



The Lady Fâtemah (a.s.) Charitable Trust

September Lodge, Village Way, Little Chalfont,
Buckinghamshire
HP7 9PU

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Website: <http://www.ladyfatemahtrust.org>

Address by the Chair Trustee

At the 2nd Annual Gala Dinner Organised on 13th May 2006

Venue: London Heathrow Marriott Hotel



Bismillah hir Rahmaan nir Raheem

In the name of God, The Beneficent, The Merciful

Our distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, Salaam Alaykum, Welcome and Good Evening. It gives me great pleasure to welcome you here to The Lady Fatemah Trust Charity Gala Dinner, and I trust that you are enjoying the evening.

First and foremost, may I take this opportunity to sincerely thank you for attending this event; I am indeed overwhelmed and honoured by your presence and support. Last year we raised a phenomenal £60,000 at the gala dinner, which went directly to the Karbala Eye Clinic, and towards our orphan sponsorship scheme in India. Without your generosity and invaluable contributions, our work would not be possible. Alhamdulillah over the past year we have been involved in many projects across the globe, providing immediate and long term relief to those in desperate need. The focus of this gala dinner is micro finance projects to create self sufficiency. As we witness the poverty and oppression that exists around the world today, surely it is our responsibility to reach out and help. In fact, our Holy Prophet Muhammed (PBUH) has said:

‘The Almighty has fixed the livelihood of the poor in the wealth of the rich. Consequently, when a poor person remains hungry it is because a rich person has denied him their rightful share.’

So ladies and gentleman, let us be united in our pain and hope, and work towards a common goal through these troubled times. Since our inception, our mission here at the Lady Fatemah Trust is to alleviate poverty and one of the fundamental objectives is to enable target communities to develop self-sufficiency for it is only then that a lasting solution to poverty can be found. What sets us aside from other charitable organisations is that we operate on the basis of zero administration fees, thus ensuring, ladies and gentlemen, that each and every penny you donate goes directly to those in need. And in addition if you are a UK taxpayer and sign a gift aid declaration form, we can reclaim 28% of the tax on all your donations. This will raise the value of your £50 ticket to £64, which will go in it's entirety to our current projects. It is crucial that everyone signs this form since if all 400 guests today signed this form, Mr



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Gordon Brown could give £5,600 extra, which amounts to many lives being saved or improved, simply by you signing, at **NO** extra cost to you!

The brochures illustrate our work, which ranges from education and healthcare to infrastructure and micro finance projects.

Wherever possible, the Trust works closely with other charities, so as to harness local expertise the benefit and maximise the benefit our target groups will derive from the generosity of international donors. Recently we have worked with the Iraqi Refugee Aid Council in Iraq and Iran, Alimaan Foundation in India, and Muslim Aid.

Since the formation of the Trust in 1997, a number of projects have been undertaken across various countries and I would like to take a few moments now to illustrate some of these. Full details of all our work is available on the website, which I invite you to visit.

India:

One of the first projects the Trust undertook was the construction of bore-holes in remote Indian Villages, so as to provide a consistent supply of clean water 24 hours a day for these villagers. To date, approximately 50 water wells, hand pump and submerged electric water pump wells have been dug and named in the memory of Bibi Sakina. Each well costs about £1,000, and the responsibility of maintaining these pumps is borne by the local community. So for just this rather modest initial cost, these people can transform their lives, improve health and re-grow the agricultural economy. This, I'm sure you will agree, is an exceptional return on such a small investment.



In the healthcare sector, the Trust has provided life saving operations including organ transplants, open-heart surgeries, hearing aids and cancer treatment. Each individual appeal received is carefully investigated by our partner organisation on the ground, and only after investigations have been finished with positive result are the funds transferred.



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The Trust also provides housing assistance, orphan care and education. Micro finance projects include teaching girls how to sew and thereafter buying sewing machines for them to earn their own living. Elderly people in Southern India have been enrolled in an effective project which involves providing them with a milking cow or buffalo and a grant for one month's fodder. The objective is for the animal to yield enough milk to meet their income requirements for food, and fodder for the following month. This project has been extremely successful, allowing the individuals to access capital and providing economic independence.



