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KA'BAH The Symbol of the Universal Message of God

by Nasir Ahmad Sahib, B.A., LL. B.

After 'Id al-Fitr, the second major festival of the Muslims is 'Id al-Adha (Festival of Sacrifice). This festival is celebrated in commemoration of Prophet Abraham's, peace be upon him, willingness to sacrifice his only son, Ishmael. 'Id al-Fitr is generally called the *minor festival* and 'Id al-Azha the *major festival*. The *Encyclopaedia of Islam* has considered it as 'Id al-Kabir meaning the *major festival*. The Holy Qur'an has designated it as *zibhin 'azim*, (a grand sacrifice).

Although 'Id al-Fitr is celebrated after a full month's rigorous spiritual training, while 'Id al-Adha is only ten days of a sort of training camp in the form of the Pilgrimage during which there is no bar on eating or drinking, yet the former is called the minor festival and the latter the major one. In this ritual worship, in addition to the obligatory prayers (*salah*), there is greater emphasis on extolling Allah's greatness and celebrating His praise, and that is why if we study the Qur'anic verses relating to *Hajj*, the words *fuzkurullah* (so remember Allah) have been used five times for this act of worship, instead of the usual word, *salah*. The fact remains that in reality in *Hajj*, there is a continuous affirmation of *tauhid*, or the unity of Allah, and one's complete readiness to obey Allah's commandments. These rituals are indicative of a man's extreme sense of servitude and perfect obedience to his Lord, and this is why this act of worship has acquired such an important position.

In this context, please also bear in mind that a dream is always subject to interpretation, because what one sees in a dream is all-symbolic and the underlying reality may be quite different. For instance, Joseph saw in a dream that *eleven stars and the sun and the moon are making obeisance to him* (12:4). Then during

imprisonment one of his two companions saw in his dream that he was *pressing grapes* and the other saw that he was *carrying bread on his head and birds were eating it* (12:26). Again the king of Egypt saw in a dream *seven fat cows devouring seven lean ones, and seven green ears of corn and seven dry ones* (12:43). Now the interpretation of Joseph's dream turned out to be that his treacherous brothers, the king and other members of the ruling class ultimately bowed to his authority. To one of his companions in prison he said that he would find deliverance and would be serving the king, and the other was told that he would be hanged on the cross (12:41). Similarly he told the king that his dream meant that there would be seven years of severe drought and famine and the way for survival was also described in the dream itself. In this context we give hereunder the Qur'anic version of the interpretation:

He said: You shall sow for seven years as usual, then that which you reap, leave it in its ear, except a little which you eat! Then after that shall come seven years of hardship that will eat away all that you have stored beforehand for them, except a little you have preserved! Then after that will come a year in which people will have rain and in which they will press (grapes) (12:47-49).

Now look at the apparent description or events shown in the dream and see how the sense or interpretation of it turned out to be something quite different. Again, also keep in mind that when Joseph narrated his dream to his father, Jacob, who himself was a prophet, he did not take the dream literally. Rather, the Holy Qur'an tells us that Jacob was given a hint about the events that were to overtake Joseph and the high spiritual station which was to be vouchsafed to him, though he was not made fully aware of it at that time. But all the same, he perceived the import of the dream that his son was to become later a prophet, so he advised his son accordingly and this has been recorded in the Holy Qur'an in the following words:

He said: O my son, relate not thy dream to thy brethren, lest they devise a plan against thee. The devil indeed is an open enemy to man. And thus will thy Lord choose thee and teach thee the interpretation of sayings, and will make His favour complete on thee and to the Children of Jacob, as He made it complete before to thy fathers, Abraham and Isaac. Surely thy Lord is Knowing, Wise (12:5,6).

The knowledge of the Unseen is given to the prophets and the righteous through dreams, visions, revelation and inspiration. At times these are hints in the form of a dream and at other times these may be explicitly stated through words and messages. But in all circumstances these people have firm belief and complete faith in Allah and their spirit of obedience remains firm and enduring. To wit, Allah kept on giving news to Jacob about Joseph, so that is why when Joseph's brothers got their younger brother Benjamin arrested on a charge of theft and on their return they informed their father about this incident, the impact the news had on Jacob is stated in the Holy Qur'an thus:

And he turned away from them, and said: O my sorrow for Joseph! And his eyes were filled (with tears) on account of the grief, then he repressed (grief). They (the brothers) said: By Allah! Thou wilt not cease remembering Joseph till thou art a prey to disease or thou art of those who perish. He said: I complain of my grief and sorrow only to Allah, and I know from Allah what you know not (12:84 -86).

