

## **No Admission to Heaven**

When the Taliban rolled into Kabul in September 1996, sixteen decrees were broadcast on Radio Sharia. A new era had begun.

1. Prohibition against female exposure.

It is prohibited for drivers to pick up women not wearing the burka, on pain of arrest. If such women are observed out on the streets, their homes will be visited and their husbands punished. If the women wear inciting or attractive clothes, and they have no close male relative with them, the driver must not let them into the car.

2. Prohibition against music.

Cassettes and music are forbidden in shops, hotels, vehicles and rickshaws. If a music cassette is found in a shop the owner will be imprisoned and the shop closed. If a cassette is found in a vehicle the vehicle will be impounded and the driver imprisoned.

3. Prohibition against shaving.

Anyone who has shaved off or cut his beard will be imprisoned until the beard has grown to the length of a clenched fist.

4. Mandatory prayer.

Prayer will be observed at fixed times in all districts. The exact time will be announced by the Minister for the Promotion of Virtue and the Extermination of Sin. All transport must cease fifteen minutes before the time of prayer. It is obligatory to go to the mosque (during the time of prayer. Any young men seen in shops will automatically be imprisoned.

5. Prohibition against the rearing of pigeons and bird-fighting.

This hobby will cease. Pigeons used for the purpose of games or fights will be killed.

6. Eradication of narcotics and the users thereof. Abusers of narcotics will be imprisoned, and investigations will be instigated to flush out dealer and shop. The shop will be closed and both criminals, user and owner, will be imprisoned and punished.

7. Prohibition against kite-flying.

Kite-flying has wicked consequences, such as gambling, death amongst children and truancy. Shops selling kites will be removed.

8. Prohibition against reproduction of pictures.

In vehicles, shops, houses, hotels and other places, pictures and portraits must be removed. Proprietors must destroy all pictures in the above-mentioned places. Vehicles with pictures of living creatures will be stopped.

9. Prohibition against gambling.

Centers of gambling will be flushed out and the gamblers will be imprisoned for one month.

10. Prohibition against British and American hairstyles. Men with long hair will be arrested and taken to the Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and the Extermination of Sin to have their hair cut. The criminal will pay the barber.

11. Prohibition against interest on loans, exchange charges and charges on transactions. The above three types of money-changing are forbidden by Islam. If the rules are broken the criminal will be imprisoned for a lengthy period.

12. Prohibition against the washing of clothes by river embankments. Women who break this law will be respectfully picked up in the manner of Islam, taken to their house and their husbands will be severely punished.

13. Prohibition against music and dancing at weddings. If this prohibition is broken the head of the family will be arrested and punished.

14. Prohibition against playing drums. The religious oligarchy will decide the appropriate punishment for anyone caught playing drums.

15. Prohibition against tailors sewing women's clothes or taking measurements of women. If fashion magazines are found in the shop the tailor will be imprisoned.

16. Prohibition against witchcraft. All books dealing with the subject will be burnt and the magicians will be imprisoned until they repent.

In addition to the above sixteen decrees, a separate appeal, aimed at Kabul's women, was broadcast:

Women, you must not leave your homes. If you do, you must not be like those women who wore fashionable clothes and make-up and exposed themselves to every man, before Islam came to the country.

Islam is a religion of deliverance and it has decided that a certain dignity belongs to women. Women must not make it possible to attract the attention of evil people who look lustfully upon them. A woman's responsibility is to bring up and gather her family together and attend to food and clothes. If women need to leave the house they must cover themselves up according to the law of Sharia. If women dress fashionably, wear ornamented, tight, seductive clothes to show off, they will be damned by the Islam Sharia and can never expect to go to heaven. They will be threatened, investigated and severely punished by the religious police, as will the head of the family. The religious police have a duty and responsibility to combat these social problems and will continue their efforts until this evil is uprooted.

Allahu akbar -- God is great.