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In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

# The HOPE Bulletin

MOTTO ISLAM: I SHALL LOVE ALL MANKIND



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لَا تَحْزُنْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَنَا

Grieve not, Surely Allah is with us

[Al-Quran 9:10]

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*Translation and Commentary of the Qur'an.....*

## **CHAPTER 87 — AL-A'LAA (THE MOST HIGH)**

**Dr Basharat Ahmad**

**(CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS ISSUE.)**

**8. And we shall make thy way smooth to a state of ease.**

By *yusra* (ease) is meant a good deed, because it results in convenience and comfort. That is, "You are striving to do a good deed in the form of receiving divine guidance from Allah and conveying it to the people, so We will help you in this mission and provide facilities and conveniences for you and would remove the difficulties that are in the way."

The truth of the matter is that if a deed is good and a man wants to do it, Allah definitely provides conveniences and facilities and helps him, and if there are any difficulties in the way, He certainly removes them. This is something that has been experienced by all spiritual personages.

If a man does not pay attention to good works, that is his misfortune, otherwise it is reported in the *Hadith* that if a man comes towards Allah by one hand's span, Allah advances towards him by yards, and whoever comes to Him walking, He advances towards him running. Let man take a first step sincerely in some good work and Allah will Himself come to his aid.

**9. So remind, reminding indeed profits.**

No force is to be used whilst admonishing others towards guidance, so the preacher should not get tired and frustrated and should keep doing his duty of reminding people of religious truths.

## **10. He who fears will mind.**

Whoever fears Allah and dreads the day when he will be called to account before the Almighty for his actions will certainly heed and benefit from this admonition.

## **11. And the most unfortunate one will avoid it.**

The classification of *sa'id* (fortunate) and *shaqi* (wretched) is based on one's deeds and is not based on birth. No one is created fortunate or wretched from the very beginning. Nay, people become inmates of heaven or hell as a result of their deeds; an inmate of paradise is fortunate and an inmate of hell is wretched. In short, good fortune and wretchedness are the outcome of one's deeds. The same applies here. The wretched and the unfortunate run away from admonition (who can be more unfortunate than one who turns away from a sublime teaching like the Holy Qur'an?) and such wretchedness is the outcome of one's misdeeds and lack of fear of Allah's reckoning.

By bringing the wretched in juxtaposition to the one who fears in the previous verse, Allah has made it clear that whoever fears Him and takes to heart the admonition contained in the Holy Qur'an is fortunate. On the other hand, whoever does not fear Him and turns away from this Reminder is wretched and unfortunate. It is reported in the *Hadith* that in response to an enquiry by Allah the angels responded that there was a gathering of people in such and such a place where they were remembering Allah's name, and sitting among them was a *shaqi* (wretched and unfortunate person), to which Allah said: "Anyone sitting in such a gathering cannot be a *shaqi*." That is, if a man is sitting in such a righteous gathering, how then can he be a *shaqi*? Only he who avoids such a gathering is fit to be called *shaqi*.

## **12. Who will burn in the great Fire.**

That is, such a person has been called unfortunate because his end would be bad, because he would enter the Fire, and it is a huge fire.

There are diverse types of fires in the world but in Allah's sight, the fire that is kindled in a man's heart as a fire of hell due to his passions and low desires is the biggest fire of them all. Though it is not felt so strongly in this life, it will be felt intensely in the Hereafter.

## **13. Then therein he will neither live nor die.**

No better description can be offered of the punishment of being in hell; that is, neither will one die so that the punishment comes to an end, nor will that life be such as could be called a proper life. In other words, it will be a life of such pain and misery that death will be better than such a life. But neither will death come, nor will such a life be worth calling a life that one can desire.

## **14. He indeed is successful who purifies himself**

That is, success in life and in religion depends on self-purification, a purification which helps man evolve spiritually, and the way to achieve self-purification is through *tasbih* (glorification of the Lord), which is mentioned in the next verse.

## **15. And remembers the name of his Lord, then prays**

The method of remembering the Lord has been described in the beginning of this chapter, that is, engage in the *tasbih* of the Lord, the Most Exalted.

Thus if anyone engages in celebrating the glory of the Lord, both in words and through his works, and acts upon His guidance in order to achieve the purpose of his creation, his step advances daily on the road to self-purification. As he continues to extol Allah's Holiness and Perfection through his words and deeds, the Lord also continuously keeps on granting him self-purification and perfection.

The result of engaging in the *tasbih* of Allah is man's own self-purification, and celebrating the *tasbih* by mentioning His attribute of Exaltedness exalts man in his self-purification.

But man is weak, and for attaining the purpose of his creation he needs to seek help from the Lord, hence the need for prayer, so that he may bow before the Lord and beseech Him for help and for guidance on the right path. That is why the *Surah Fatiyah* is considered the kernel of the entire *salah* (prayer). By intoning the prayer, "Thee do we serve and Thee do we beseech for help... Guide us on the right path," one seeks guidance towards the path by treading on which one attains one's purpose of creation and one also fulfils one's obligation to celebrate the *tasbih* of the Lord.

That is why when one is in prostration during *salah*, a posture symbolising the extreme humbleness and servitude of man, one engages in the same *tasbih* which has been mentioned in this chapter and which is: Glory be to Allah, the Most Exalted. In other words, whilst extolling His *tasbih*, he beseeches Allah's help in total submission and in all sincerity and humility, for the opportunity to carry out the practical *tasbih*, a *tasbih* he had prayed for when reciting *Surah Fatiyah*.