I have given a detailed explanation of dreams and their interpretation and the events that overtook Joseph and Jacob as stated in the Holy Qur'an in order to elucidate that dreams are always composed of hints and allusions and need to be interpreted and explained. But Abraham and Ishmael were so enthusiastic and were imbued with such an extreme sense of obedience and submission to the will of Allah that they took the dream literally and got ready to act upon it. Now see how Allah appreciated this extremely praiseworthy resolve of Abraham - a resolve that was made in response to a difficult test set for him by Allah - and how He then rewarded him for such superb faithfulness:

Surely this is a manifest trial. And We ransomed him with a great sacrifice. And We granted him among the later generations (the salutation), Peace be upon Abraham (37:106-109).

And in the very next verse Allah gives an assurance that anyone who does noble deeds is always granted abundant reward by Him: *Thus do We reward the doers of good.* And it is a living reality that this sacrifice was so highly appreciated that the memory of this act of sacrifice by Abraham and Ishmael was given eternal recognition through making it an obligatory part of the rituals of the pilgrimage. Also, two *raka'hs* of *salah* to be offered at *Maqam-i Ibrahim* (the place where Abraham stood) were made an obligatory part of the ritual of pilgrimage as well. In addition to the making of circuits around the Ka'bah, *sa'i* (running between the two hillocks, *Safa* and *Marwa*) was also made obligatory.

The importance of this sacrifice can best be illustrated by an incident at the time of the peace agreement of Hudaibiyah. The Holy Prophet [pbuh], relying on a dream, started off for Makkah from Madinah, along with his Companions [rta], to perform the pilgrimage but were stopped by the unbelievers of Makkah at a place called Hudaibiyah outside Makkah. In view of the sanctity of the month, the Holy Prophet [pbuh] preferred to start peace negotiations instead of going to war and eventually a peace agreement was arrived at. In

addition to other conditions, it was agreed that the pilgrimage should be postponed till the next year. Since the pilgrimage was not performed, the Companions [rta] were not prepared to offer their animals for sacrifice. On this occasion, the Holy Prophet [pbuh] had his wife Zainab [rta] with him, so he consulted her as to what should be done in order to persuade them to slaughter their animals. At this point, notice should be taken of the Holy Prophet's [pbuh] high regard for the intellectual capacity of the opposite sex in seeking advice from a woman. He consulted his wife regarding a very tense and delicate situation. And the credit goes to Lady Zainab [rta] for this most intelligent and beautiful piece of advice given by her:

"Sir, all the people love you extremely, so you should just quietly take your sacrificial animal to a distant spot and slaughter it. The faithful would follow suit with fervour and will be slaughtering their animals without fail."

History bears out that that is exactly what happened. This incident not only provides proof of respect and honour shown by the Holy Prophet [pbuh] to women, but also proves that women are capable of giving mature advice. It also highlights the unmatched spirit of obedience of the Companions [rta], an obedience that has become proverbial in the annals of history. And now see in what glorious words Allah appreciates and approves of this noble example of the Holy Companions and their spirit of submission to and cheerful acceptance of the Will of Allah. This is recorded in the Qur'an in the following words:

Allah is well pleased with them and they are well pleased with Allah (5:119).

Islam has laid down four obligatory rituals by way of worship for the spiritual and mundane education and discipline of its followers, viz., *salah* (prayers), *zakat* (poor-rate), *saum* (fasting) and *hajj* (pilgrimage). There underlies a Divine wisdom in the order of these four ritual obligations of Islam. There is no denying the fact that by acting on these four practices in all sincerity a man can make progress both in self-purification as well as in spirituality. For instance, take the ritual of the five obligatory prayers. During their observance, a man devotes some portion of his time five times a day for the remembrance of Allah in order to rid his mind and consciousness of the worldly dross of daily life to enable him to lead a pure life in compliance with the commandments of Allah and His Apostle (peace be on him) and thereby to become capable of serving others as well. This fact has been described beautifully by Allah in the Holy Qur'an thus:

He indeed is successful who purifies himself, and remembers the name of his Lord, then prays (87:14, 15).

