

“In the name of ALLAH, the BENEFICENT, the MERCIFUL”

NOOR-I-ISLAM

(INTERNATIONAL)

AHMADIYAH ANJUMAN ISH'AT-I-ISLAM (LAHORE), CANADA

OCTOBER - 2003

TEACHINGS OF ISLAM

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (may Allah be pleased with him)

REFORMER OF THE 14TH CENTURY

LIFE AFTER DEATH

(Continued from previous edition)

Nature of Next Life

The verse quoted above tells us in plain words that those who spiritually taste of the love of God in this world will be physically sustained by the same food in the next life. The blessings of the next life will recall to their minds the spiritual blessings of the love of God which they tasted in this life, and they will remember the time when in seclusion and at the dead of night, alone and in silence, they found their sweet enjoyment in the remembrance of the Lord.

If it be objected that the words of this verse contradict the saying of the Prophet (peace be on him) which describes the blessings of heavenly life as unseen by worldly eyes, unheard of by human ears and inconceivable by the mind of man, the answer is that the contradiction exists only when we take the words “these are the fruits which were given to us in our former life” as indicating temporal blessings, enjoyable in this life by all men whether good or bad. But if the “fruits” spoken of here be understood to mean the fruits of good works, the spiritual blessings which the good enjoy in this very life, there is not contradiction. Whatever the good men enjoy spiritually in this life are really blessings, not of this but of the next life and are granted to them as a specimen of the bliss that is in store for them in the next life in order to increase their yearning for it.

It should further be remembered that the righteous man is not of this world and hence he is hated down here. He is of heaven and is granted celestial blessings just as the worldly ones are granted the dainties of this world. The blessings which are granted him are really hidden from the eyes, the ears and the hearts of men and they are quite strangers to them. But the person whose life in this world has been transformed so that he tastes spiritually the cup which he shall actually quaff in the next world, shall truly utter the words: **“these are the fruits which were given us formerly.”** However, he shall at the same time be perfectly aware that those blessings were quite unknown to the world, and as he too was in this world --- though not of this world --- so he also shall bear witness that his physical eye never saw such blessings, nor his ear ever heard of them, nor his mind ever conceived of them in the world. But in his second life, after his regeneration, he did witness specimens of these things but this was only when, all his lower connections having been cut asunder, higher ones were established with the next world.

The following verses will show how the Holy Qur'an has repeatedly asserted that the life after death is not a new life but only an image and manifestation of the present one:

“and We have made every man's actions to cling to his neck, and We shall bring forth

to him on the day of Resurrection a book which he will find wide open” ---- 17:13

“on that day thou wilt see the faithful men and the faithful women, their light gleaming before them and on their right hands ...” --- 57:12

“abundance diverts you, until you come to the graves. Nay, you will soon know, nay, again, you will soon know. Nay, would that

you knew with a certain knowledge ! you will certainly see hell; then you will see it with certainty of sight; then on that day you shall certainly be questioned about the boons” --- 102:1-8

(..... to be continued in the next edition)

English Translation by
Maulana Mohammad Ali

SAID THE PROPHET

------(peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)
“**There will be seven persons sheltered under the shade of Allah on the Day of Judgment when there will be no other shade besides His shade. They are: a just ruler; a young man who passes his youth in worship and service of Allah – the Lord of Honor and Glory, one whose heart is perpetually attached to the mosque; two such persons who love each other for the sake of Allah, they joined together for His sake and parted for His sake; a man who is invited for sin by a beautiful woman but declines, saying I fear Allah, one who gives charity in a secret way without making a show, in a way that his left hand does not know what his right hand spent; and one who remembers Allah in solitude so that his eyes overflow (fill with tears).**”

NOTE 1: The “*Seven People*” in this Hadith means the seven types of people that are considered to be very unique and difficult to find. Those special people will have better treatment on Judgment Day. They will not have to wait in the unbearable heat; but rather, will be allowed to wait for their judgment in the comfortable shade, His Rahmah.

