

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, 2nd January 2005

Time: 3 pm

Speaker: Dr Zahid Aziz

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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News

Fini

Saira Ali

اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّا نَسْأَلُكَ

We announce with deep sorrow the passing away of Begum Saira Ali in Suva, Fiji Islands on 17 October 04.

Sister Saira had been sick for some-time and she died at the age of 73. Funeral prayers were held on 19 October and she was buried in the family graveyard.

Begum Saira was the sister of Yasin

Sahu Khan, Imran Sahu Khan, Nazim Sahu Khan and Ameen Sahu Khan.

May Allah bless the departed soul and grant patience to the bereaved family. Aameen.

Holland

On the initiative of four co-operating Ahmadiyya (Lahore) organisations in Holland, Maulana Kemal Hydal from Trinidad & Tobago was invited to perform a series of lectures here. Before starting his own assignment Maulana Hydal and Mrs. Nareeman Hydal were brought to attend a lecture on the theme of "democracy and Islam" at the University of Utrecht. From 29 – 31 May a training weekend containing a complete study programme was carried out in a conference resort near the Doorn village in the province of Utrecht. The three days study marathon, including a wide variety of subjects on Islam, was actively attended by some 50 members coming from the four jamaats in Holland. After the training weekend Maulana Hydal continued the lecture tour in several cities:

Thursday 3rd June: At Rotterdam's Radio Amigo a live interview was

conducted between Maulana Hydal and haji Santoe on different actual subjects e.g. jihad and the multicultural aspect of Islam in the West. In his answers Maulana Hydal clearly explained the peaceful purpose of jihad and the equally peace and tranquillity of Islam. Under auspices of haji Nur Sardar's Stichting SAAI another interview also taken by haji Santoe was broadcasted in The Hague in which the Maulana elaborated on such actualities as above.

Friday 4th June: As guest of SAAI Maulana Hydal first delivered khutba and led the Jumu'ah prayers and in the evening he lectured here on the important topic of Ahmadiyyat in which he explained the meaning of Mujaddid and the revival of religion in a new era.

Saturday 5th June: AAI Amsterdam's programme started with a dinner after which he lectured on the subjects of homosexuality and respect for other religions. He also explained the verse "the Quraish" being the guardians of the Kabah. **God lives not in Kabah but in the heart of the believers.**

Sunday 6th June: As guest of the

AAII RIV – Rotterdam, Maulana Hydal gave a lecture here on “the essentiality of wars in Islam” explaining that these wars as mentioned in the Quran have nothing to do with aggression against others but with defence of the own community and the solidarity within.

Tuesday 8 June: In this final session at the AAII(L)N centre in The Hague Maulana Hydal elaborated on the last ten chapters of the holy Quran explaining the contents and the metaphors of these Meccan surah’s. On behalf of the Literary Trust in Trinidad he finally presented *Ulamon* a voluminous Arabic dictionary in which reference is also made to Quranic verses. Hikmat Mahawat Khan, as *Ulamon*’s president, thanked the Maulana for all his efforts and Mohamed Mahawat Khan, responsible for the coördination of this 2004 summer educational project, also expressed gratitude to Mr & Mrs. Hydal as well as to all those who had participated in the programmes. In the next issue of *Ulamon News* an interview with Maulana Hydal will be published in which he will express his views and experience about his visit in Holland.

Quranic dictionary for Leiden university by *T. Hassenmahomed*

In May this year, I was interviewed by Mrs R. Boersma, a student at the theological faculty in Leiden. Because she was doing a thesis on the Ahmadiyya movement, I sent her eight books. After she finished with them, I asked her to hand over the books to Leiden University, the ISIM library (International Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World). I spoke to Professor J.J. Witkam and we agreed to stay in touch. It was also agreed that we would continue to provide the ISIM Librarian with books on the Ahmadiyyat.

On Friday 15 October I presented to Professor Witkam the dictionary *The Qur’anic dictionary and Concordance of Maulana S. Muhammad Tufail (M.A.) and Maulana Mustapha K. Hydal (B.A)* and the *Bayaanul Qur’aan of Maulana Muhammed Ali*. He was full of admiration regarding the print, font and length

of the research and the compilation. We agreed that this was a good start and we both look forward to further develop this cooperation. It would be very good for the Ahmadiyyat, since the ISIM Librarian is a well-known and respected library, both nationally and internationally. Thus, it would be a major step forward in the field of education. An important step since the Leiden university library is one of the leading libraries in the Netherlands and it is linked to the ISIM.

Seminar The Dutch Constitution and the way believers believe by *Nazreen Ilahibaks-Ghauharali*

On the occasion of its 28th anniversary, the AAII(L)N organised a seminar, which took place in The Hague on 9th October last. The theme was the Dutch constitution and the way believers believe. Today there is much debate about this. Time and again, you hear that some Muslims are abusing their constitutional rights, which would justify an amendment of the constitution. Apparently, there are those who have difficulty with the way Muslims use the freedom of liberty, or rather they way they believe.