**16. But, you prefer the life of this world,**

**17. While the Hereafter is better and more lasting.**

In these verses, Allah has pinpointed the real disease—that the real reason for wretchedness and heedlessness towards Allah's guidance is the priority one gives to worldly affairs and desires, although every wise person knows that every ease and every pleasure of life is temporary and finite. Hence, to abandon the Hereafter which is much better and perpetual for this finite and perishable life is folly and wretchedness of the highest degree.

The *Mujaddid* of these times, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, made a very correct diagnosis of and prescribed the best treatment for the disease afflicting mankind at the present time by including the salient clause, "I shall give precedence to my Faith over my worldly affairs," in the pledge of fealty. A nation that stands up to pronounce *tasbih* worldwide must observe this, that is, it must give priority to the Faith over all worldly affairs.

**18. Surely this is in the earlier scriptures,**

**19. The scriptures of Abraham and Moses.**

The same teaching was given in the scriptures of the earlier prophets, that, he indeed is successful who purifies himself. Man can only achieve success through self-purification, and self-purification is the outcome of Allah's *tasbih*. In other words, it has always been the teaching of all the prophets that man should not limit his vision only to this world's life. Nay, he should also keep an eye on the purpose of his creation, that is, the Hereafter, where he will find a new life, and for success there, it is essential that he should carry out his self-purification through extolling the *tasbih* of his Lord, both in words as well as through deeds.

Prophets Moses and Abraham (peace be on them) have been specially mentioned here because Prophet Moses was a prophet recognised by the Israelites and was their leader, and Prophet Abraham was the Patriarch of both the Israelites

and the Ishmaelites. Therefore, when these two nations were especially addressed, to mention the teachings of their master-prophets carries a special effect. But the statement has not been limited to these two only. Nay, by saying that this is the teaching of all the old scriptures the message has been widened and the argument is brought home to all the nations of the world, because it is not for a wise man to reject the unanimous testimony and teaching of all the recognised righteous persons of the world.

**(Concluded).**

**(Translated from the Urdu *Anwarul Qur'an* by Imam Kalamazad Mohammed, Trinidad.)**

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## **THE NEW MOON, CELEBRATION OF EID AND FOLLOWING THE SUNNAH OF THE HOLY PROPHET SIGNIFICANCE OF “ENTERING HOUSES BY THEIR DOORS” AND “EATING OF SPIRITUAL FOOD.”**

**(*Eid-ul-Fitr Khutbah* at the Lahore Ahmadiyya Centre, Darus Salaam, London, Wednesday, 5 June 2019)**

**by Dr. Zahid Aziz**

“They ask you about the new moons. Say: They are times appointed for people, and (for) the pilgrimage. And it is not righteousness that you enter houses by their backs, but he is righteous who keeps his duty. And go into houses by their doors; and keep your duty to Allah, that you may be successful.” (2:189)

This verse of the Quran occurs immediately after the verses relating to fasting in Ramadan. And before the beginning of Ramadan and before its end, Muslims do indeed widely ask “about the new moons”. Here we are told that these new moons are a way of determining time for people, and determining also the time of the Pilgrimage.

The words which follow are: “And it is not righteousness that you enter houses by their backs, but he is righteous who keeps his duty. And go into houses by their doors”. An explanation of these given is that there was a superstitious custom among pre-Islamic Arabs that if one of them went out of his house for some important purpose and failed to achieve it, then when he returned home he would not enter it through the door, but by going around the back, jumping over the back wall or through

a window at the back, and kept on doing it for some time. There were other occasions as well when a person would not enter his house by its door.

### **Significance of “Entering Houses by their doors”**

Commentators of the Quran have always realised that this statement must have some general meaning for Muslims as well, rather than being only directed against a pre-Islamic Arab superstition which has no meaning for Muslims. So they say that entering your house stands for how you undertake some task or duty, especially a religious duty which you undertake to attain righteousness. This verse teaches that whatever aim you are trying to achieve, you should use the proper way that is provided for achieving it, and not try to go around the proper way.

But the question remains: what is the connection of this with new moons? Modern circumstances, of the past twenty or thirty years, provide a connection. There are Muslim countries, and religious authorities, who believe that righteousness, or adhering to Islam, requires that to start and end the month of Ramadan the new moon must be sighted by some person with his eyes. There is nothing wrong or objectionable in this. But what is being done, again and again, is that these authorities determine and decide *many days before* when the new month should begin. But they pretend to wait till the evening before and then announce that as the new moon has been sighted, the new month will begin on the next day. They make that announcement regardless of whether anyone sighted the moon and even when it was impossible to any person to have sighted it.

In this case, the meaning of entering the house by its door means that if you have declared a standard or method then you should apply it! Entering it by the back means that you circumvent your own established standard, your own door. The alternative is to explain to people the standard you are *really* applying, why you are adopting this method, and its benefits and convenience. In other words, you educate people. Entering by the back is when circumstances force you to use a new method, but you pretend before people that you are still following what they believe to be the Islamic method. This pretence is out of fear of antagonising people or because you think that reforming people is too hard.

The next point I wish to deal with is that while fasting in Ramadan is covered in detail in the Quran, there is no mention whatsoever in the Quran of Eid-ul-Fitr or celebrating after the end of Ramadan. The Quran in verses 2:183 to 188 explains the purpose of fasting, which month to fast in, that the fast is a daily fast from dawn to sunset, who is allowed to not fast in Ramadan and what they should do instead of fasting, the close connection of fasting with prayer, the practice of *itikaf*, and how violating the rights of other people is against the spirit of fasting. But the Quran never at all mentions any aspect of Eid whatsoever, or even its existence!

