



THE SALAAM NETWORK

Striving to make our Beloved Community of Louisville Whole

MINI- WORKSHOP ON ISSUES RELATED TO WOMEN AND GENDER IN ISLAM

PRESENTER: DR. RIFFAT HASSAN, Professor Emerita, University of Louisville

FACILITATOR: DR. MATTHEW PIERCE, Department of Religion, Centre College, Danville

VENUE: THOMAS JEFFERSON UNITARIAN CHURCH

DATE: MARCH 26, 2019 (7.00 - 9.30 p. m.)

BACKGROUND: The students who participated in the Mini-Workshop were taking a class on "Gender and Sexuality in Islam" with Dr. Matthew Pierce at Centre College, Danville. They had studied some general feminist theories and writings to develop some nuance in thinking about issues that face women globally and how gender hierarchies develop and have been challenged in contexts familiar to them. Then they read Leila Ahmed's *Women and Gender in Islam*, as well as writings by Dr. Riffat Hassan. Some members of The Salaam Network and Thomas Jefferson Unitarian Church also participated in the Mini Workshop.

PROGRAM

PART ONE: DR. HASSAN'S PRESENTATION: Dr. Hassan spoke to the students for an hour talking about the following:

- a) The highlights of her life-journey in Pakistan, England and the U.S.
- b) Her educational career. The formative influence of the modernist, reformist poet-philosopher Muhammad Iqbal on her thinking. By strengthening one's Self one could attain the highest level of development. Iqbal's thought was rooted in the ethical vision of the Qur'an.
- c) The start of her research into the Qur'anic teachings about women (1974) - the realization that there was a huge discrepancy between these teachings and patriarchal Muslim culture. Development of her Islamic feminist theology - Phase One: 1974 - 1983-4; Phase Two: 1984 - 2009; Phase Three: 2009 until now.
- d) Significant contemporary issues for Muslim women in personal and public life.
- e) The quandary of modern Muslim women living in the West.

PART TWO: Q & A with students and other attendees.

PART THREE: Wrap-up of the Discussion by the **Facilitator**.