

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



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THE FIRST ISLAMIC MISSION IN THE U.K. ESTABLISHED 1913 C.E. AS THE WOKING MUSLIM MISSION

*Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam Lahore (U.K.)*

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## Next Meeting

Assalamu alaikum

Venue: *Dar-us-Salaam*

Date: **Sunday, 7<sup>th</sup> November 2004**

Time: 05:30 pm

Topic: **Ramadan**

Please make every effort to attend and be on time.

## Regular Activities

**Dars-i Quran/Hadith:** Every Friday at 2:30 pm.

**Meeting of the Executive:** First Sunday of every month at 2 pm.

**Meeting of the Jamaat:** First Sunday of every month at 3 pm.

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## Hazrat Ameer's Message

*"O you who believe, fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may guard against evil". (Al-Baqarah 2:183)*

The blessed month of Ramadan is here to give us an opportunity to uplift and strengthen our souls and further ourselves in striving towards *Taqwah*. *Taqwah* is used in the sense of guarding against what is harmful or injurious and what has to be feared because of its evil consequences. It is also used in the sense of fulfilment of duty to Allah. The purpose as stated in the verse cited above is "so that you may guard against evil". Thus Allah gives us an opportunity to strengthen our souls against the weaknesses that have crept into our lives. Through fasting we cure such weaknesses and protect ourselves from further damage that threatens our souls.

I am sure all members of the Jama'at are looking forward to the spiritual experience associated with fasting. I pray to Allah to give us the health and the strength to embark on this

*mujahidah* (holy struggle) in the strengthening of our souls. Let us take this opportunity to remind ourselves that fasting is not merely the abstinence from food and drink but the adherence to the *spirit of fasting*, which are the moral and spiritual values associated with it. This is stressed both in the Quran and the Tradition. Fasting is a form of prayer and the Quran clearly states:

*"So woe to the praying ones, Who are unmindful of (the object of) their prayers". (Al-Maa'oon 107:4-5)*

The Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, is reported to have said:

*"Whoever does not give up lying and acting falsely, Allah does not stand in need of his giving up food and drink". (Bukhari 30:8)*

The Holy Prophet is also reported to have said:

*"Fasting is a shield, so let the man who fasts not indulge in any foul speech or do any evil deed, and if any one fights or quarrels with him or abuses him, he should say twice, I am fasting." (Bukhari 30:2)*

## 'Id ul Fitr Invitation

Sunday

14 November 2004

Prayers at 11:00

Please make sure  
you are on time.

Brothers and sisters, we should take this month as an opportunity to peep into our hearts to see where our weaknesses lie. We should then make an earnest effort to remove these by asking for Allah's forgiveness and protection. We should also pray that we attain Allah's nearness and even after the month of Ramadan has passed, maintain our nearness to Allah with constant effort and resolve.

*Professor Dr. Abdul Karim Saeed*

Ameer-i-Jama'at

## Ramadan and its significance

### How to observe it in its true spirit

*Importance of self-reform and abstention from base desires*

"O you who believe, fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may guard against evil." (The Holy Quran, 2:183)

Allah says: "And when My servants ask you (O Prophet) about Me, surely I am nigh. 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." (*ibid.*, 2:186)

"And swallow not up your property among yourselves by false means, nor seek to gain access thereby to the authorities so that you may swallow up other people's property wrongfully while you know." (*ibid.*, 2:188)

"He who does not give up uttering falsehood and acting according to it, God has no need of his giving up his food and drink." (The Holy Prophet Muhammad)

Jesus fasted forty days and forty nights, and explained it by saying: "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." (Matthew 4:2-4.) Moses also fasted forty days and forty nights (Exodus 34:28).

### Purpose of fasting in Islam

To develop and strengthen our powers of self-control, so that we can resist wrongful desires and bad habits, and therefore "guard against evil". In fasting, by refraining from the natural human urges to satisfy

one's appetite, we are exercising our ability of self-restraint, so that we can then apply it to our everyday life to bring about self-improvement.

**To attain nearness and closeness to God so that He becomes a reality in our lives. As we bear the rigours of fasting purely for the sake of following a Divine commandment, knowing and feeling that He can see all our actions however secret, it intensifies the consciousness of God in our hearts, resulting in a higher spiritual experience.**

To learn to refrain from usurping other's rights and belongings. In fasting we voluntarily give up even what is rightfully ours; how can then we think of taking what is not ours but belongs to someone else?