The Trust has recently received an appeal requesting funds for the purchase of a building to be used as a medical rest home in Bhavnagar. The Civil Hospital in Bhavnagar serves the surrounding 47 villages, and often the patients attending the hospital cannot afford, or are too infirm to travel home in between appointments. In addition their families have nowhere to stay temporarily. This project, which requires £10,000 of funding, will provide for this home to be established, thereby saving these villagers from sleeping, washing, and literally living outdoors under the trees, which unfortunately has been their situation up to now.



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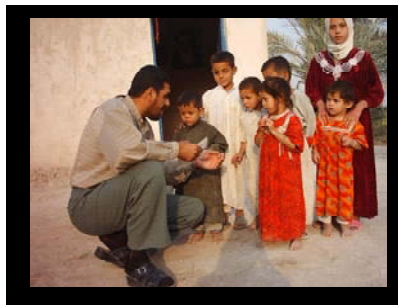
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Iraq:

In Iraq, prior to fall of the previous regime, the Trust was active in providing Ramadhan iftaar relief to those in need. Imagine ladies and gentlemen, £10 would barely cover our costs for one day's meal requirements; but this is all that is required to provide basic food for a person for an entire month. In fact, £10 a month will also provide an orphan with basic food and education. It really isn't much at all, but will offer a little child the chance to some sort of brighter future. The Lady Fatemah Trust has sponsorship schemes for orphans in Iraq, Iran and India.



Over the past three years, the Trust has increased its activities in Iraq, and projects undertaken have included shipping of 20foot and 40 foot containers of second hand clothes, the purchase of neonatal equipment for Najaf Hospital, and most recently a project to assist the widows in the marshlands of Iraq by providing them with a young, female water buffalo. Following the success of the milking cow project in India, Christian Aid generously donated US\$ 25,000.00 towards a similar project in the Iraqi marshlands and subsequently 23 female water buffaloes were purchased. Water buffalo milk is very rich and produces a lot of cream that sells at a good price. In total 31 water buffaloes, so far funded, are providing an income for over 310 people in total.



One of the key projects for The Lady Fatemah Trust has been the establishment of the Karbala EYE Clinic, a non profit, charitable based centre, which was the focus of last year's gala dinner. Every day, an average of 40 patients are examined and glasses dispensed, free to those who cannot afford them. Simple basic measures, such as providing the patient with spectacles or performing cataract or retinal laser surgery, can improve or restore eye sight, thereby preventing blindness, allowing the individuals to be independent and to raise themselves, their families and their communities to a better standard of living. Clinic staff members have also visited the residents at the Geriatric Care Department in the Al Jahez district, examined their eyesight and provided spectacles for those in need of them. The Karbala eye clinic has



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received blessings of Ayatollah al-Ozma As Sayyed Ali Seestani. The Trust also shipped all equipment required for establishing a second Eye Clinic in Basra, which started running exactly one month ago today, the 13th April 2006. The initial report is of an overwhelming number of patients seeking treatment at the clinic.



Iran:



In Iran, most Afghani refugees are desperately poor and the illiteracy rate among them is extremely high. Nevertheless, or maybe because of this, they are well aware of the importance of being literate and of education. With the assistance of educated Afghans, informal schools have been established to educate the refugee children. The children may walk between one and five km each way to school, but the classrooms have no heating or insulation from the cold, and lack basic facilities like washrooms, benches, blackboards, tables and chairs. Thanks to your support, several of these schools have now been refurbished, and the headmaster of Sajjadiyeh School wrote that the children were not able to sleep for a few days due to their happiness. These children are deprived of many things, but at least now they have a little comfort in school.



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The Imam Mehdi School is another informal refugee school, located in the destitute Jamkaran region on the outskirts of the Iranian city of Qum, and close to 500 Iraqi refugee students attend. School fees amount to just £13 per year, however most families are hard-pressed to pay this and some have to take out a loan. Our staffs in Qum expects that this school will probably receive more students next year as its fees are cheaper, so, poorer families are going to try and change to Imam Mehdi School. If we can provide school fees for next year and for years to come, we will be able to facilitate access to education for very needy refugee students.