### **Celebration of Eid-ul-Fitr and practice of the Holy Prophet**

Muslims learnt about Eid-ul-Fitr, and what to do on it, from the practice of the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. He established this festival and its main features, and Muslims acted accordingly in his lifetime and afterwards. Then, a couple of centuries later, when Muslim scholars compiled books of his sayings and practices, they included in them details of Eid-ul-Fitr as taught by the Holy Prophet. This shows that the religion of Islam is based not only on the Quran but also on the practice of the Holy Prophet. Some Muslims say that they believe only in the Quran and that nothing outside it can be an obligatory part of the teachings of Islam. Just think that this means that they have to

undergo all the rigours of fasting for a month, but they cannot celebrate after it! Whether there are any such Muslims who *actually* refuse to celebrate Eid because it is not in the Quran, I don't know, but if there are any, they must be quite miserable today. But there are many who glibly say: "We only believe in the Quran", without thinking of its consequences.

Could it be that Allah did not mention Eid in the Quran, but established it through the Holy Prophet, because He wanted to point out, in a way that could not be denied by anyone, that the practice of the Holy Prophet is an essential constituent of the religion of Islam.

It is clearly stated in the Quran that the religion of Islam is not only derived from the Quran but also from the practice, sayings, work and example of the Holy Prophet. His mission for his followers is described as follows:

That is to say, he "recites to them (his people) His messages and purifies them, and teaches them the Book and the Wisdom" (62:2).

"Recites to them His messages" is to deliver the revelation of the Quran to people. "Purifies them" refers to the purity attained by his Companions merely by keeping company with him. This continues even after him by Muslims keeping the company of the righteous of their community in all ages. A prophet or a holy man or saint in Islam radiates a purifying influence around him by his spiritual power, and this influence penetrates the hearts of those around him. Then the Holy Prophet's function is also said to be to teach his followers "the Book and the Wisdom". This means that he explains to them the teachings of the Quran, shows them how to act on it in practice and makes them understand the wisdom underlying it. And that knowledge too, which he imparted to his followers, was intimated to the Holy Prophet by Allah through a form of Divine inspiration. For example, the words of the call to prayer, the *Azan*, and the *Iqamah*, are not in the Quran, but were revealed to the Holy Prophet in a dream, and the same dream was seen by two of his Companions, and all of them saw it independently of one another.

The Quran tells Muslims to obey Allah *and* the Messenger in more than twenty verses in words such as: "Whoever obeys the Messenger, he indeed obeys Allah" (4:80), and "obey the Messenger, so that mercy may be shown to you" (24:56). We all know the famous verse, 33:21, that the Messenger of Allah is an excellent exemplar for all Muslims. The Holy Prophet was also told by Allah to declare to people: "If you love Allah, follow me: Allah will love you, and grant you protection from your sins" (3:31).

### **Holy Prophet's example is being followed from the beginning**

So, in matters of worship especially, the Holy Prophet's example and illustration, apart from his words, are all a part and parcel of Islam and incumbent on Muslims to follow. And Muslims from the beginning of Islam have been following his example in practice for all to see, and passing them down to the next generation. Of course, there are other matters in which the Holy Prophet, when he did something, acted according to his personal inclination or because of the circumstances of his time and country. Those are not binding on us, but still have lessons for us.

### **In what context the word Eid is used in the Qur'an**

Our Eid is not mentioned in the Quran. But an Eid is mentioned in the Quran which was called for by Jesus. The Quran relates its story as follows:

"When the disciples said: Jesus, son of Mary, is your Lord able to send down food to us from heaven? He said: Keep your duty to Allah if you are believers. They said: We desire to eat of it, and that our hearts should be satisfied, and that we may know that you have indeed spoken truth to us, and that we may be witnesses of it." (5:112–113)

They wanted Jesus to get God to supply them miraculously with food from heaven. Then they would be satisfied that he was indeed a true one sent by God.

It seems to me that this request for food from heaven has a parallel with the Muslims sitting expecting a Messiah and a Mahdi sent by God to come to them, who, as they believe, will make them rulers of the earth and bring them great wealth of the world. Muslims who rejected Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad have always argued that if he was the Messiah and Mahdi he would have restored their worldly rule. If he brought to them the fruits of political power, they would eat those fruits and their hearts would be satisfied that he was the true Messiah and Mahdi. But his message to them was also as Jesus here told them: "Keep your duty to Allah if you are believers." That is the only way to success.

The problem here is that if God were to send them food in a miraculous way, they would be satisfied for a while that Jesus is true, but then after some time they would ask for the same miracle again! They would say, if God could do it once, He can do it again, and again. Also, if God gave those people this sign through Jesus, what happens after Jesus is gone? It won't serve as a sign of any future generation who didn't see that sign. That is why Jesus told them: "Keep your duty to Allah if you are believers." That's the only way to become closer to God, by acting on His commandments. The story in the Quran continues:

"Jesus, son of Mary, said: O Allah, our Lord, send down to us food from heaven which should be to us an ever-recurring happiness (an Eid) to the first of us and the last of us, and a sign from You, and give us sustenance and You are the Best of the sustainers." (5:114)

Although Jesus was praying on his followers' insistence, for what food was he praying? According to the Gospels, once some people pursued Jesus in the hope that he would show the miracle of bringing them food miraculously, but he told them: "Do not labour for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life" (John, 6:27). When Jesus was once offered food to eat, he replied: "My food is to do the will of Him Who sent me, and to accomplish His work" (John, 4:34). Then there is his famous saying: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." (Matthew, 4:4)

In view of this, Jesus could *not* have been praying for physical food for his followers, especially as according to the Quran, he had replied to his followers' request by saying: "Keep your duty to Allah if you are believers." Also he prays that the food becomes a permanent festival, or Eid, for his followers

of all times. So it can't be for physical food appearing by miracle till the end of world. The reply of God as given in the Quran was as follows:

"Surely I will send it down to you, but whoever disbelieves (or is ungrateful) afterwards from among you, I will punish him with a punishment with which I will not punish anyone among the nations." (5:115)

Although Jesus had only spiritual food in mind in his prayer, actual history shows that God granted his followers material prosperity as well. But the condition imposed by God is that if they now don't live up to their claim that if they saw this sign they would believe in God, then a great punishment would befall them.