Charity and generosity is especially urged during Ramadan. We learn to give, and not to take. The deprivation of fasting makes us sympathise with the suffering of others, and desirous of alleviating it; and it makes us remember the blessings of life which we normally take for granted.

Fasting in Islam does not just consist of refraining from eating and drinking, but from every kind of selfish desire and wrong-doing. The fast is not merely of the body, but essentially that of the spirit as well. The physical fast is a symbol and outward expression of the real, inner fast.

Fasting is a spiritual practice to be found in all religions. The great Founders of various faiths (Buddha, Moses, Jesus, etc.) practised quite rigorous fasting as a preliminary to attaining their first experience of spiritual enlightenment and communion with God. This kind of communion is indicated in what has been said above.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad said:

"People are unaware of the true nature of fasting. The fact is that no country or realm can be described if one has not been there. Fasting is not just the state of remaining hungry and thirsty. Its nature and effect can only be discovered by experience. The human makeup is such that the less food is consumed the greater is the purification of the soul and the development of the powers of inner vision. God's purpose is that you should reduce one kind of food (physical) and increase the other kind (spiritual). The person fasting

must remember that the aim is not simply to remain hungry; he should be engrossed in the remembrance of God so as to attain severance from worldly desires. The object of fasting is that a person should abstain from the food which nourishes the body and obtain the other food which satisfies and brings solace to the soul. Those who truly fast for the sake of attaining to God, and not merely as a custom, should be absorbed in the praise and glorification of God, and in meditating upon His Unity."

Maulana Muhammad Ali said:

"The real purpose of fasting is to attain righteousness. A person who undergoes hunger and thirst, but does not behave righteously, has done nothing. If someone is told the aim and object of doing a certain duty, and he does that duty but does not attain the required aim and object, it is as if he has not done that duty."

The Maulana used very strongly to urge the members of the Lahore Ahmadiyya community to say the *tahajjud* prayers during the month of Ramadan:

"You have to rise early in any case to begin the fast; rise even earlier, by half an hour or an hour, and say *tahajjud* prayers."

## Prayers for Ramadan urged by

### Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Ali

In the month of Ramadan Maulana Muhammad Ali used to exhort the Lahore Ahmadiyya community (*Jamaat*) to undertake a spiritual exertion (*mujahida*) in two forms. One was to fall in prayer before God and beseech Him tearfully in *tahajjud* prayers to enable us to carry out the work of the propagation of Islam and the Quran, and the other was to make financial sacrifices. In this connection he has written many heart-felt, moving prayers in his articles and *khutbas* published in *Paigham Sulh* (the Urdu organ of the Movement) and entreated every member of the *Jamaat* that at least in the month of Ramadan they should treat the *tahajjud* prayer as obligatory for them.

Some prayers that he urged upon the *Jamaat* are given below. These begin with a verse of *Sura Fatihah*, which is

followed by a prayer based on the meaning of the verse.

*Al-hamdu li-llahi Rabb il-'alamin* — 'All praise is for Allah, the Lord of the worlds'.

O God, You have provided the very best means for the physical development of human beings. Now **provide for Your creation spiritual nourishment through the Quran**, as they have moved far off from You and are lost in darkness racing towards destruction. Acquaint their hearts with the bliss that is attained by bowing at Your threshold.

O God, Who granted the Holy Prophet Muhammad and his Companions unique success enabling them to transform the destinies of the entire countries and nations, **foster and nourish us and our Jamaat today** to make it reach the pinnacle of success in spreading the Quran and propagating Islam in the world. Let the foundations for the propagation of Your religion **be laid by our hands**, upon which an edifice continues to be raised till the Day of Judgment.

*Ar-Rahman-ir-Rahim* — 'The Beneficent, the Merciful'.

Your mercy is so boundless that it is aroused even without humans asking for it. It is by Your mercy that the efforts of human beings come to fruition. By Your beneficence **provide guidance** through the Quran to those who are engulfed in darkness. **Make successful our insignificant efforts**, that we may take Your holy message to these people.

*Maliki yaum-id-din* — 'Master of the day of Judgment'.

