

MR AND MRS HATIM AALVI

by Mrs Habeeb

God in His Infinite Mercy has blessed Mr and Mrs Hatim Aalvi with the happy occasion of celebrating the 50 years of their marriage. What I found most unique about a couple married for five decades was their young heartedness.

It may be difficult to describe what young at heart signifies, in this case it is Hatim Aalvi's affectionate understanding of his wife, and her desire to do everything for her husband's pleasure. These virtues which can be called the key to a happy marriage is ingrained in both Hatim Aalvi and his wife Safia, in their attitude towards each other. Her favour for his pleasure could almost be compared to a young brides desire to please his groom.

Their fifty years of married life seem to have been most successful from any point of view. Their six children, four girls and two boys, the eldest of whom is a grandparent, are by the Grace of God each a healthy, happy and successful personality. The girls in their homes, and at the enormous civic and social work, the boys in their sphere of work and with their families. Each of the children are held in high esteem and are very popular with their friends and associates.

The central theme of Mr. Hatim's life is Religion. He has led his own life and fashioned and moulded the life of his children round the principles of Islam. With Islam as his guiding star and inspiration, his and his wife's life seem to be lived in the best way from the standards of this world and for promoting the best in the world to come.

It is but natural that when one man is a good and honest taskmaster his subordinates and associates will be inspired to do good, so also Hatim Aalvi and his wife seem to spread nothing but goodness and righteousness to those who are lucky to come in contact with them.

Two examples of this are a letter received by Mr. Hatim Aalvi in which a friend wrote to say that during the holy month of Ramazan, he had a chance meeting with Mr Aalvi and during the conversation realised that he had not been fasting as he suffered from diabetes, but came to know that Mr Aalvi had never abstained from fasting on this account—went home and against the doctors orders and his sons advice, started fasting the remaining fasts with no harmful effects to his health.

The other was a conversation Mr Aalvi had with a lady who felt that so many things were wrong in Pakistan that it seemed useless to do her little bit for its betterment. Mr Aalvi's answer to her was that he had seen and experienced such glaring examples of things wrong with his country, but strived to do his share as he said that "God is not going to ask me what my country men did or what my govt. did, He will ask of me what I did to correct the wrong I came across". . . . The lady said it gave her spirits a new lease. . . . to see the problem from this angle.

On asking Safia Bano what was the main advice she gave to her daughters, she said that besides the usual one that one gives one's daughters, she feels that she could not stress enough the importance of living within one's budget. She said that she impressed upon her daughters that they must stay within their budget, and never try to keep up with the Joneses.

She recalled the days as a young bride, the training and wise understanding that she received from her own mother-in-law, and she feels that she is glad that she did everything in her power to give happiness to her mother-in-law and served and cared for her when

she required it. Safia Bano wonders why today's young misses yearn to live alone when the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law could lead a richer life by being mutually considerate to each other.

The Aalvis two married sons share home with their parents. Mrs Hatim Aalvi said that she had given the full responsibility of running the house, supervising the servants, the care of the garden etc., to her two daughters-in-law, who did everything very wisely and in turns. She said I am so happy in that I have two very good daughters-in-law. Mrs Aalvi said I am thankful to God Almighty that all our children, grand-children, sons-in-law, daughter-in-law have turned out so united, loving and obedient and so interested in following the Islamic principles.

Mrs Hatim Aalvi stressed that though she had given up other household duties to her daughters-in-law, anything that concerned her husband, she still did herself. She said that she was particular about things where her husband was concerned, she did not like to do anything which was not done exactly as he liked it, she would never allow herself to be slack in anything which concerned his diet, his clothes, his likes and dislikes.

To please her husband, Safia Bano said that she had to overcome many obstacles over the years, but the hurdles were easier to cross as the thought uppermost in her mind was always to believe in him and please him. She remembered the days when she gave up wearing her nose ring and dressed in a manner which won her husband's approval. . . of course women talked. . . and though this does not bother men as a rule, I know what it must have meant to her, as most of us women like to conform for the fear of what THEY will say.

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Mr and Mrs Hatim Aalvi.



When I asked her about it, she also told me of the time when newly married, her groom joined the non-cooperation movement, requested of her to give up her imported finery and silken clothes. Having received a fabulous amount of *jahez* from her family who were the richest princes in Karachi she had so many things which she gave up by making them into a bonfire in the Denso Hall square, and she donned Khadi which was of very coarse texture then. Her mother-in-law wondered at her action and sympathised for her beautiful clothing, but soon after seeing her daughter-in-law in Khadi decided to follow suit.

Mr Aalvi when relating the same incident said "Women's attachment to their clothes all over the world is a well known sentiment but for a young girl to burn all the precious silks must have cost her a great wrench. I shall never forget the companionship which my young wife gave me then and has continued since then".