The Lord's prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread", the most important prayer of the Christian religion, is a permanent reminder of this incident from the Quran. His followers are repeating this prayer of Jesus as taught to them in the Gospels. In the above verse of the Quran, God is replying to this prayer, saying: I will give you your daily bread in unimaginable, abundant measure; but now you have to take my spiritual bread as well, otherwise, you are ungrateful, and if you are happy only with the physical bread, this will lead to your destruction like no one else faced destruction in history before.

#### **Eid in Islam is for Re-occurring of spiritual sustenance**

Finally, during the month of Ramadan, we learn how to avoid wrongdoing and to do good by fasting, that is, by *not* eating and drinking. But according to the Quran we can also learn the same lessons by eating and drinking. A verse in the Quran says:

"O people, eat the lawful and good things from what is in the earth, and do not follow the footsteps of the devil." (2:168)

Can we avoid following the footsteps of the devil by carrying out this command in the *physical and literal sense* of eating lawful and good things? If someone only consumed vegetarian or vegan food brought from an organic farm, they can be sure that it was both "lawful", that is *halal*, and of course "good" (*tayyib*) in the sense of being good for you. But will that guard them against following the footsteps of the devil? This clearly shows that by eating "the lawful and good things" here is really meant lawful and good *behaviour*. Only then can we resist the devil. The word *tayyib* used here for "good", although applied mostly to good things of various kinds in the Quran, is also applied to good humans. For example, it says in 24:26:

"good women are for good men, and good men are for good women", and could also mean "good deeds are for good people, and good people are for good deeds". The Quran also speaks of a *tayyib* life:

"Whoever does good, whether male or female, and is a believer, We shall certainly make him live a good life and We shall certainly give them their reward for the best of what they did." (16:97)

And it speaks of those who keep their duty as dying in a *tayyib state* (16:32).

Therefore, after resuming eating at the end of Ramadan, if our behaviour corresponds to how we should be eating, that is to say, we lead lives of *lawful and good, halal and tayyib*, behaviour, then we will continue to resist the devil and our eating will be as spiritually beneficial as refraining from eating during Ramadan.

\* \* \*

## PERFORM GOOD DEEDS BEING SINCERE TO ALMIGHTY ALLAH

(EID-UL-FITR SERMON DELIVERED AT THE CONGREGATION OF THE SOUTH AFRICA JAMA'AT JUNE, 2019)

Imam Ebrahim Mohammed

**"The month of Ramadan is that in which the Quran was revealed, a guidance to men and clear proofs of the guidance and the Criterion." – 2:185**

All praise is due to Allah, the Beneficent, the Most Merciful. We thank Him for having blessed us with the holy month of Ramadan. A month of reflection; of introspection; of quenching our spiritual thirst through fasting and prayers; of quickening the dormant feelings of empathy for the poor and indigent; of sharing and giving in charity seeking thereby the pleasure of Almighty Allah. Even in a world beset with materialism, Ramadan brings a heavenly atmosphere that touches the soul in many ways. This is what happens when humankind collectively strive to gain nearness to Allah; not individually like the single-minded hermit in the jungle but rather as one unit - a synergy of human souls - following the same pattern of fasting, prayers and charity across mother earth to taste the sweet spiritual blessings and joys of the Holy Month. Ramadan teaches us that human weaknesses prompted by our low desires that impede our spirituality can be brought under control and mastered through fasting, intensified prayers, charity, listening to the melodious recitals of the Holy Quran that resonate with the calls to prayer that fill the air of cities all over the world where Muslims reside; but most importantly of seeking understanding, inspiration and guidance from the Holy Quran, the ultimate Criterion of all wisdom and guidance man would ever need for his success in this life and the next.

In the month of Ramadan, the devil that targets our base desires has been fettered with the chains of enhanced faith that marked the believers' resolve to transform their lives for the better. Thus, Ramadan taught us how to say NO to the promptings of the slinking devil and YES to the promptings of the angels that descend to inspire us and strengthen our will to do good and forbid evil. This is the ideal inspirational and transformative effect Ramadan is meant to have.

### Sincerity in obedience

However, the one thing the Holy Quran repeatedly teaches us is to conduct our *ibadat* (all acts of worship) with sincerity of heart and purpose; as beautifully stated in the Holy Quran: '**Being sincere to Him in obedience**'. This is the overriding theme of this year's *khutbah*.