In other words, the best means of self-purification is by engaging oneself in the worship of Allah. Hence the first stage of Divine proximity to Allah is attained through prayer. The second stage of divine proximity is attained by spending out of one's earned wealth for the welfare and good of others. Then comes fasting, which is a means for attaining the third stage of proximity. It is a practice that teaches self-control, inculcates an urge to

do good to others, and helps a person to achieve inner purification through a month of hard spiritual discipline. Thus the spiritual exercise of fasting offers opportunities for further progress in worship and sacrifice. These various disciplines of worship are meant for the spiritual training of man during the normal activities of his daily life, but pilgrimage is a ritual of worship which is undertaken by leaving the business of daily life, leaving behind near and dear ones, spending wealth and undergoing the hardship of journey purely for the attainment of Allah's pleasure and with a sense of complete obedience to Him. Thus wealth is spent and hardship is borne in order to achieve the highest point of worship of Allah and to attain the inner purification and spiritual exaltation that are mentioned in the verse: *Successful indeed is he who purifies himself*. In the next two verses, the reality of the worldly and other-worldly life has been elucidated and our attention has been drawn to the fact that such a spiritual training is necessary. In fact, Allah says in the Qur'an:

But you prefer the life of this world, while the Hereafter is better and more lasting (87:16,17).

If one casts a cursory glance over these pillars of Islamic worship it will become clear that the intention is to inculcate Allah's love in man. And the reason why the ritual of pilgrimage has been placed last in order is that this is the culmination of man's complete obedience to Allah's commands and the desire for sacrificing in His way. While performing *hajj*, one's mind is fully devoted to the remembrance of Allah and the desire to achieve closeness with Him. In this state, the pilgrim is in such a condition of absorption and preoccupation with the remembrance of Allah that in that ecstasy even the person of the Holy Prophet [pbuh] is left out of his mind and one expresses one's servitude and obedience only to Allah. Please listen to the words of the *talbiyya*, and ponder over their meaning. While making circuits around the Ka'bah a pilgrim's heart, mind, lips, nay, his entire person, keeps on reciting these words of praise to Allah.

Labbaika, Allahumma labbaika. Labbaika la shareeka laka. Labbaika innal hamda wanni'mata laka. Wal mulka laka. Laa shareeka laka. (Here I am in Thy presence, O my Lord, here I am in Thy presence! There is no associate with Thee. Here I am. Verily all praise and bounties and the Kingdom belong to Thee. There is no associate with Thee. Here I am in Thy august Presence.)

In fact, the special atmosphere that is obtained at this ritual pilgrimage, an atmosphere of total absorption and celebrating Allah's praise and extolling His Name in congregation, is not to be found in any other act of worship in congregation. We all know that from the day of pilgrimage till the early noon prayer on the third day of 'Id, all the Muslims of the world wherever they may be, chant the following words extolling His Name, known as *Takbir-i Tashriq* after each of the five obligatory daily prayers:

Allah-u Akbar Allah-u Akbar. Laa ilaahu il-lal laah. Wal-laaho Akbar Allahu Akbar wa lil-

laahil Hamd. God is the Greatest. God is the Greatest. There is none worthy of worship except Allah! And God is the Greatest. God is the Greatest. And all praise is due to Him alone.

From the words of the *talbiyyah* (that is, *labbaika*, etc.) and the *takbirs* recited during the three days (called the *tashriq* days), one can vividly visualise the intensity of devotion with which Allah's name is extolled and glorified and the fervent expression of humble bondage to Allah by Muslims in the holy precincts of the Ka'bah and all over the world.

One unique aspect of the ritual of pilgrimage is that in this high point of worship, no memorable event relating to the life of the Founder of Islam, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, has been included in the ritual of *hajj*. The sacrifice of an animal offered is a tribute to the spirit of sacrifice shown by Prophet Abraham when he was ready to sacrifice his son Ishmael in obedience to the Divine command. The circuits around the Ka'bah are made as a tribute to Abraham and Ishmael for re-building the Ka'bah. The *sa'i* (running) between the two hillocks of *Safa* and *Marwa* is a tribute to the patience and fortitude shown by Lady Hagar (Hajira), the mother of Ishmael. The throwing of pebbles at Satan is a tribute to the resistance offered by Prophet Abraham to the attempts of Satan to dissuade him from sacrificing his son, while he was taking him to the place of sacrifice.