Mr Aalvi added that "Is it impossible to bring two persons together who are so widely and completely different in their approaches to life as myself and my wife?" "I can do without food for some days but not books. My wife never touches a book except to dust the many many volumes of my library. I am utterly oblivious to what is called public opinion and this in spite of the fact that I have had considerable public life. The mind of my wife is tuned, like a sensitive barometer, to public opinion although there is no reason why she should care for it so much" He went on to say that he could multiply these differences a good deal but he felt that these two examples would suffice for the reason, "I have stated them to bring up one of the main purposes of marriage and one of the secrets of making it a happy one." Mr Aalvi said that "It is not just tolerance but affectionate and sympathetic understanding of the personality and purposes of one's life partner. If each married couple could develop this idea, they should be able to attain similarly happy results."

One has come across many homes where a wife who does not take an active interest in her husband's business, or work, or his social life. Not only that but she leaves the shopping for the family furnishings, and clothes, etc. to him also. Not so with Mrs Aalvi, she reigns supreme in the domestic kingdom. She said that hers was always the job and choice of decorating and furnishing the home, she told me that though "I could not actively help my husband in his wide interests and work, I could help him entirely in caring for the family, and home and thereby taking away a big chunk of responsibility from him."

He said, "I doubt if I would have been able to achieve any worthwhile results in any direction if my wife was not there in our home." He continued to say that half a century is a very long time in a man's life, but he felt that "during all this long period, she has managed our household and our children in a wonderfully dedicated way, relieving me completely from not only any anxiety but even thought in those directions.

Therefore, if I have been able to contribute anything, I give the fullest marks to my wife for the domestic co-operation and help she rendered."

Talking about the necessity of ensuring that our children can be made to find an interest in religion, he feels that if you want to tackle the problem on a national scale then he feels that religious instructions should be made compulsory right from class I to University level till M.A. and to be taught by proper teachers. He said that we

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must not forget that Islam and the Quran is our anchor sheet. When you see the same problem on an individual basis said Mr Aalvi, he thinks that women can tackle this problem much more effectively than men as women he feels are sincere and true. . . the tricks of earning the living suppresses the finer sentiments in the man. He also believes that women must be given the highest of education, "yes, but not to hold a caeer", he says that "the bringing up of children and looking after household affairs properly is a whole time job which should not leave much spare time for a career but enough for social and civic work."

Mr Aalvi is of the opinion that educational institutions in our country are fairly good and it should be our efforts to bring these to the level of the best in other parts of the world. Meanwhile, there is no reason to send our young boys and girls abroad for education because while here or there, beneficial results might accrue, Hatim Aalvi Saheb said that "on the whole, the result of foreign education is disastrous on the character, upbringing, religion and ideology of our Muslim children". He said that the only exception he would make to this is for technical education as for this for decades to come, we will not have facilities. We need technicians in very large numbers and, therefore, our boys and girls could go out at a mature stage of their life to foreign countries for technical education.

Mr. Hatim Aalvi has gone round the world eight times he has represented Pakistan at U.N. and led the economic delegation to Moscow.

Director of State Bank and actively involved in a public life, working selflessly for the Deaf, Dumb and Blind school and for the many other associations, he and his wife have worked hard to run their domain wisely so that by the Grace of God its inmates have attained health, happiness, and religious enlightenment.

Surely if more families could attain this success in their individual lives, then the total outcome would be a success of the largest of the families — the Nation. MIRROR congratulates Mr and Mrs Hatim Aalvi who celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary on the 29 January 1967. May God continue to shower His blessings on them and their family.

At present the Hatim Alavi Memorial Library has 4,000 English and Urdu books besides the fifteen hundred cassettes. This was made possible by modern equipment like the Thermoform Brailon Duplicating Machine, Perkin's Brailers, Combo Binding and Punching machine and cassette recorders and players. .

A book is taken up for transcribing if at least four students are in need of it. It is first typed on the Perkin's Brailier, then the Thermoform duplicator makes instant copies of the master copy, then the Combo machine cuts, punches and binds the paper. The book is then bound and ready with the aid of this machine. Mrs. Nargis Jivanjee first saw this machine. Mrs. Nargis Jivanjee first saw this machine in use, in Osaka, Japan and decided to import it.

The Hatim Alavi Memorial Braille Library would be grateful for the services of social workers and volunteers who could find time to read Urdu and English books for recording, or transcribing into braille. Even a donation of cassette tapes would be most welcome. The tiny room used for recording needs a small air-conditioner urgently. Family and friends contribute generously to help Mrs. Jivanjee in running the Library.

Mrs. Jivanjee gives a message for all blind brothers and sisters and friends to come and use the library, which opens a whole new world to them. The tremendous effort that has gone into making the Hatim Alavi Memorial Braille Library what it is today is itself an invitation to every blind student in the city to avail of its services.