Almighty Allah does not love superficiality and hypocrisy. Put simply, it is not about the quantity of your deeds but the quality. We have seen so many prayers surfacing and being circulated on social media during the holy days. These prayers whilst good by itself should not be made into a sort of ritualistic ‘life or death must do or else’ with the risk of being deprived of Allah’s mercy especially if you do not observe it on a particular night. The Holy Quran teaches us that Almighty Allah listens to prayers all the time when we appeal to Him **with sincerity of heart**. In fact, in the verse following the verse on fasting, Almighty Allah tells us –*‘And when My servants ask thee concerning Me, surely I am near - I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he calls on Me - so they should hear My call - and believe in Me - that they may walk in the right way’* – (2:186). Almighty Allah, indeed, is near to us all the time and He answers our prayers but because we are so obsessed with worldly things, are weak of faith and often do not ‘walk in the right way’, we distance ourselves from Allah and therefore are unable to hear His call. At least in the month of Ramadan some of the veils of materialism were lifted as a result of our fasting and prayers and therefore during this time our supplications have added efficacy. And therefore it is important that we make our best efforts to remain firm in our belief in Allah’s Mercy and firm in our resolve to ‘walk in the right way’ and NOT deviate from the straight path if we are hopeful of our prayers being answered. And this should be our position not only in Ramadan but throughout our lives. Another thing to remember is that our prayers should not be made to obtain momentary relief from an immediate crisis without showing gratitude after being saved from distress. The Holy Quran warns us of such hypocrisy so common in human society. For example in chapter 41 verses 50 and 51 we read:

And if We make him taste mercy from Us after distress has touched him, he says: This is due to me, and I think not that the Hour will come to pass; and if I am sent back to my Lord, I shall have sure good with Him...

And when We show favour to man, he turns away and withdraws himself; but when evil touches him, he is full of lengthy supplications. — 41:50-51

Therefore, it is not the ‘lengthy supplications’ (*duahs*) that we make; nor the additional prayers; nor the amount of days we fast; nor the amount of money we give away in charity, by itself that are of importance to Almighty Allah, it is the **sincerity that accompanies such noble acts of worship** that is of paramount importance. If such acts are devoid of sincerity without constant reminders that we are nothing without the Beneficence of Almighty Allah, it loses its value in the sight of Almighty Allah. A ‘high and mighty’ attitude without humility and gratitude is condemned in the Holy Quran. Thus we are warned:

#### **107:4 “So woe to the praying ones”,**

‘**Woe**’ means ‘despair’ ‘unhappiness’ ‘wretchedness’ ‘despondency’ etc. it is likened to ‘distress’ . Muslims may argue that their lengthy supplications and extra prayers ought to bring them happiness and success and not despair. Indeed it should! So who are the Holy Quran referring to when it says ‘woe’ to the ***mussalin*** the ‘praying ones?’ The Holy Quran answers and says it is those...

#### **107:5 “Who are *unmindful* of their prayer!”**

‘**Unmindful**’ means ‘not to be conscious of or aware of’; also means ‘paying no heed to’; or to be ‘careless, reckless, etc.’ So the ‘praying ones’ who are ‘unmindful of their prayers’ are the people

who are not conscious of the fact that prayer is meant to be a communion with Almighty Allah; meant to build a connectivity between mortal man and the Almighty, Lord of the Universe. The Holy Quran is thus warning us that prayer should not be treated as a mere ritual to be rushed through aimlessly, merely to placate the conscience. Neither should it be driven by an over-blown ego zealous to impress others with a pretentious display of piety often confined to nothing more than superficial flowing gowns and neatly trimmed beards. These are the ones, the Holy Quran says, are those:

**107:6 “Who do (good) to be seen”.**

There are many who give in charity; who are present in the mosque five times a day; who give gilded speeches and sermons on social media; on television; on the radio. These are all very good, but of little use if done for mere show - **‘doing good to be seen’** - rather than to serve Almighty Allah. These ‘egotists’ you will find are often the ones whose hearts are not tempered with kindness and empathy. Their attitudes are often marred by an indifference to the plights of the poor and the orphans and thus the Quran says of them:

**107:7 “And (they) refrain from acts of kindness!”**

**Ma'un**, ‘acts of kindness’ can be anything from removing a banana peel out of the way where people walk, a smile to a neighbour, giving an ear to the elderly, visiting the sick, feeding the beggar and the wayfarer. It is these humble acts of kindness done with love, empathy and sincerity without show or for worldly recognition and reward that the Holy Quran is drawing our attention to as being of value in the sight of Almighty Allah.

The same attitude of ‘unmindfulness’ in prayers and condescendingly showing off our deeds, both of which are condemned in the Holy Quran, applies to giving in charity as well. The Holy Quran makes this quite clear in no uncertain terms when it says:

‘A kind word with forgiveness is better than charity followed by injury. And Allah is Self-sufficient, Forbearing.’ – 2:263

‘O you who believe, make not your charity **worthless** by reproach and injury, like him who spends his wealth **to be seen of men** and believes not in Allah and the Last Day.’ -2:264

It is clear from these verses that it is extremely hateful in the sight of Almighty Allah to injure by condescending and belittling those who you gave your charity to or even reminding them of such charity. If you do this your charity becomes ‘worthless’ in the sight of Allah. Your charity should be made in the same spirit of empathy and dignity as when you utter a kind word tempered with forgiveness.

We can see now from these lessons in the Holy Quran how important the adoption of the right ‘attitude’ of sincerity is in whatever we do; whether it is our fasts; our prayers; giving in charity; our relationships with family and friends etc.

It will benefit the whole community much if our attitudes to life should follow the guidance of the Holy Quran and not the dictates of our egos. Indeed the Holy Quran calls on us to adopt an attitude that will ensure that we are of those:

Who are humble in their prayers, And who shun what is vain, And who act for the sake of purity.—23:2-4

Remember brothers and sister, the 1<sup>st</sup> of Shawaal beckons the timing of the propagation of the Holy Quran. To do this effectively much work is required and many sacrifices financially and physically are required. The Holy Quran as we all know was revealed in Arabic, the mother tongue of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw). Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad *Mujaddid* of the Age, did a deep research on the Arabic language and proved with solid arguments that Arabic was indeed the 'mother of all languages' and thus the ideal medium for the expression of the final prophetic Word of Almighty Allah meant for the benefit of the entire world. There is no other language that has the capacity to express subtle and fine religious and secular truths, especially the lofty descriptions of the attributes of the Divine Being, as does the classical Quranic Arabic.