NOTE 2: “*Two people who love each other for the sake of Allah*” means husband and wife OR two friends, whose relation or friendship are not based on materialistic or superficial things, but on their mutual love for Allah. When one of them becomes corrupted, they are no longer friends.

NOTE 3: “*Heart being perpetually attached to the Mosque*” means who always prefer to pray at the Mosque and his attendance at the mosque is regular.

R A M A D A N

1424 HIJRAH

27-28 OCTOBER ---- 25-26 NOVEMBER, 2003

(subject to appearance of moon in different parts of the world)

WEL COME — “KHUSH AMDEED” —

— AHLAN WA SAHLAN —

Every year, when Ramadan arrives, columns of newspapers and magazines are filled with discussion on fasting which ranks as one of the five major duties which are described by the Prophet as the pillars on which the structure of Islam is built. Much of this discussion is repetitive. Scholars who are approached to write about Ramadan will often select the most prominent aspects of this great month and the duty of fasting which we have to observe when it begins. Unaware of what other writers and other publications have already written and published, the most important features of this great duty tend to be highlighted in almost every publications. This makes writing on such occasions rather boring to both reader and writer. Moreover, it leads to the neglect of other important aspects which are normally reduced to a secondary grade, simply because everyone finds it easier to speak on the general principles.

In an attempt to avoid being repetitive, we already know the significance of certain Hadiths relevant to this great month. We know about the duty itself, its reward and what code of behaviour it imposes on a fasting person. We will now talk about different aspects of the duty of fasting and the month of Ramadan.

We fast from dawn to dusk (sunset). This is the timing given to us by Allah in the Qur'an when He states: **“you may eat and drink until you can distinguish the whiteness of the day against the blackness of the night at dawn. Then continue your fast until nightfall.”** (2:187) This verse of the Qur'an, however, was not revealed at the time when the duty of fasting was imposed in the second year after the Prophet's settlement in Madinah. What Muslims were required to do before the revelation of this verse was that they were allowed to eat and drink at night, until they have prayed Isha and slept. When they have slept, no matter how early at night they did so, they were not allowed to have anything to eat or drink until sunset of the following day. Al-Bukhari relates on the authority of Al-Baraa': "If a man from among the companions of Mohammed (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was fasting and it was time to end the fast, but he slept before he broke his fast, he was not allowed to eat for the rest of that night, or during the following day until evening. Qais ibn Sirmah, a man from the Ansar, was fasting. When it

was time to end his fast, he came home and said to his wife: 'Do you have any food?' She said: 'No, but I can go and seek some food for you.' He had spent all that day working. As he sat, sleep overtook him. When his wife came back and saw him, she said: 'Deprived you are.' When it was midday the following day, he fell unconscious." This was reported to the Prophet (peace be on him). Shortly afterwards, the verse was revealed which starts with: "It is made permissible to go to your wives in the night of fasting." They were exceedingly pleased with its revelation. Also revealed (in the same verse) were Allah's words: **“You may eat and drink until you distinguish the whiteness of the day against the blackness of the night.”**

This Hadith tells us how the ruling on fasting and the length of time one has to fast was changed. At the beginning, the time for starting the fast was not very definite. It depended on going to bed after Isha. That did not leave Muslims much time to rest from fasting. When it was sunset, they broke their fast, offered Maghrib prayer and had a meal. When they had done that, it was not long before Isha prayer was called. Their social habits meant that they went to bed shortly afterward. Once they slept, they could not eat or drink. That meant that the day of fasting extended to something like 20 or 21 hours. Everything, however, depended on keeping awake after sunset. If anyone was overpowered by sleep, he had to continue fasting, even if he had not had a meal after such long day.