Again, while we recite the *darud* (invoking Allah's benedictions) in favour of the Founder of Islam, the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him), at the end of each prayer yet we also recite the *darud* for Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) with the same zest and fervour. The fact stands out clearly that the pilgrimage is a practical demonstration of the universal concept of Islamic teachings at this high-point of worship and Allah has registered His appreciation for the sacrifices offered by Abraham, Ishmael and Hagar. They indeed offered incomparable sacrifices in the re-building of the Ka'bah and in establishing its integrity as the living centre for the worship of the One and Only Divine Being. This gesture of the universality of Islam in according respect and recognition to all the prophets raised in the world is solid proof of the Holy Qur'an that Allah raised messengers proclaiming the Unity of the Divine Being to all the nations of the world, and it was the followers who later corrupted this pure concept.

A Christian writer, Chris Horrie, in his book, *What is Islam?* (published by Virgin Books, London (England), pays tribute to the historic role played by the Ka'bah in establishing the concept of *tauhid* (Oneness of the Divine Being) and in the struggle against polytheism in the following words:

"The Ka'bah is a cube-shaped stone building, believed to have been built at the beginning of time by Adam for the exclusive worship of Allah. The fate of the shrine is symbolically linked to Islam's battle against mankind's repeated reversion from true religion of Allah-worship into paganism. (p.38)

Thus the Ka'bah is a living monument to the monotheistic concept and the festival of 'Id al-Adha is a reminder to man to work continuously for the inner and outer purification of his person through spiritual discipline and training, so that he should be able to lead a virtuous life. Further, he is to derive strength to empathise with others and serve them.

The rituals observed during pilgrimage furnish us with living proof of the fact that hardships undergone and sacrifices made for noble and virtuous ideals and for setting a noble example are always rewarded by God, the High. The greater the sacrifice, the greater and more abiding shall be the recompense.

May Allah give us the strength to tread along the path of righteousness and to do good to others. And may He also enable us to inculcate within us a spirit of submission and sacrifice in obeying His commandments. This is the important lesson 'Id al-Adha tries to convey to us for leading a better and virtuous life. May Allah bless all of us.

EID-UL-ADHA

Message from Hazrat Ameer
Prof Dr Abdul Kareem Saeed Pasha
President of the world-wide Lahore
Ahmadiyya Jamaat

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

“And relate to them with truth the story of the two sons of Adam, when they offered an offering, but it was accepted from one of them and was not accepted from the other. He said: I will certainly kill thee. (The other) said: Allah accepts only from the dutiful.

If thou stretch out thy hand against me to kill me I shall not stretch out my hand against thee to kill thee. Surely I fear Allah, the Lord of the worlds:

I would rather that thou shouldst bear the sin against me and thine own sin, thus thou wouldst be of the companions of the Fire; and that is the recompense of the unjust.

At length his mind made it easy for him to kill his brother, so he killed him; so he became one of the losers.

Then Allah sent a crow scratching the ground to show him how to cover the dead body of his brother. He said: Woe is me! Am I not able to be as this crow and cover the dead body of my brother? So he became of those who regret” (Al-Ma'idah, 5:27-31).

Dear sisters and brothers, *Assalaam-o-Alaikum Wa Rakhmatullahi Wa Barakaato Hoo.*

I have selected these verses of the Holy Qur'an for my *Eid ul Adha* message, as they relate the story of the first sacrifice offered in human history. The story is that of the two sons of Adam, Abel and Cain, who respectively represent the virtue and evil amongst human beings. It is also the story of the first violent act and murder; a story which teaches forbearance and patience as virtues; jealousy, aggression, pride and ignoring of good advice, killing and harming fellow-beings as evil deeds.

In these days of tragic events in the world, this is a message of peace and non-violence in the face of aggression. Abel is not deterred from good when threatened by his brother, who is eventually killed and becomes the first martyr in history.

As we celebrate this festival to mark the sacrifice Hazrat Ibrahim (Abraham) offered without questioning when Allah ordained, we too must follow his example and bring our offerings with a sincere heart and do as Allah desires. This is the spirit of *Taqwah*.