### **Translation of the Qur'an was needed to rebut wrong allegations and misinterpretations**

But the Holy Quran was meant for the entire world and not just for the Arabs and this brought to fore the necessity of translating the Holy Quran into different languages of the world. But the translation of the Holy Quran is not the work of just anyone, it requires, as the Holy Quran says in chapter 3 verse 7, pure minded, rightly guided persons, deeply rooted in knowledge and understanding, who are free of perverse tendencies and biases.

Let's look at the English translation which became a necessity of paramount importance with the establishment of the British Empire that dominated most of the world in the late 18<sup>th</sup> early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The first English translations were by Christians of British descent. These translations, well intended as it were, suffered in purity because of obvious Christian evangelical bias, which in many instances cast the Holy Prophet and in particular Islam in a bad light.

At that time Islam had suffered serious setbacks because of the infiltration and dominance of perverted ideologies and thinking of the *ulema* of the time. One or two Muslims attempted to translate the Quran into English but their attempts were localised to its place of origin in India and besides it was fragmentary, lacked insightful commentary that adequately addressed the negative issues facing Islam at the time. It thus had no far reaching impact. A scholarly translation brought about under Divine guidance and inspiration that met the challenges Islam was facing at the time was indeed needed. This was indeed the task of a *Mujaddid* raised by Almighty Allah and not just any ordinary scholar. It was Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad who said he was that *Mujaddid*. His works in defence of Islam and revivalist teachings proved his claim beyond a shadow of a doubt. Whilst the Muslim world was in a state of slumber and sheer apathy to the needs of Islam, he was the one who addressed the false doctrines and errors that had crept into Islam via misguided *ulema* under the influence of perverse Christian and Jewish thinking in particular such anti- Quranic teachings such as:

- Calling Muslims Kafir.
- The doctrine of abrogation of verses of the Holy Quran.
- Jihad as an aggressive war and a means of forcing people to accept Islam.
- Treating the Holy Quran secondary to the opinions of jurists.
- Acceptance of hadith that contradicts the Holy Quran.
- The belief that Jesus ascended into heaven with his physical body.
- That saintly revelations and *ijtihad* (rational thinking) had stopped.

- That apostates and adulterers should be executed.
- Abuse of polygamy and women in general.
- The keeping of sex-slaves.
- The identity of Gog and Magog and ‘the Beast from the Earth’; etc.

Besides this he rebutted Christian, Jewish and Hindu propaganda against Islam by writing profusely against it in defence of Islam. As mentioned, he did it at a time when Muslims were apathetic to the needs of Islam wasting their time away by fighting amongst each other much like they still do today. He was thus quite rightly given the task by Almighty Allah to bring into existence not only an English translation of the Holy Quran but one with adequate commentary addressing all those false, un-Quranic perversities outlined above. It was in this context that Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, saw in a true dream, that this noble task should be assigned to Maulana Muhammad Ali, a righteous, extremely dedicated and sincere follower adept in the English language. Anyone who has read, nay! Studied the English translation by Maulana Muhammad Ali with commentary first released in 1917, more than a century ago, will testify that this is the only English translation that addresses all the discrepancies outlined above and thus you will understand why it is of such precious value to us.

The ideologies motivating those who kill in the name of Islam are based on those false interpretations of the Holy Quran and Hadith which the *Mujaddid* came to address as mentioned above; but were ignored.

We must, however, bear in mind that no translation can ever be entirely perfect. And as time progresses and as new learnings unfold, who knows Almighty Allah may raise another rightly guided servant of His to bring forward even more in depth and enlightening interpretations in the future.

For now this translation is the touchstone of all translations and it is our task to ensure that it reaches the far corners of the world. There is no greater work in the sight of Almighty Allah than to propagate the message of the Holy Quran as best as you are able to. Remember our prayers, our fasts, our charities, our pilgrimage are for ourselves. It does not benefit Almighty Allah Who is Self-Sufficient but it benefits His mortal servants. The Holy Quran says: ‘And Allah is Self-Sufficient and you are needy.’ What the Almighty requires from us is to deliver His message to the furthest corners of the world so that others who have not received it may benefit from it. The Holy Quran encourages:

“And from among you there should be a party who invite to good and enjoin the right and forbid the wrong. And these are they who are successful” (3:104)

Our organization was started on the broad principle of the injunction contained in this verse i.e. spreading goodness in the way of Allah by means of the Holy Quran. We are proud pioneers of this work in the West. Our organization has seen to the translation of the Holy Quran into over 20 different languages as well as seen to the dissemination of hundreds of thousands of it since 1917 across the world and is ongoing.

Unfortunately, like the historians of the West that tend to suppress the real truths by not mentioning the great contributions Muslims made to the advancement of civilization, so our own Muslim brothers deliberately ignore the great contributions made by the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam to the spread of the truth of Islam in the world.

When Maulana Muhammad Ali's English translation came out in 1917 it was revolutionary in that it made a huge impact on Western thinking and their opinions of Islam. A great admirer, Maulana Yaqub Khan, puts it very well and I quote:

'Maulana Muhammad Ali's Translation marks a definite epoch in the understanding of Islam. Among the Muslim intelligentsia it positively arrested the creeping decay of faith as a result of Western materialistic influences, and the sceptical trends of Western philosophic thought.'