This Hadith tells us that this Ansari companion of the Prophet, Qais ibn Sirmah, came to his wife at Maghrib time asking her whether she had anything for him to eat. It may sound to us strange that after such a long day a man might not have had anything in his home to eat. Commentators on Hadith give different explanations on the basis of the fact that this Hadith has been related in several versions, some of them giving further details and the reason for Qais' wife to go out and seek food at that particular time. Some scholars mention that Qais was working throughout the day on a farm and he could not manage to bring any food with him. A more detailed version of this Hadith suggests that he brought some dates with him and asked his wife to offer some of these dates in exchange for flour in order to cook him a hot meal. He was bored with eating dates every day. When she went about doing what her husband

requested, he sat down to relax and was overtaken by sleep. All this serves to show that many of the Prophet's companions were poor. They hardly had anything more than bare necessities. A fasting person was required to work very hard throughout the day that he could not relax for half an hour at the end of his day without dozing off. It was a hard life.

Fasting for these long hours made the duty very difficult indeed. It is not surprising that when a person missed his evening meal, as Qais did on this particular occasion, he found fasting too difficult to withstand. Qais was not an old man, yet he lost consciousness by midday after going for about 40 hours without food.

Making fasting so long at the early stages was yet another test required of the early Muslims. When they have kept it up to the extent that a person like Qais would refuse to eat or drink after nearly 24 hours of fasting, because eating after having slept constituted disobedience to Allah, then Allah lightened their duty by giving them, and all Muslims in future generations, a more relaxed time for preparing for their day of fasting.

Fasting is now required from dawn to dusk. We note that the Qur'anic verse speaks of distinguishing the whiteness of the day against the blackness of the night. This is an idiomatic translation of the Qur'anic statement. A more literal translation may be rendered as follows: **“you may eat and drink until you can distinguish the white line from the black line at the dawn.”** The term used for “line” also means “thread”. Some of the companions of the Prophet, however, took the verse literally. Addi ibn Hatim, a companion of the Prophet, reports that when this verse was revealed he said to the Prophet: “Messenger of Allah, I placed under my pillow two ropes, a white one and a black one, so that I could distinguish night from day”. The Prophet said to him: “your pillow is certainly wide. This is reference to the blackness of night and the whiteness of the day.” (related by Al-Bukhari and Muslim in slightly different versions).

Addi ibn Hatim was not alone in doing so. We have several Hadiths which suggest that many of the companions of the Prophet understood the statement literally and tried to determine the time for the beginning of fasting by holding a white thread and a black one. They continued to eat and drink until they could clearly distinguish between the two. We note here how the Prophet explained to Addi ibn Hatim what was by the Qur'anic verse. He first told him that his pillow was wide. That was an expression denoting that he would be sleeping late if he waited until he could distinguish one rope from the other. The break of dawn takes place earlier. Much of the light of the day is needed before one can distinguish one rope from the other. Ibn Hajar, a great scholar of

Hadith in his own right, mentions in his extensive commentary on the Sahih of Al-Bukhari that the words of the Prophet are used figuratively in a different direction. What the Prophet meant, he says, was that Addi's pillow would be very wide indeed if it could cover the two ropes Allah has meant, namely, the blackness of the night and the whiteness of the day. When the Prophet has made this abundantly clear to his companions, they were in no doubt whatsoever about the time when they have to start their fast. Anyone could determine that by merely looking at the sky. He is certain to note when the first ray of light shows against the blackness of the night.

When this relaxation has been given, the Prophet (peace be upon him) taught his companions to exercise it to the full, making sure to have a meal shortly before the beginning of the day of fasting. At the time of the Prophet, two of his companions made the call to prayer at dawn. **Bilal** and **Ibn Umm Maktoom**. Both were among the early companions of the Prophet. Bilal was a former Abyssinian slave with a very melodious voice. Ibn Umm Maktoom was a blind man whose incident with the Prophet is the subject of Surrah 80 of the Qur'an, ‘the frowning.’ Each one of them made the call to prayer at dawn time, with Bilal making it first, then Ibn Umm Maktoom. In order not to leave any room for confusion, the Prophet mentioned to his companions that they should consider the call made by Ibn Umm Maktoom as the signal for starting fasting. Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her), the Prophet's wife, mentions that Bilal made his call to prayer when it was still night time. She further quotes the Prophet as saying: **“Eat and drink until Ibn Umm Maktoom makes his call to prayer. He does not make it until the break of dawn.”** This Hadith is related by Al-Bukhari and more than one versions of it are related by Muslim. Al-Bukhari further quotes a statement added by one of the reporters of this Hadith which states: “The gap between the two calls to prayer made by them was no more than what it took the one to come down and the other to go up.”