The story of acceptance of the sacrifice made by one brother and not by the other demonstrates that Allah accepts the spirit of the sacrifice and not the outward appearance of that action. Allah does not accept the *zaahir* aspect but the *baatin* of all spiritual acts as stated in the following verse of the Holy Qur'an:

“Not their flesh, nor their blood, reaches Allah, but to Him is acceptable the observance of duty on your part. Thus has He made the subservient to you, that you may magnify Allah for guiding you aright. And give good news to those who do good (to others)” (Al Hajj, 22:37).

Many may pretend to be pious and make sacrifices to be seen by the world but Allah knows what is concealed in the hearts and accepts only from the observers of duty (*muttaqeen*) as exemplified by the sacrifice of Abel.

Dear sisters and brothers, today we have a chance to pledge that we will submit to the will of Allah as demonstrated in the lives of Hazrat Ibrahim, Hazrat Ismael and Hazrat Hajirah, may Allah shower peace on all of them. It is also a chance to share the family values of togetherness in faith and sacrifice as demonstrated by them. Hazrat Ibrahim obeyed the command of Allah without hesitation; Hazrat Ismael, a young boy, submitted to the will of Allah without questioning, and Hazrat Hajirah, who had spent a life of sacrifice in the desert with an infant son, finally submitted to the will of Allah to sacrifice him.

If today we learn to obey Allah in all His commands and submit to His will, we would then achieve the spirit of the day and be really happy, which is the essence and literal meaning of the word 'Eid'.

I pray that Allah help us to become His true servants and to submit to His will. *Aameen*.

Professor Dr Abdul Kareem Saeed Pasha
President of the World-wide Lahore Ahmadiyya
Jamaat

Message from

SHAUKAT A ALI

AAII Regional Coordinator/Asia & Pacific
Region

Bismillahi-r-Rahmani-r-Rahim

(In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful)

Dear sisters and brothers

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatullahe wa Barakatuhu

Alhamdulillah, Allah *swt* has once again given us the opportunity to celebrate *Eid-ul Adha* and to make sacrifices. The significance of *Eid-ul Adha* and the associated sacrifice can be seen from various verses of the Holy Quran and I begin with Chapter 22 - *Al-Hajj*: (The Pilgrimage):

Not their flesh, nor their blood, reaches Allah, but to Him is acceptable observance of duty on your part. Thus has He made them subservient to you, that you may magnify Allah for guiding you aright. And give good news to those who do good (to others). (22:37)

There are some three million Muslims performing *Hajj* at the moment and our prayers are with them for the acceptance of their worship and sacrifices as well as their safety and security. May Allah facilitate their *Hajj* and remove all obstacles for members of *Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat Islam (Lahore)* to perform *Hajj* without any hindrance – *ameen*. I also hope the *Hajis* will return with a pure heart and be true bearers of witness.

In the verse quoted above, a couple of significant points to note are the “*observance of duty (to Allah) on your part*”, and “*do good (to others)*”. We must always bear in mind that among the many duties imposed on us is the duty to fellow human beings. While on the one hand we are told to observe our duty to Allah, on the other, we are being reminded to do good to others. We are also told that the flesh of the sacrificed animal does not reach Allah; but it is given to the poor and needy as well as to relatives, neighbours and friends. Therefore while we pray and remember our Creator and Sustainer all the time at the spiritual level, on the practical and material side we feed, among others, the poor and needy (verse 22:36) with the meat of the sacrificed animal.

At the time of *Eid-ul Adha* we always remember the agreement to perform a great sacrifice by Hazrat Ibrahim (Abraham), Hazrat Ishmael and Hazrat Hajirah, may peace and blessings of Allah be on them, “in observance of duty” as commanded by Allah.

Further on in the same Chapter we are told:

And strive hard for Allah with due striving. He has chosen you and has not laid upon you any hardship in religion — the faith of your father

Abraham. He named you Muslims before and in this (The Holy Quran), that the Messenger may be a bearer of witness to you, and you may be bearers of witness to the people; so keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate and hold fast to Allah. He is your Protector; excellent the Protector and excellent the Helper! (22:78)

Elsewhere in the Holy Quran we are told:

And thus We have made you an exalted nation that you may be the bearers of witness to the people and (that) the Messenger may be a bearer of witness to you. (2:143).

