrat Masih Maud (as) says that people are insisting on relaxation of ‘Purdah’ and follow Europe but this is not at all appropriate. This freedom of women is the root cause of evil and disobedience. Just ponder over the moral condition of those countries where this kind of freedom is tolerated. If you see a rise in the level of their purity and chastity as a result

of this freedom, then we will accept that we are wrong. However, it is clear that when man and woman have reached their full strength and there is freedom of association, how dangerous their relationships will be. Casting evil glances and being overcome by carnal desires is in man's nature. Then if despite 'Purdah' some succumb to evil deeds and become disobedient, one can imagine what can happen where freedom prevails. Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih 2<sup>nd</sup> (ra) has stated in this regard that the 'Purdah' according to the Shariah, that is proven from the Holy Quran, is that a woman's hair, neck, and face up to the front of her ears should be covered. This instruction can be adopted in different countries according to the local dress and circumstances. He stated that all parts of the body except the hands are included in the 'Purdah'. Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih 3<sup>rd</sup> (ra) has stated, during an address to the Norway Lajna, "I ask those women who feel that it is not necessary to observe 'Purdah' that what favor have they done to Islam by abandoning the 'Purdah'? Today some seek permission to do away with 'Purdah'. Tomorrow they will seek permission to skinny dip in the sea and to lay bare on the beaches. Later they will seek permission to bear children out of wedlock. I will tell them that they should be prepared to feel the fire of Hell. They should mend their ways before God's wrath overtakes them."

Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih 4<sup>th</sup> (ra) said, "I felt that 'Purdah' is disappearing from many places in the world as if it never existed and people do not realize what horrible consequences they are facing as a result of this. Parents are driving their generation towards hell fire due to their carelessness and there is no one who cares for them. This situation is rapidly deteriorating throughout the world. It occurred to me that if Ahmadies do not immediately stand up in defense of Islam then the situation will reach a point from which there is no return." Again he said, "There are those women who have to venture outside to work but they go out with full makeup. What has makeup to do with the performance of your duties?" Again he said, "Women think that in this society, where 'Purdah' is being discarded, if they meet their friends with their veils or scarves, their friends will call them backwards, foolish, or mad and say that this age is beyond 'Purdah'. And this also troubles the men. They forget that dignity and respect for others comes from one's own character and the dress has no value in the worldly honor. A person with moral character is given respect. We should learn to respect ourselves first. Again he said, "The girls being brought up in this country (England) are confused about the hair on their head. They think that covering your head is a backward thing to do. Therefore, they take a step towards Allah half heartedly and not happily. They are, in fact, saying that, O' God accept us as we are. We are wearing a scarf

but in a manner that is similar to a Jew who is covering a very small portion of his head with a small flat cap. So please accept this incomplete step that we have taken towards you. If you do everything for the sake of Allah then this is entirely inappropriate. Remember that the most beautiful part of a woman's features is her hair, specially, when they are hanging in front of her face. I have noticed some girls that when they put their scarves on they do so in a manner that causes their hair to dangle in front of their faces. You should ask yourself, do I care more for my Lord, or for other people?"

Huzoor said, "These were the statements made by the previous Caliphs. Those people who think that so and so Caliph did not say this but the other Caliph is saying this should remember that they are, without knowledge, slandering the Caliphs that, God forbid, they did not want to enforce the basic commandments of Allah. I have read before you the statements of all the previous Caliphs so that you may cleanse your minds of this misunderstanding. Secondly, it is possible that different Caliphs have stressed on different things according to the needs of the time. Therefore to say that because a previous Caliph said a certain thing in a certain manner and that I should also do the same is tantamount to tying my hands and is disrespectful of the Khilafat. This shows that you took the oath of Bait only because you were forced to do so due to pressure of people around you, or your parents, or your husband, or your children. It was not your whole hearted decision. If it was the case then the promise to obey all rightful decision will be in your minds and you will never question any decision. Let me make it clear again that if you want to stay attached to the Jama'at of Hazrat Masih Maud (as) (only the handful of people are addressed here who indulge in this kind of talk not all of you are addressed) then you must obey the clear commandments of the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet (saw). Then as Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih 4<sup>th</sup> (ra) had said that duplicity will not work. You should fear either your Lord or the people. So today, it behooves every Ahmadi woman that instead of being afraid of the people while the seeds of hatred for Islam are being sown in the world, while Islam is under attack from all sides, you should cry out loud and proclaim throughout the world that no matter how many hurdles it may place in our paths it can not wipe away these beautiful teachings from our faces, from our hearts, or from our actions. And just because they are turning away from their religion and are running towards their ruin at an ever increasing pace, let them know that we are not prepared to follow them to this hell. Instead, we pray that may God save mankind from the dire consequences of its evil deeds. Come and join us and by obeying the commands of Allah try to win His pleasure. This is what will make you content and safeguard your

future generations. I am hopeful that every decent Ahmadi woman who has even the slightest doubt about any of Allah's commands will rid herself of it and will become one who is truly "***resigned, believing, obedient, always turning to God, devout in worship***" (66:6). May Allah make it so. Aameen.