'In the realm of Western scholarship, the impact of this Translation is noticeable in the changed outlook on Islam and the changed tone of literature about Islam that has since appeared. The very first indications of such wholesome change are met with in the writings of a man of no less scholarly stature than H.G. Wells. In 1920, when his work *The Outline of History*, appeared, it carried the whole section 16 of Chapter 3 as rendered in this Translation, describing it as an example of the Quran's "majestic utterances from the recent orthodox translation by the Maulvi Muhammad Ali."

Interpreting the Word of God calls for great gifts of scholarship, no doubt, but it requires something much more, which no scholarship can confer – the gift of inner purity. Maulana Muhammad Ali wielded a scholar's pen with a saint's hand, and that is where lay the secret of this Translation becoming a real spiritual force and a beacon of light for seekers-after-truth.'

Indeed this is what distinguishes Muhammad Ali from the host of all other translators.

We are therefore appealing to all to support this cause of making available this translation of the Holy Quran to as many of those who yearn for this light; even if you purchase just one Quran and donate it to a deserving family member, friend or stranger. In the broader scheme of things you will soon realise that it is more rewarding than just handing out food to sustain the body and neglect to provide food for the soul.

Therefore, as we say farewell to Ramadan, may we become as passionate about the spiritual needs of humankind as well.

## **EID UL-FITR MESSAGE 2019**

***Dr Abdul Karim Saeed***

***HEAD OF THE LAHORE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT IN ISLAM***

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Assalaam-o-Alaikum Wa Rakhmatullahi Wa Barakaato Hoo.

“Those to whom We have given the Book follow it as it ought to be followed. These believe in it. And whoever disbelieves in it, these it is that are the losers.” (Al Quran 2:121)

### **A very Happy Eid Mubarak to you all!**

Muslims all over the world are celebrating Eid ul Fitr which marks the completion of Ramadan, the holy month of fasting. They have a very good reason to be happy as they have passed through a wonderful experience of spiritual devotion through fasting and prayers. Recitation of the Quran and listening to it in taravee prayers has brought them closer to Allah.

I want to convey a very important message through the verse that I have quoted. On the day of Eid everyone must reflect on it and follow it. Allah says:

“Those to whom We have given the Book follow it as it ought to be followed. These believe in it.”

Thus for those of us for whom Arabic is neither a mother tongue nor a language that we understand, it would be difficult to follow it as it ought to be followed if we did not know what the Book says. So today is a day we must resolve to know what the Quran says and follow it to be guided aright. We are lucky that we have wonderful translations and commentaries of the Holy Quran by Maulana Muhammad Ali in both Urdu and English. We are rightly proud that the founder of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Jama‘at and our first Ameer was the first Muslim to achieve the distinction of translating the Holy Quran into English. We should also be proud of the fact that we have rendered the original English translation into many major languages of the world. But the question is: have we benefited from these translations? Have we read the Qur'an in the manner it needs to be? Have we acted on the guidance in it? Have we changed our lives through following the injunctions in them? If the answer to these questions is not in the affirmative, then the day of Eid is for us is a day for self-analysis. Let us review our lives and find out where we fall short and overcome our shortcomings. Let us reflect on the words of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Reformer of the present era. While stressing on the importance of following the guidance of the Quran he stated:

“Do not take a single step in opposition to anything contained in the Holy Book. Indeed, I tell you truly that whoever circumvents even a single of the 700 hundred commandments embodied in the Holy Quran, closes the door of salvation upon himself.” (*Kashti-e-Nooh*)

Let us all resolve to adhere to the commandments of the Quran. Let us resolve to study a portion of it daily in the language we understand so that by next Ramadan, Allah willing, we will have finished the reading of the whole Book. While doing this we should mark our shortcomings and try to overcome them as much as is humanly possible, or else we would be closing the door of Allah's salvation upon us.

I pray that we will be able to progress Still we achieve our goal.

Aameen.

\* \* \*

## **EID GREETINGS FROM OUR FRIEND, IAIN DIXON, MANCHESTER**

**Wishing you all at Wembley a great Eid day! May it be a day of peace, of love, of closeness with one another, and closeness to Allah.**

**May this Eid day also be a time of remembrance for loved ones who have passed away, and a celebration of the lives they have lived before us. Examples of love and faithfulness. Examples of perseverance in the midst of trials. May we hear their voices cheering us on.....spurring us on to live greater lives for Allah.....lives full of devotion and zeal.....and lives wrapped in royal robes of love and compassion. Be blessed!**

**Eid Mubarak!**

**Lots of love**

**Iain**

\* \* \*

## **..... AND HIS THOUGHTS AFTER ATTENDING EID CONGREGATION AT WEMBLEY, LONDON**

**“PRAYER IS THE GOLDEN THREAD THAT LINKS ONE WITH GOD AND WITH ONE ANOTHER.”**

Eid Mubarak! Are you having a great Eid? I know I am. Did you know, I no longer get invited to Eid day at this mosque? Now, I just invite myself! I love coming here so much I no longer wait to be invited, I just write to you and say: “I am coming!” It is always such a joy and a pleasure to be here with you all.

### **Friend not an enemy**

As you all know, I am a follower of Jesus. I am not your enemy, I am your friend! I don't suffer from anti-Muslim feeling. I choose to be here, because I care for you. I have been asked to share a few words with you all at the end of this meeting. I hadn't prepared a talk today. Just a few minutes ago, one of your leaders asked me to share a few thoughts with you. So..... here goes! I am a bit nervous, but I will just share what is on my heart.