The word “*Shahid*”, apart from the familiar translation “*bearer of witness*”, also signifies *one possessing much knowledge*, and it also means *an Imam or a leader*. Thus it signifies that just as the Holy Prophet, Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, delivered the message of truth to the Muslims and was their purifier and leader, the role of the Muslim community is to deliver the message of truth to the whole of humanity and to be its purifiers and leaders.

In view of the prevailing conditions in the world, it is our obligation to disseminate the “*message of truth*” as widely as possible. We must always remember that the aim of Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam is to take the pure and pristine message of the Holy Quran to the farthest corners of the world.

It may be very difficult to emulate the sacrifice which Hazrat Ibrahim and his small family, peace and blessings of Allah be on them, agreed to execute in acceptance of Allah’s command; and the Holy Quran says:

The nearest of people to Abraham are surely those who follow him and this Prophet (Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be on them), and those who believe. And Allah is the Friend of the believers. (3:68.) and in another verse:

And who is better in religion than he who submits himself entirely to Allah while doing good (to others) and follows the faith of Abraham, the upright one? And Allah took Abraham for a friend. (4:125).

As I mentioned with my message for *Eid-ul Fitr*, there are about 200 verses in the Holy Quran which tell us to do good to others. Therefore remembrance of Allah (prayers) and doing of good should be an everyday affair. We are told in another verse:

Say: My prayer and my sacrifice and my life and my death are surely for Allah, the Lord of the worlds— (6:162)

Dear sisters and brothers,

The *Mujaddid* (Reformer) of the Fourteenth Century of *Hijrah*, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, had established the Motto for Ahmadiyya Movement “to hold the religion above the world” and we should act on it as well

as assist in achieving our aim i.e. to carry the message of the Holy Quran to others.

In view of the above, and the fact that the Holy Quran provides a complete code of life, we should form the habit of reading the Holy Book everyday and sharing the messages with others. I am sure we can all spare a few minutes to read at least a section or two every day.

You will note that any issue that comes up today, the Holy Quran has related us either historical anecdote or both historical story and guidance which helps us address the issue. It may seem incredible that the Holy Quran, which was revealed fourteen hundred years ago, has provided us solutions to the problems we are facing in the 21st Century. These are provided clearly and in great detail on some issues, which we are currently facing, thereby strengthening our faith that it is based on Divine revelation and the fact that it is the last of the revealed Books, which will continue to provide answers to our questions till the end of the world.

May Compassionate and Merciful Allah guide and grant us the wisdom to serve Him and fellow human beings – *aameen*.

EID MUBARAK

FORGIVENESS

The Qur'an considers forgiveness as a virtue which is very pleasing to Allah. Although paying the wrongdoer back in the same manner in which he committed a wrong can have a positive effect on him, we should always have the person's improvement in mind as the main goal. Forgiveness is a good deed only if we apply it with good understanding and according to the circumstances and in such a way that the wrongdoer will not consider it a deed of disregard or cowardice.

Being unjust is a wrong attitude towards the enemy. The Qur'an leaves it to us to strike the golden mean, which will cause our sense of responsibility to be developed further and further. It tells us the following:

"And hasten to forgiveness from your Lord and a Garden, as wide as the heavens and the earth; it is prepared for those who keep their duty; those who spend in ease as well as in adversity and those who restrain (their) anger and pardon men. And Allah loves the doers of good (to others)." (3:133-134)

"Take to forgiveness and enjoin good and turn away from the ignorant." (7:199)

"And if you take your turn, then punish with the like of that with which you were afflicted. But if you show patience, it is certainly best for the patient. And be patient and thy patience is not but by (the help of) Allah, and grieve not for them, nor be in distress for what they plan. Surely Allah is with those who keep their duty and those who do good (to others)." (16:126-128)

"And the recompense of evil is punishment like it; but whoever forgives and amends, his reward is with Allah. Surely He loves not the wrongdoers. And whoever defends himself after his being oppressed, these it is against whom there is no way (of blame). The way (of blame) is only against those who oppress men and revolt in the earth unjustly. For such there is a painful chastisement. And whoever is patient and forgives — that surely is an affair of great resolution." (42:40-43)

"Tell those who believe to forgive those who fear not the days of Allah that He may reward a people for what they earn. Whoever does good it is for himself, and whoever does evil, it is against himself; then to your Lord you will be brought back." (45:14-15)

Source: The Holy Qur'an and its Teachings (Dutch)
G.A. Bashir

Labour in Balance

Islam aims at creating a society in which peace and prosperity prevail among the citizens. This includes material progress, and for this purpose God has provided mankind with the natural resources of the earth [31:20, 2:30].