O God, we are Your humble, unworthy servants. There are shortcomings in us, in myself, in my Jamaat. Sometimes Your orders are even disobeyed. By means of Your authority of judgment, **forgive our faults and infringements**, and let them not be obstacles to the success of our efforts.

*Iyya-ka na'budu wa iyya-ka nasta'in* — 'Thee do we serve and Thee do we beseech for help'.

We serve You and wish to exalt Your name in the world. This is the sole aim of our lives. But we are small in numbers and weak while the task is mammoth. We who are exhausted, weak, humble and sinful, beg only You for help. **Grant this Jamaat the success** which You be-

stow on people who spread Your name in the world.

*Ihdi-nas-sirat al-mustaqim, sirat-allazina an'amta 'alaihim* — 'Guide us on the right path, the path of those upon whom You bestowed favours'.

You have been showering Your servants with the greatest favours. You have never let those fail who made it their aim in life to exalt Your name. Guiding us on the straight path, **confer on us the same favour** which You granted to those before us. **Blow the breeze of Your help** upon us as You made it flow for them and **open the doors of Your bounty** upon us in the same way.

*Ghair-il-maghdubi alaihim wa laddallin* — 'Not those upon whom wrath is brought down, nor those who go astray'.

O Master, let it not be that we make worldly gain to be our objective and give up spreading religion, as is the state of the general Muslims today, or that we become misguided and destroy our powers for the sake of following exaggerated, wrong beliefs, as some are doing.

**More prayers by Maulana Muhammad Ali:**

'Thee do we serve and Thee do we beseech for help.' O God, we do as much as it is in our power to obey You and to spread Your name and Your Word in the world, but we are weak and cannot fully discharge our duty of obeying You. Help us and produce within us the greatest strength to obey You. O God, spreading Your name in the world is the exalted mission for which You had been appointing Your chosen ones, and it was only with Your help that they succeeded in achieving this magnificent goal. One such chosen man of Yours (Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad) has entrusted us with this task, but we are small in numbers, weak, and lacking in means. We are opposed not only by outsiders but also by our own who hamper our way. Guide us through Your graciousness and infuse in us the same strength with which You have ever filled Your chosen ones, and create in our hearts the same light with which You have been illuminating the hearts of Your chosen ones. O God, spreading Your message in the world is the most difficult of tasks in the world. Whenever such a reforma-

tion came about, it was not because of the strength of any man or army but it was from Your aid and succour. So we seek from You that help and aid which You have been bestowing upon Your chosen ones.

O God, Your Holy Word that was revealed for the guidance of the world is not being spread even by its believers. But it is Your promise that You will make it prevail in the world. We too heard the voice of one who came to call to Your message (Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad), and our feeble hands came forward to take this great burden. It was this voice which revived our dead hearts. But our Jamaat is like an ant facing the mountain of unbelief. It is Your promise that has strengthened our hearts. We need Your help above all. We know we are unworthy and not fit to receive Your help, but, O God, Your religion, Your Quran and Your Prophet are deserving of Your help. Let help for them be today manifested through our hands, may Your light illuminate our dark hearts, and may we witness with our own eyes the fulfilment of Your promise.

## Some Questions

### Regarding Fasting

*What is fasting as prescribed by Islam?*

Fasting is a form of training to refrain from all wrong-doing by learning to control one's desires. It consists of giving up, for a fixed period of time, the most basic urges which human beings have, i.e. the urge to satisfy hunger, thirst and sexual desire, and devoting oneself to serving and helping others while disregarding one's own needs.

*How is fasting done in Islam?*

During the month known as Ramadaan in the Islamic calendar, every day from the start of daylight in the early morning till sunset, one must not eat or drink (or have sexual relations). You take a meal while it is still dark just before dawn breaks, and then do not eat or drink anything at all until sunset when the fast ends. During the hours of fasting, extra effort must be made to be kind, generous and helping to others, and to avoid doing anything bad or harmful to other people.

*Does every Muslim have to fast in*

### **Ramadaan?**

Every healthy adult Muslim man or woman must fast during Ramadaan. Those who happen to fall ill or be on a journey during any part of this month do not have to fast on those days and should complete the missed fasts after Ramadaan. People who are permanently unable to fast, or those whose reasons for not fasting are prolonged, such as the very old, the long-term ill, and women who are pregnant or feeding babies, etc., can give in charity instead of fasting. This charity consists, at the least, of giving a day's food to one poor person for every fast missed.