The best schedule any Muslim can have in the nights of Ramadan is to wake up, say, an hour before dawn, and have half an hour or forty minutes of night worship before having his suhoor meal, then going on to pray Fajr and, perhaps, recite some passages of the Qur'an before going back to sleep, if he wishes to do so. That makes his day and night very blessed indeed.

We note that the gap between the two calls to prayer was not more than a few minutes. Yet the Prophet was keen to tell his companions, and the Muslims in every generation, that they need not start fasting before they are absolutely certain that it is due. Some people in later generations began to advise people to leave a gap of time between finishing their meal and the time for Fajr prayer. They did this as a precaution against error. This Hadith and similar ones are clear in that no such time gap is required for any reason. Indeed, the Prophet has taught us to leave our meal of suhoor, i.e. the meal we eat before we begin fasting, as late as possible. Anas quotes the Prophet as saying: **“Make sure to have your suhoor meal, for suhoor is blessed.”** Another Hadith related by Muslim on the authority of Amr ibn Al-Aas quotes the Prophet as saying: **“The difference between our fasting and that of the people of earlier revelations is the suhoor meal.”** These two Hadiths stress the importance of making good preparations for a day of fasting by having a meal immediately before it is time to begin the fast. This meal is given a distinctive name, **suhoor**, which is derived from the word **“sahar”** which denotes the night time immediately before dawn. The Prophet explains to us that it is this meal which distinguishes our fasting from that of people of earlier religions. It is, therefore, a concession given to us by Allah so that we are better able to undertake the task of fasting throughout the day. When the Prophet indicated that something has become a distinctive mark to the Muslims nation, that indication enhances its significance and makes it highly important for everyone to act upon it. When the Prophet adds in the first of the two Hadiths that this meal in the early hours of the morning is blessed, he leaves us in no doubt that we should always make sure to have it.

Some people find it difficult to wake up at that early time in order to have a meal. They say that they prefer to go without it rather than interrupt their sleep. Be that as it may, they lose a great deal of blessings by sleeping through that time. They will have to wake up shortly afterward anyway in order to offer their Fajr prayers. If they wake up for suhoor, they make sure of praying Fajr at the beginning of its time which is far more preferable. Moreover, if they allow themselves half an hour extra, they can have a short stint of night worship which is always one of the best rewarded acts of worship. It is far more so in Ramadan, when every good action is rewarded much more amply by Allah.

The Prophet himself used to have suhoor. At times, some of his companions joined him for his suhoor meal. Zaid ibn Thabit, a young companion of the Prophet, reports: **“We had suhoor with the Prophet (peace be on him) before he stood up to pray.”** Anas who transmitted this report asked Zaid: **“How much time was there between the call to**

prayer and your suhoor?” He answered: **“about 50 verses of the Qur’an.”** This means that the Prophet started his suhoor something like 15 or 20 minutes before it was time for Fajr. The recitation of 50 medium verses of the Qur’an in a mode which is neither fast nor slow, does not take more than that.

We note here that Zaid who was to become one of the most renowned reciters of the Qur’an, and the person to be entrusted with compiling its complete and standard version at the time of Abu Bakr estimated the time of suhoor by reciting 50 verses. The Arabs at that time used to estimate time certain familiar actions. They used to say that a certain action is done over “the time it takes to milk a sheep, or to slaughter a camel, etc.” Zaid, however, chose a different sort of action, which is the recitation of the Qur’an. This serves as an indication that that particular time should be devoted for worship. Moreover, the Qur’an was the most important thing in the life of that Muslim community. Its recitation was the most familiar of actions to them. Zaid suggested that their suhoor took place earlier than Fajr by the short time which it takes to recite 50 verses.