Asceticism

An ideal society includes a flourishing economy and for this reason Islam encourages labour. However, it is possible that people get so involved in labour that they lose sight of the spiritual side of life. As a result, many unlawful and irresponsible means (corruption, gambling, etc.) might be used to earn as much money as possible, without hesitation.

To avoid this situation, some groups within various religions (including Islam) went to the extreme and established the institution of Asceticism. The thought behind this is that people who seclude themselves from the temptations of the world, such as wealth and sex, will automatically achieve a pure, spiritual life. This, however, is not the view of Islam. The Qur'an states that God has established times for working and for rest:

"We (God) made the night a covering, and the day for seeking livelihood" [78:10-11].

Man can only develop his moral self when he is exposed to the attractive and tempting things of life. He can make spiritual progress by making efforts to restrain these temptations.

Thus, Islam aims at finding a middle course and for this reason the Qur'an teaches the believers to pray for the good, both of this world and of the Hereafter [2:201]. Asceticism is not an Islamic institution, therefore, the Qur'an mentions it as being "an invention of man" [57:27].

Spending Property

Labour and the collection of wealth are not only necessary for the progress of society, but they play an important role for the individual, too. The Qur'an mentions property as being "a means to support" [4:5]. This support is not only for one's household, but, in fact, for every poor and needy fellow-man. Islam does not consider property to be the possession of an individual – even if he has earned it with his own hands – but property is considered as the possession of God, which has been entrusted to the people. For this reason, the Qur'an describes the true believer as one who "spends of what God has given him" [2:3]. By spending his property on his fellow-men, he tries to lessen their sorrow, he develops a feeling of compassion for them, and he learns that wealth is not everything in life. This last point is very important, for, as was mentioned earlier, the desire for more and more wealth can drive one to unlawful and irresponsible means to achieve it.

Always a place for God

Labour and wealth are only a means to achieve certain goals and not the ultimate goals of life. One can earn as much money as one likes, there is no restriction on this, except that extravagance should be avoided, [5:87-88, 7:31-32] for even if the roofs and stairs of his house are from silver and gold, as the Qur'an states, the Hereafter will be only for the dutiful believers [43:33-35]. The Qur'an describes these believers as:

"Men whom neither merchandise nor selling diverts from remembrance of Allah and the keeping up of prayer and the paying of the poorrate" [24:37].

So even if you are busy earning money, God desires that you always have a place for Him in your heart and that you spend part of your property on your poorer brethren. Only in this way can a flourishing, peaceful society exist, which consists of righteous and pious people who earn and spend their property in a sound way.

Practise Encouragement

"Speak good words to all men." (Quran,2:83)

"To God do ascend the goodly words, and He exalts the goodly deed." (Quran,35:10)

Dr. Alfred Adler, the great psychologist, had an experience when he was a young boy. He got off to a bad start learning arithmetic, so his teacher became convinced that Adler was stupid when it came to mathematics. The teacher told Adlers parents that the boy was dumb, and also told them not to expect much from him. His parents were convinced that the teacher's evaluation was correct. Therefore, Adler passively accepted the assessment that they had made of his abilities. And his grades in mathematics proved that they were correct.

However, one day he had a sudden flash of insight and thought he saw how to work a problem the teacher had put on the board that none of the other pupils could solve. He raised his hand and announced that he would like to do the problem. The students, and even the teacher, laughed at this. He became indignant. He strode to the blackboard and solved the problem perfectly, much to everyone's amazement. And at that moment he realised that he could understand mathematics. He had been handed an unreal, negative self-evaluation, and he had believed it and performed on the basis of that assessment.

Many of us have done the very same thing. Someone has told us that our abilities are limited, or that our dreams are unreachable. We have accepted that without question, and we go through life unhappy and unfulfilled. We become estranged from ourselves simply because we believe what others people have told us about ourselves.