### **The power of Prayer**

Did you know, that Eid is not something that we COLLAPSE INTO? No, rather Eid is something we SPRING OUT OF! We don't just endure the last few weeks of Ramadan, and then finally collapse with great relief into the Eid day. Instead we should take lessons we have learnt over the last few weeks and continue to put them into practice for the rest of the year. We 'spring out of' Eid with new energy, with new ideas, and also with new lessons to better ourselves and to better others. The last few weeks I have learnt about the power of prayer and encouragement.

### **My favourite Bible verse**

One of my favourite Bible verse is James 5:16. It simply reads: “ The effectual, fervent Prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” That means simply, that PRAYER IS POWERFUL! I wonder if we have forgotten how powerful prayer is? I want to encourage you all to ‘spring out of Eid’ with a fresh desire to pray for one another, and to have a fresh vision of the power of prayer. Our duas to Almighty God for one another have great power.

### **Prayer more powerful than dynamite**

I once had a friend who used to make money by robbing banks! He doesn’t do that now! He met Jesus, and his life changed. But that is what he used to do. Not an honourable way to live in those old days, but Jesus can change lives. Praise God! He told me a funny story about how he and a gang broke into a big warehouse. The plan was simple. They broke into the office, placed explosives on the safe lock.....blew the lock.....grabbed the money in the safe.....and ran before the cops came! Simple! But unfortunately, they placed too much explosive on the lock! Instead, they blew the safe through the back wall and into a canal behind the warehouse! They never got their money!!! Why do I tell you that story? Well, just as my friend didn’t realise how powerful the explosives really were, so too, I wonder if we have forgotten the power of prayer! Prayer is really more powerful than dynamite!

### **Look around and see**

Don’t just collapse into Eid. Instead, spring out of Eid with a new desire to pray for one another, and to encourage one another. My words to you this Eid day would be simple. Take a look around your Jama’at. There may be people hurting. There may be people who are really struggling. Pray for one another! There may be people struggling with health issues.....or struggling with financial issues. There may even people struggling with relationship issues. We need each other. Remember....Prayer is more powerful than dynamite. Our prayers can bring change in other peoples’ lives. Our prayers can help lift burdens or impart strength to others. Eid isn’t over. It continues on as we continue to practice what we have learnt. “The effectual, fervent Prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”- James 5:16. Believe in the power of prayer. Prayer is the golden thread that links earth with heaven. And with one another.

Be blessed! Eid Mubarak to all of you!

Iain Dixon

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## **EID-UL- FITR MESSAGE FROM BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA**

**Mr. Shaukat A. Ali**

**(IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE BENEFICENT, THE MERCIFUL)**

**The month of Ramadan is that in which the Quran was revealed a guidance to people and clear proofs of the guidance and the Criterion (2:185). By the Book that makes manifest! We revealed it on a blessed night — truly We are ever warning. In which (night) is made clear every matter of wisdom; (44:2-4).**

Dear sisters and brothers,

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuhu

We pray for spiritual and physical health by the grace of Compassionate and Merciful Allah upon all of you and that you have been recipients of His blessings during the month of Ramadan. Alhamdulillah, we thank Allah for His guidance and wisdom for us to comply with the obligation during the holy month. In the verses cited above, we are told that the Holy Quran was revealed as a guidance to people and it made clear every matter of wisdom. Throughout the blessed month, among other obligatory compliances, we have endeavoured to study and delve deeper into the broader meanings and understanding of the verses and implemented whatever we could.

It is an obligation that must not end with Eid-ul-Fitr and they should be adhered to during the rest of the year and manifested always in the future. In order to realize the significance of the Holy Book, let's examine some of what Allah has said about it as per following examples: Surely this Quran guides to what is most upright and gives good news to the believers who do good that theirs is a great reward, (17:9). And the Quran that We reveal is a healing and a mercy to the believers, (17:82). We have made distinct in this Quran for mankind every kind of description; (18:54 & 30:58). These are the verses of the Quran and the Book that makes manifest. A guidance and good news for the believers, who keep up prayer and give the due charity, and they are sure of the Hereafter. (27:1-3). We have made the Quran easy to remember, but is there anyone who will be mindful? (54:17, 22, 32 & 40).

Almighty Allah also tells us to keep up prayer, give due charity and to do good to others: And keep up prayer and give the due charity. And whatever good you send on ahead for yourselves, you will find it with Allah. Surely Allah is Seer of what you do (2:110). They only are believers whose hearts are full of fear when Allah is mentioned, and when His messages are recited to them they increase them in faith, and in their Lord do they trust, those who keep up prayer and spend (on good works) out of what We have given them. These are the believers truly. For them are with their Lord exalted grades and protection and an honourable sustenance (8:2-4). During the month, we have been charitable and did whatever good that was possible. The end of fasting should not be the end of doing good and being charitable. These should be part of our daily lives, and widows, orphans and the needy should never be forgotten. the charitable men and the charitable women, and the fasting men and the fasting women, . . . and the men who remember Allah much and the women who remember — Allah has prepared for them forgiveness and a mighty reward (33:35).

Sharing messages of the Blessed Book must continue so that others may also acquire genuine guidance and knowledge. We pray for guidance, wisdom and blessings of Merciful Allah so that we can attain piety and indepth knowledge of the Holy Quran. We also pray for peace, tolerance, greater understanding and goodwill among the peoples and nations of the world. We wish everyone a pleasant and enjoyable Eid-ul-Fitr celebrations.

Please convey our prayers and felicitations to your loved ones and others who see this Message.

EID MUBARAK

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**ISLAM stands for: I SHALL LOVE ALL MANKIND**

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