

“Aalimah Of The Year Award”

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

“Islam can make a woman so strong that she no longer strives to be noticed by men, no longer needs the admiring gaze to feel attractive, and no longer puts herself on display even though the entire world is doing just that.”

In light of the recently launched “Aalimah of the Year Award,” it has become necessary to present a Shar’i perspective based on Qur’an, Sunnah, and the principles of modesty and sincerity. While the intention to appreciate female scholars may appear noble, the structure and implications of this initiative raise serious objections. The following points outline our concerns.

1. Contradiction with Qur’anic Modesty

Allah Ta’ala commands:

“And stay in your homes and do not display yourselves as [was] the display of the former times of ignorance.” (Surah al-Ahzāb: 33)

By calling for biographies, impact statements, and even photos and videos, this initiative directly conflicts with the Qur’anic injunction of concealment. An Aalimah’s true honour lies in her dignity and Hayā, not in being displayed and celebrated on public platforms.

Ibn Hajar Rahimahullah noted that the high status of many women remained hidden because of their Hayā and remaining within their homes, so hardly anyone knew their worth. (*Al-Matālib Al-‘Aaliyah*, 324/8)

Sayyidah Faatimah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا, the queen of all women, expressed: “The best women are those who do not see men and who are not seen by men.” (*Ahkām-un-Nisā*, p. 219)

2. Exposure of Women’s Information to Men

The award requires sensitive personal details, reflections, and media to be sent to an email address overseen by men. This is highly inappropriate. Women’s information and images should not be exposed in such a manner. Islam safeguards women’s modesty; this system compromises it.

Shaykh Muhammad al-Amīn ash-Shinqīṭī Rahimahullah, under the verse *“Ḥūrīs restrained in pavilions” [55:72]*, explained that a woman who does not leave her home except out of necessity possesses a quality that beautifies her. (*Adwa’ al-Bayan*, 314/6)

3. Fitnah of Attraction and Domestic Harm

By publicising names, achievements, voices, and images of women, the initiative risks creating attraction and Fitnah. Men may become drawn to these women whether through admiration or appearance, which can lead to jealousy, disputes, and even the breaking of homes.

Rasulullah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: “I have not left behind me any Fitnah more harmful to men than women.” (*Bukhari, Muslim*)

Imam al-Ghazali Rahimahullah emphasised that a woman should remain mostly at home, rarely going out or being seen publicly, avoiding unnecessary interaction with strangers, and focusing her attention on her family, worship, and inner duties. (*Ihya’ Ulum al-Din*)

Abu Imrān wrote:

“Wallāhi, if there is appropriate amount of modesty and bashfulness in a woman’s heart as Islām recommends, she will be too shy to throw herself into the public eye over unnecessary things. What many of you have fallen for is the whispers of Shaytān that tell you whatever is good for a man is also good for a woman. If you can find one, marry a woman who is bashful, who finds it too shy to throw her video and

pictures around to the public without you even reminding her it is inappropriate. A bashful woman is a woman who is reluctant to draw attention to herself.”

4. Violation of Ikhlaṣ (Sincerity)

Rasulullah ﷺ warned: “What I fear most for you is the minor shirk: showing off (Riya).” (*Musnad Ahmad*)

The most beloved deeds to Allah Ta’ala are those done in secrecy: fasting, where no one knows, but Allah Ta’ala; Tahajjud, prayed in the stillness of the night. By publicising an Aalimah’s efforts, what should remain only between her and Allah Ta’ala is dragged into the public spotlight. Even well-intentioned exposure fosters pride and Riya (showing off).

Mawlānā Afzal Ismail has beautifully reminded:

- One Aalimah may inspire 100 in a receptive community, while another struggles to inspire one person in a hostile environment.
- Outwardly, the first seems more “impactful,” but in reality, the second may have exerted greater effort, sacrifice, and Du’a known only to Allah Ta’ala.
- Awards misrepresent worth by measuring only visible results while ignoring unseen struggles.

5. Praise-Seeking and Vote-Driven Competition

Many women may now seek votes, messages of support, or recognition, mimicking a vote-driven system. This is against the spirit of Ikhlaṣ.

Rasulullah ﷺ said: “When you see those who excessively praise, throw dust in their faces.” (*Sahih Muslim*)

He ﷺ also said: “We do not appoint to this position the one who asks for it or the one who is eager for it.” (*Sahih al-Bukhari, Sahih Muslim*)

Seeking praise, positions, or public recognition removes Allah Ta’ala’s help and rewards and reduces sacred Khidmah to worldly metrics.

6. Rivalry and Pride Among Scholars

By elevating one Aalimah above others, the award fosters rivalry, jealousy, and disunity. Sacred knowledge and Khidmah are not competitions.

Even writing and publishing unnecessarily in male-dominated spaces can become a subtle form of Fitnah.