That was a suhoor taken with the Prophet. We note here that the Prophet chose the course which he knew was easier for his companions. He realized that if he had his meal long before Fajr, his companions would have done likewise. Since that is not required by our faith, he left his meal to the latest time possible. His companions realized that and followed his guidance. Sahl ibn Sa’ad, a companion of the Prophet, reports: **“I used to have suhoor with my family before going fast to join Fajr prayer. My speed would be such that I managed to catch up with Allah’s messenger when he was in his prostration (sujood).”** This Hadith again indicates that the companions of the Prophet left their suhoor very late. There was no time left between finishing suhoor and Fajr time. Sahl needed to go very fast to the mosque after finishing his suhoor, because if he did not walk fast he might have missed Fajr prayer with the Prophet. What the Prophet’s companions did serves as a good example for us to follow. They understood the Prophet’s guidance better than anyone else, because they understood what the Prophet required of them and they followed his guidance. By following their example we also are following the Prophet.

LET US ALL PLAN THIS RAMADAN IN A DIFFERENT WAY AND PAY SPECIAL ATTENTION TO WORSHIP ALLAH BEFORE SUHOOR AND REMEMBER EACH OTHER IN OUR PRAYERS. IMAGINE HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL BE PRAYING FOR YOU, IF YOU START PRAYING FOR THEM.

NOOR-I-ISLAM

(INTERNATIONAL)

AHMADIYAH ANJUMAN ISH'AT-I-ISLAM (LAHORE), CANADA

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EDITOR'S MAIL BOX

RAMADAN MUBARAK

Before you receive the next issue of Noor-i-Islam, the **Holy month of Ramadan** will be with all of you, giving you a great opportunity in the life of everyone to fulfill your duties towards Allah and get unlimited rewards from Him, at the same time. It was the practice of the companions of Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) that they used to pray with tears in their eyes that may Allah give them a chance to see this Holy month again in their lives. We will be greatly blessed if we are still alive when it starts. Remember, in your prayers, each and every member of Ahmadiyah Movement, in particular, and the whole Muslim community, in general. May Almighty Allah bless you all and shower His Barakah on you during this Holy Month (Ameen).

REQUEST FOR PRAYERS

Maulana Abdul Mannan Omar s/o Hazrat Hakeem Noor-ud-Deen (may Allah be pleased with him) has been suffering from multiple medical problems and is not in good health in these days. Everyone is kindly requested to pray for his health.

Prof. M. A. Hami of UK went through an operation and is recovering. May Allah give him good health and quick recovery as he has promised to visit us in Canada soon.

NEWS FROM SURINAME

Aunty Hila has very kindly sent the following:

- There will be an International Convention in Suriname in August 2004.
- There are 18 beautiful Mosques of our Jama'at in Suriname.

- 3000 people are expected to attend the next convention and catering for lunch and dinner is provided by the Jama'at.
- There was a Boat Tour in the Suriname River arranged for the Jama'at members on the 13th of September 2003.
- The complete tour was a sold out event.

Aunty! Thank you very much for all the lovely news. We love to hear from you more often and about the activities of our brothers and sisters there. Please keep filling up our mail box.

"KAMRAN" MUBARAK

A new addition to our community. Almighty Allah blessed Ahsan with a son. Name is **Kamran A Sadiq s/o Ahsan J Sadiq s/o Javid Sadiq s/o Habib-ur-Rahman Sadiq**. Deepest congratulations to the whole family and our prayers that the new addition brings Allah's blessings and happiness for everyone. (Ameen)

THANK YOU

- **Mr. Nasir Ahmad** of UK keeps a close eye on our Newsletter and gives us valuable advice. Remember us in your prayers, Nasir sahib.
- **Mr. Mujahid Saeed** of UK always takes interest and writes us regularly.
- Thanks to **Zahida Hydal** of Toronto for regular support of our Newsletter.
- **Kamran Kareem** has referred someone in Jordan who is interested to know and learn about Ahmadiyah. Thank you, Kamran! I will be in touch with him and will assist him as per my limited knowledge.

"Saying and Believing "ALLAH -O-AKBAR" is a Prayer too"