Everyone of us - young and old alike - needs to be encouraged. To encourage someone is to put courage into them. To discourage is to take courage out of them. It costs nothing to put courage into another ... to speak a kind word ... to let them know you appreciate them ... to tell them you believe in them ... that you admire them ...to thank them and so on.

So, today, make a point of putting courage into your spouse ... your children ... your boss ... your employees ... and the clerk at the local store. Go out of your way to do it. And in blessing others you will be blessed yourself.

DickInnes

Source: www.divinehumanism.org

In the Love of Allah/God and Mankind

By Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad
{ Translated by Sheikh Muhammad Tufail }

He who lives in humility is the one who finds his Beloved.

O thou experimenter with other ways try this recipe too. Only those who are near to God are alive. It is they, having been accepted by God, who has become His dear friends.

They are far removed from God who are far away from righteousness.

They are at all times the prisoners of haughtiness, pride and vanity.

Friends, righteousness means the abandoning of haughtiness,

The getting rid of the habit of pride, vanity and miserliness.

Give up the love of this transient world.
For the sake of your Beloved, give up the path of mirth
and jollity.

Accept the life of hardship in all sincerity,
So that the angels from the empyrean heights may
descend on you.

Give up conceit and vanity — that is what righteousness
is.

Make yourselves lowly and humble — that is where the
pleasure of God resides

JUST LETTING YOU KNOW

Maulana Muhammad Ali Day was commemorated on the 1st of November 2008 at the residence of Mr and Mrs. Muhammed Usman Sahu Khan. Br Zakir Sahu Khan was the Master of Ceremony. The programme began with Qur'an Tilawat by Br Zafrullah Sahu Khan. Our president Br Muhammad Sadar ud Dean Sahu Khan welcomed all those attending and then went on to speak on **why and how Maulana Muhammad Ali's appointment was a divine appointment**. He also took the opportunity to emphasise and explain the role our Jam'at played in the defence and propagation of Islam according to the Holy Qur'an and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

Br Muhammad Ameen Sahu Khan delivered the monthly Dars-I-Qur'an. He spoke on the subject **"Iman and Islam"**. He also performed the closing dua. The function was well attended.

Lailatul Qadr was celebrated on the 28th of September 2008 at the residence of Mr and Mrs Feroz Dean. Br Zakir Sahu Khan was the Master of Ceremony. Br Muhammad Ameen Sahu Khan spoke on the significance of Lailatul Qadr. Dinner was provided by the hosts.

Eid-Ul-Fitr was celebrated on the 1st of October 2008. Prayers were held at the Wentworthville Community Center. Br Muhammad Ameen Sahu Khan led the prayers and delivered the Khutba.

Quran Dars for the month of November 2008 was held on the 29th at the residence of Mr and Mrs Asim Khalil. Our President Br Muhammad Sadar ud Dean Sahu Khan delivered the Dars. Br Muhammad Usman Sahu Khan performed the dua. Maghrib prayers was led

by six year old Nabeel Malik, Alhamdulillah. He is the grandson of our President.

Eid-Ul-Adha was celebrated on the 10th of December 2008. Prayers were held at the residence of Mr and Mrs Zakir Sahu Khan. Br Muhammad Ameen Sahu Khan led the prayers and delivered the Khutba.

Quran Dars for the month of December 2008 was held on the 13th at the residence of Mrs and the late Dr A.H. Sahu Khan. Our President delivered the Dars. Once again Maghrib prayers was led by six year old Nabeel Malik.

Other Activities

Our President continues to deliver Jumuah Khutba at the Multicultural Center in Canberra City in his capacity as the permanent Imam. He also continues to take active part in Inter-faith meetings and delivers talks as and when required. His last delivery was on the subject **"Environment and Islam"**

"ANOTHER AUSSIE"

Pictured is Mrs Malka Shah, MBE, with His Worship the Mayor of Blacktown Cr Leo Kelly, OAM, at the Citizenship Ceremony held at the Bowman Hall.



BASHSHAAR
(Bringer of Glad Tidings)
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in loving memory of **ABDUL KHALIK SHAH**
(a past president of the Sydney Anjuman)
by his mother **Mrs Malka Shah (MBE)** and his wife **Mrs Nazreen Shah.**