Tap water in Jamkaran is unfit for human consumption. The representative of our partner organization, IRAC, recently discovered the students and staff have up till now been forced to drink the polluted tap water. Thanks to your support, a water purification device, tank and refrigerator were purchased and installed. In addition, a computer has been purchased to allow practical implementation, as the computer classes thus far have been conducted without a computer. The computer will also serve to hold school records and other documents and will assist in providing teaching materials.



The Medical Referral Program is another project the Trust has recently been involved with, and provides desperately required medical assistance for Iraqi and Afghani refugees in Iran. One of



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their reasons for not returning home is lack of medical facilities in their respective countries, and so they remain in Iran hoping somehow to raise the money for treatment. The Lady Fatemah Trust in conjunction with the IRAC office in Tehran is co-coordinating this work. The MRP is not simply a charity program of giving out money. On the contrary, it is a very empowering program to support sick people who generally do in fact work, however their incomes are insufficient to cover treatment cost. The treatments range from simple rehabilitative measures, to more complex, lifesaving procedures and cancer therapy. This project needs monthly funding due to the increasing number of refugee patients calling for assistance.

Another project we have recently set up in Iran is a microfinance project. As I mentioned, the vast majority of the Afghani refugees living in Iran are poor and needy. The Afghani men do the most dangerous jobs and are paid well below the minimum wage. However, many of the families are women-headed since the men have become sick due to their work conditions, or have been killed during the war in Afghanistan. The women are highly skilled in intricate embroidery, and we recently purchased 12 sewing and embroidery machines for women-headed families to help them become self-sufficient. Sewing and embroidery are crafts that can be taken up with minimal investment working from home. However, due to their poverty, the purchase of a sewing or embroidery machine is far beyond the reach of such households. Their work will then be sold to the Iranian market, as well as in Western countries. Infact ladies and gentleman, we have some exclusive samples on sale today. Please do visit the stall outside to place order. All proceeds will be sent back to these families.



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Marching into Africa in the year 2006.

The Trust has recently received an appeal requesting sponsorship for a humanitarian trip to Madagascar, one of the poorest African countries, where over half a million people are blind from preventable causes. A team of five British ophthalmologists led by Dr Martin Harris and Dr Riaz Asaria are planning this trip in June 2006, and hope to carry out ophthalmic procedures as well as training sessions. These doctors are self funding and so all the donated money will go to treating blindness. The team is working closely alongside Mr Daniel Ismail from Madagascar who is supporting the project.



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A patient who could not control her joy
of seeing after a long time

Kandak, Dodoma Region July 2005

This project needs financial support of £ 5,000.00 and we hope to make this an annual event.

Immediate Emergency Relief

In addition to intermediate and long term relief, The Trust also provides emergency assistance when required. Funds were donated to Bam and Kashmir following the earthquakes, and £12,000 was transferred to the Tsunami victims in Aceh to provide orphan care and housing.

So you can see ladies and gentleman, that our work is dedicated wholly to humanitarian relief, assisting our fellow brothers and sisters worldwide. With the grace of Allah significant work has been achieved, however there is a colossal amount of work that remains.

Standing Order

In the short term, your pledges and donations are invaluable, but what we need in the medium to long term, to ensure the work of the Trust continues and grows, is a consistent guaranteed income. And the only way to reach this aim is through your completing a standing order mandate, which you will find is enclosed in your brochure packs. You can contribute any amount, at an interval that is convenient to you. And please remember, ladies and gentlemen, **every** penny you donate goes to those in need, as we strictly operate on the basis of ZERO percent administration costs.

Give the Gift Presentation Slides

- A £10 donation will help feeding a family for a month in Ramadhan, or provide basic food and schooling for an orphan.
- £ 40.00 will cover the cost of performing a cataract surgery in Africa thereby avoiding patient from blindness.
- With a £50 donation we can purchase sewing machines to enable widows and the infirm to earn their livelihood.
- £100 will build a home for a Kashmir earthquake victim.
- £200 a month will pay the salary for a qualified optician at the Karbala eye clinic.



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- £500 will buy a milking cow or buffalo
- £1,000.00 can build a bore-well and provide a village with clean water and irrigation.
- £1,500 for open heart surgery
- £2,500 for establishing a school library
- £3,500 for an auto rickshaw taxi service providing enough income for a family
- £10,000 to build a school and provide education for an entire community

If you have been touched or inspired by any of the work you have seen here this evening, I urge you, ladies and gentleman, kindly to contribute, or sign a mandate.