At the seminar the following questions were addressed:

Is there a tension between the teachings of Islam and the freedom of Religion as laid down in Articles 1 and 6 of the Dutch constitution?

How much room does Islam offer to live within the framework of the Dutch constitution?

How could or should the Muslim community deal with the call to change the constitution insofar as it touches upon the way Muslims believe?

The programme consisted of two introductions in the morning and a discussion between Muslim organisations and Dutch politics in the afternoon. The first speech was delivered by Hans Dijkstal, former right-wing minister of Interior Affairs. In his speech he explained that the constitution as we know it today, is the result of what others suffered. He is a

fierce opponent of those who favour a constitutional amendment.

Cees Schuyt, member of the Scientific Council for Government Policy and Professor at the University of Amsterdam, was next. He talked about the developments in the Netherlands and the increasing call for a constitutional amendment. He, too, strongly objects.

The second part of the seminar included representatives of four Muslim organisations united under the CGI umbrella:

The Ahmadiyyat represented by ULAMON-chairman Hikmat Mahawat Khan.

The Alevites from HAK.DER, represented by Nurretin Altundal.

The Shia represented by the Shia council, Mr Mehmet Kaplan.

The Sunni voice represented by Mr Derwisj Maddoe, chairman of the Dutch Muslim Council (NMR).

Dutch politics was represented by socialist parliamentarian Mr J. Dijkstal.

The audience again actively participated. It is a landmark in the history of the Ahmadiyyat to be together with four different Muslim denominations, discussing a political issue!

The seminar received quite some media attention. Newspaper journalists and TV was. There the speech by Mr Hans Dijkstal attracted attention, also from right-wing politician Mat Herben who felt compelled to respond in a Dutch newspaper.

PROHIBITION OF INTOXICANTS

Ibn Saleh

When and How Intoxicants came to be forbidden in Islam

There is no doubt whatsoever that all intoxicants are forbidden for Muslims to drink. The prohibition is made absolutely clear in the Qur’an and several Hadiths by the Prophet Mohammed

Drinking, Gambling, Idols and Divining Arrows were important aspects of pre-Islamic Arabia and currently a favorite practice of western society. They were closely related together in practice and tradition. The Arabs used to drink to extravagance. They considered drinking among practices which gave people distinction. They often mentioned drinking in their poetry as a practice to be proud of or to praise others with. In social gatherings, drinking was coupled with the slaughter of animals which were immediately cooked to provide food to those who took part in drinking, those who served wine and those who frequented such gatherings. The sacrificed animals were slaughtered at the feet of idols which were sprayed with the blood of the sacrifice. In such social events, divining arrows were practiced in order to determine the sharing out of the meat of the sacrifice.

This gives us an idea how traditions were intertwined with ignorant ideological concepts. Islam did not address such traditions at the start, because they were based on mistaken beliefs. To try to reform them at the surface before establishing the right foundation of faith was bound to be a wasted effort, which a divine system would not even consider.

Islam begins its reform with the paramount question for every human being, namely, faith. It uproots the very basic ideological concepts of ignorance in order to put in place the Islamic concept which is in complete harmony with human nature. The Islamic method of reform did not start with the deviations and abominations of ignorance. It addressed the question of faith, beginning with the declaration that there is no deity save Allah.

It took around 13 years to establish in the hearts of the early Muslims the concept of the Oneness of Allah with all that it entails. When submission to God was clearly established in their hearts and they recognized that they could have no choice other than what has been chosen for them by

Allah, then the next phase of outlining their duties, including worship, began. This was combined with the process of eradicating the social, economic, moral and behavioral traces of ignorance.

Yes, the prohibition of intoxicants and games of chance did not come as a surprise. Before this categorical prohibition, some steps were taken to loosen the hold of such social traditions which were closely intertwined with personal habits as well as with economic aspects. Indeed, this was the third or fourth step in solving the problem of intoxicating drinks under Islam.

The first step was no more than firing a shot in the right direction when Allah (limitless He is in His Glory) says in Surah 16, "The Bee", revealed at Makkah: **"And from the fruit of date-palms and vines you derive intoxicants as well as wholesome sustenance"** (16;67). This was the first indication to Muslims, placing intoxicants as opposed to wholesome sustenance.

The second step addressed the Muslims' religious conscience through legislative logic, with the verse revealed in Surah 2, "The Cow": **"They question you about intoxicants and games of chance, Say: in both there is great evil although they have some benefit for man; but their evil is far greater than their benefit."** (2;219) The import here is clear: since the evil of a particular practice is far greater than its benefit, then it is better to abandon it altogether. Hardly anything is totally devoid of benefit, but its permissibility or prohibition depends on whether its evil outweighs its benefit.