### **How does fasting enable us to give up the bad desires which lead to wrong-doing?**

During the fast, a person feels the urge to have something to eat or drink, but he withstands this strongest of all desires, in obedience to God. This daily training, for a month, exercises and strengthens his ability to control bad desires in everyday life which lead to wrong-doing. This is just as physical exercise strengthens the body, and enables it to fight off illness more easily.

### **Are there any other moral benefits of fasting?**

Yes. Firstly, man is drawn closer to God because when he feels hungry or thirsty during the fast it is the thought of the nearness of God which stops him from satisfying his desires. This makes him feel that God is always near at hand. Secondly, fasting teaches one to be patient and resolute in difficulties, for that is what one does during the fast. Thirdly, it makes us realize the great blessings of food and drink which are so easily available, but which we normally take for granted. Fourthly, it curbs the feelings of greed that develop in people when they have all that they need, and even more.

### **And what does fasting teach us about how to treat other people?**

It makes us realize the suffering and the feelings of those who are deprived and destitute. A very important purpose of fasting is to learn to care about the needs of other people by being less concerned with oneself. This is why charitable acts of all kinds are especially encouraged during the month of fasting. By giving up your right to consume your own

food and drink during the fast, you train yourself to be able to give up something that is rightfully yours, voluntarily and cheerfully, in order to help and serve others.

## **Benefits Of Ramadan**

*Ramazan*, the ninth month of the Muslim calendar, is of great spiritual value to Muslims all over the world. The revelation of the Holy Quran commenced in this month, and the reason given in the Holy Quran for fasting is that the fasting person may guard himself against evil. This shield against evil helps us in the following ways:

### **The Spiritual and Moral Benefits:**

1. It brings a fasting man/woman closer to his/her Creator (Allah).
2. One develops a sense of love for the Holy Quran, as this month brings along with it an opportunity towards a special dedication, and also a love towards its recitation, understanding an remembrance.
3. *Lailat-ul-Qadr* (i.e., the Night of Majesty) falls in this month, and provides an opportunity for acceptance of prayer.
4. *I'tikaf*, i.e., staying in the mosque for the last ten days of this month (*Ramazan*), is observed, and in doing so one gets a better concentration and more time towards praying, reciting the Holy Quran and undergoing other religious activities.
5. Punctuality in the five obligatory prayers helps one develop a habit of offering one's prayers regularly and punctually.
6. The *Tahajjud* prayer is more widely observed. The faithful leave their warm beds in search of the Bliss of Allah.
7. The *Tarawih* prayer is an event that allows faithful to hear the Holy Quran from beginning to end.
8. The fasting Muslim learns to obey every command of Allah, the "Supreme Commander", both publicly and privately.
9. One refrains from evil deeds while one is fasting.
10. One is prepared for radical changes in one's life, as the advent of this month brings similar changes to one's daily schedule.
11. One develops a sense of unity and brotherhood with fellow Muslims all over the world by sharing the

same spiritual experience (i.e., of fasting).

12. One obeys the saying of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, by following his advice to *refrain from harming one's fellow Muslims, physically and/or verbally*.

13. Equality and uniformity is observed, as both black and white, wealthy and poor, master and servant, act according to the will of Allah.

14. The wealthy realise the essence of the word *hunger*, and thus become more dutiful towards the rights of the poor, the orphans, the widows and the needy. Thus one is more mindful towards the giving of charity and bringing about other pious deeds that can alleviate the miseries of the poor.

15. It develops the habit of eating moderately and avoiding wastage of food.

16. Allah forgives the previous sins of the fasting men and women when they seek His forgiveness.

17. Owing to a fasting person's pious acts, fellow-people love him and thus the foundation of a solid and healthy brotherhood is laid down.

### **The Physical Benefits:**

1. It is easier to undergo physical labour.
2. Animal instincts and lower passions are conquered.
3. Body organs benefit from the lesser workload, and some of the injurious substances are eliminated from the body.
4. Laziness is warded off, and one becomes active.
5. One is prepared to face any future hardships and adverse conditions.
6. Physical and mental endurance is increased.
7. One achieves spiritual, bodily and mental gratification on completing one's fasts.
8. After a month-long devotion towards fasting, and accomplishment of acts of piety, one feels real delight when one celebrates the well-deserved *Id-ul-Fitr*.