Only The Almighty knows the reward for the benefit of giving. Indeed, our first holy Imam, Imam Ali (as) has said:

'Be merciful to those of you who are weak, for showing mercy to them is the means by which God will show mercy to you.'

Ijaaza

One last piece of news, ladies and gentlemen, which I must share with you, is the granting of Ijaaza to The Lady Fatemah Trust, by Ayatollah al-Ozma Seyed Ali Seestani. This transpired when the workings of the Trust was independently presented to the Ayatollah, and subsequently endorsed by another highly acclaimed religious cleric. Thereafter, the Ijaaza was issued, and basically what this means is the Trust is allowed to collect religious dues or Islamic tax on behalf of Ayatollah Seyed Ali Seestani, and utilise part of it for worthy projects.



Tribute

Before I sit down ladies and gentlemen, I would just like to take a few moments to pay tribute to a truly amazing individual, Marhoom Mehboobhai Suleman, who is not with us today. My heart is filled with deep sadness as I remember Marhoom and his dear family, who departed from this world on Friday, 29th July 2005. The family had travelled for umrah where they met with a tragic car accident, resulting in the demise of Marhoom Mehboobhai, Marhooma Mussaratbai, and their son Sibtain.



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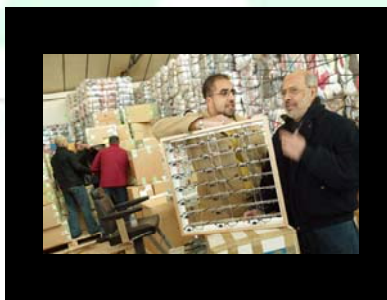
However inspite of this sorrow, I am also overwhelmed with an enormous sense of pride, for having known Marhoom, and been given the great privilege of working with him. Imam Ali (as) has said

“Treat people in such a way that when you are alive they crave your company, and when you die they weep over you”.

I can sincerely say that Marhoom was most definitely such an individual.

For he was a selfless, compassionate, extra ordinary person who devoted his life in the service of others. Marhoom’s family, especially his dear father Amanullahbhai Suleman, have been known to me since Mombassa. I became closely acquainted with Marhoom when he started supporting and working for The Lady Fatemah Trust four years ago.

He was instrumental in establishing the Karbala Eye Clinic. He worked tirelessly from the outset to obtain, collect and send the equipment; to cite just one example he personally secured a donation of over 40,000 brand new frames from Specsavers, and 40,000 lenses, which were essential for the clinic to be operational. His dedication was truly an inspiration, his enthusiasm infectious and his vision of helping people has most definitely become a reality.



Marhoom had also carried out significant groundwork for the Basra eye clinic and had procured over 50% of the equipment required. Because of him, Specsavers have pledged to carry on supporting both the Karbala and Basra Eye Clinics, with regular donations of frames.

I really cannot find the words to do justice to this remarkable man, who was so committed during his life, and whose efforts are still being accomplished even though he has departed.



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Marhoom's caring nature, coupled with his peaceful personality made him a real pleasure to know and work with. He truly personified devotion and kindness, always shouldering responsibility with a smile, for nothing was a burden and everything was always a pleasure.

On behalf of the Lady Fatemah Trust, I would like to request Ayatollah Sayyed Professor Fadel Milani to come forward and present this small tribute to Marhoom Mehboobbhai's father, Amanbhai. Our dearest Marhoom will sincerely be missed by us all, but his memory will live in our hearts forever and from his life we will draw strength, carrying the work of the Trust forward in his legacy.

We pray to the Almighty to shower His mercy on the souls of the departed, granting them an elevated place in Paradise. May I please request you to recite a Sura-e-Fateha for the benefit of the departed souls.

Finally dear guests, I would like to conclude by saying thank you most sincerely for being here. This evening would not have been possible without your presence and support, for which I can only say Jazakumallah. I hope you continue to enjoy the rest of the evening, and inshallah, God willing, I hope to see you again next year.

Wasalaam

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