Imam al-Qurtubi Rahimahullah explained: “Writing is like speech. Writing is like an eye through which the present can see the absent; handwriting expresses what the tongue cannot.”

A woman’s words can penetrate hearts even more strongly than her voice — hence why caution is even more necessary today.

7. The Example of the Salaf

In earlier generations, women were almost unseen in public. It is reported that in some towns, a person would not see women the entire week — it was as if there were no women in that town — only on the day of Jumu’ah when they briefly emerged, concealed, to attend the congregational prayer. The rest of the week, they remained within their homes, honouring the command of Allah Ta’ala: *“Wa qarna fi buyutikunna.”*

Imam Malik’s daughter, Faatimah Rahimahallah, memorised all his knowledge, yet her Hayā kept her hidden. She stood behind a door during her father’s classes, and if a student erred in reading, she would gently knock to alert him. Imam Malik would understand and correct the error. (*Tarteef al-Madārik, 109/1*)

This is the model of Islamic scholarship for women: deep knowledge coupled with high modesty, never exposure.

8. Marginalisation of Silent Heroines

Many Aalimah's labour quietly in small circles or within their homes, nurturing the next generation of Muslims. Their sacrifices are immense but invisible. This award system overlooks these heroines and favours those with visible, public-facing work. This is unjust and contrary to Islamic values.

Sayyiduna 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ood Radiyallahu Anhu said: "A woman does not seek the pleasure of Allah Ta'ala in a better way than by remaining in her home and worshipping her Lord." (*At-Tawheed by Ibn Khuzaymah*)

This shows that the path to Jannah for women is not through public platforms, awards, or recognition but through devotion to Allah Ta'ala, obedience, and service within the home.

9. The Shari'ah's Vision for Women

The Maqāsid (objectives) of Shari'ah and the teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah never demanded that women must go out to study or expose themselves for knowledge. Rather, the emphasis is consistently on preserving modesty, fulfilling family duties, and serving quietly within the home.

Rasulullah ﷺ said: "If a woman prays her five daily prayers, fasts her month of Ramadhan, protects her chastity, and obeys her husband, it will be said to her: Enter Jannah from whichever gate you wish." (*Ahmad, Ibn Hibbān*)

Another narration states: "Any woman who dies while her husband is pleased with her, she will enter Jannah." (*Tirmidhi, Ibn Mājah*)

Mufti Rasheed Ahmad Ludhyānwi Rahimahullah explained that men and women are created differently: men are naturally adapted for the outdoors, while women are created perfectly suited for the environment of the home. If a woman feels restless indoors, it is a sign of corrupted Fitrah due to external influences. (*Ahsanul Fatāwa, 49–50/8*)

Thus, a woman fulfilling her role as "*queen of the home*" may remain hidden from the world, yet thousands will enjoy the fruit of her sacrifice and benefit from her efforts: righteous children, stable families, and preserved communities.

10. A Necessary Rebuttal

A final question must be asked: if this initiative is purely for recognition, then where is the "Aalim of the Year Award" for men? Why is this award only for women? Is this not a reflection of the modern thirst for female validation and the lure of women's exposure, driven by personal motives stemmed in desire?

Rasulullah ﷺ has already forewarned: "I have not left behind me any Fitnah more harmful to men than women." (*Bukhari, Muslim*)

Why then open these doors under the pretext of recognition?

Conclusion

A. Summary of Concerns

The "*Aalimah of the Year Award*" conflicts with the spirit of sincerity, humility, and concealment that Islam emphasises in good deeds. It risks:

- Exposing women unnecessarily.
- Encouraging praise-seeking and rivalry.
- Fostering jealousy and pride.
- Promoting vote-driven competition foreign to Islam.

- Undermining Hayā, Ikhlās, and humility.

B. Constructive Alternatives

If the goal is to value Aalimah's, there are Sharī'ah-compliant alternatives:

- Support their institutions quietly with resources.
- Encourage students to preserve their legacy through practice and Du'a.
- Share anonymous accounts of sacrifice without exposing identities.
- Recognize efforts locally and privately, away from publicity and Fitnah.

As Mufti Taqi Usmani Hafidhahullah reminded, modesty is not a burden but part of a woman's very Fitrah. The word 'aurat itself means something to be concealed, and real comfort lies in guarding this concealment. (*Islāhi Khutbāt*, 154/1)

Allah Ta'ala says:

"That home of the Hereafter We assign to those who do not desire exalted positions upon the earth or corruption. And the best outcome is for the righteous." (Surah al-Qasas 28:83)

True honour for an Aalimah lies with Allah Ta'ala and in the Du'as of her students — not in publicity, awards, or online broadcasts.

We therefore urge **Radio Islam** to withdraw or urgently reformulate this initiative in line with Islamic values of Hayā, Ikhlās, and Taqwā.