The third step broke the habit of drinking and put it on a collision course with attendance to obligatory prayers. Here we have the verse revealed in Surah 4, "Women": **"Believers, do not come near to prayers when you are under the influence of drink, until you are conscious of what you say."** (4;4) Since Muslims offer five obligatory prayers everyday, with close time range for each, which is not sufficient to get drunk and regain sobri-

ety, this instruction practically restricted the times available for drinking. This, in effect abolished the habits of drinking in mid-morning and mid-afternoon which were part of the tradition of pre-Islamic Arabia. Moreover, it militated against addiction, which is closely related to the time of drinking. It became practically impossible for a Muslim to attend to his prayers on time, and to drink at his habitual times.

The fourth and final stage was the categorical prohibition which came after people became fully ready to accept it. This is included in the following verses of surah 5, entitled "The Repast". These may be given in translation as follows: **"Believers, Intoxicants, games of chance, idols and divining arrows are abominations devised by Satan. Therefore, turn away from them so that you may prosper. Satan seeks only to stir up enmity and hatred among you by means of intoxicants and games of chance, and to turn you away from the remembrance of Allah and from prayer. Will you not, then, desist?"**

Umar Ibn Al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) reports: I said in my supplication: My Lord, give us a clear-cut ruling on intoxicants. The verse in surah "The Cow" was revealed stating: **"They question you concerning intoxicants and games of chance, Say: In them there is great evil as well as some benefit for men. However, their evil is far greater than their benefit."** Umar was called in and the verse was recited to him. He said: My Lord give us a clear-cut ruling on intoxicants. The verse in surah "Women" was then revealed: **"Believers, do not come near to prayer when you are under the influence of drinks until you are conscious of what you say."** Umar was called in and the verse was recited to him. He once again said: "My Lord, give us a clear-cut ruling on intoxicants." The verse in surah "The Repast" was then revealed, stating: **"Satan seeks only to stir up enmity and hatred among you by means of intoxicants and games of chance, and to turn you away from the remembrance**

of Allah and from prayer. Will you not, then, desist?" Umar was called in and the verse was recited to him. He said: "We do desist, my Lord! We do desist."

When these two verses which make intoxicants absolutely forbidden were revealed in the third year of Islamic Calendar, shortly after the Battle of Uhud, the matter did not require more than sending someone around the places where people gathered in Madinah to announce: "All intoxicating drinks are forbidden."

Everyone who had a glass of wine in his hand broke it and everyone who was in the actual process of drinking threw out what was in the mouth. Barrels and bottles of wine and intoxicants were broken. The whole matter was over as if the people never drank before.

The way the Qur'anic statement is phrased tells us much about the Qur'anic method of cultivating people's minds and reforming their behavior. It begins with the address so familiar in this part of the surah: "Believers". This address awakens the hearts of believers on the one hand and reminds them, on the other, of the basic requirement of the faith, namely, obedience and submission. This is followed by a decisive statement of the nature of those practices which admits no counter argument: **"Intoxicants, games of chance, idols and divining arrows are abominations devised by Satan."** These are, then, foul practices and cannot be included among good and wholesome things which Allah has permitted. Moreover, they have been devised by Satan, the old enemy of man. It is sufficient for a believer to know that something is devised by Satan to make it totally repugnant to him.

At this point the prohibition is issued, combined with holding the prospect of prosperity which has its profound effect on the human mind: **"Therefore, turn away from them so that you may prosper."** The Qur'anic verses go on to further expose the scheme of Satan behind the devising of these abominations: **"Satan seeks only to stir up enmity and hatred among you by means of**

intoxicants and games of chance, and to turn you away from the remembrance of Allah and from prayer." The aim of Satan and the purpose of his scheming are thus exposed before every Muslim. Satan seeks nothing except the stirring up of enmity and hatred among believers and to turn them away from their worship. What a wicked scheme! These aims of Satan can be easily recognized in practical life after we have accepted them as true, since Allah has stated them.

It does not take long to recognize how Satan does actually stir up enmity and hatred, utilizing for this purpose intoxicants and gambling, since intoxicants weaken one's consciousness and self-control, heightens tempers and stirs up whims and impulses. Gambling and all games of chance leave people with a sense of loss. It is natural that a losing gambler nurses a strong grudge against the winner who takes away his money from right under his nose and leaves him empty handed. It is only natural that such matters stir up enmity and hatred, regardless of the strength of the impression of happiness they initially give. The fact that intoxicants and gambling do turn people away from the remembrance of Allah and from prayer is too clear to require elaboration.

Drinking makes people forget and gambling makes them oblivious of everything else. Indeed, games of chance keep gamblers in a state of intoxication which is not dissimilar to that produced by drinks. The world of a gambler is akin to that of a drunkard: tables, glasses and a strike of fortune or misfortune.

With this clear reference to the aim of Satan, the question is put pointedly: **"Will you not, then, desist?"** It is a question that admits only one answer: **"We do desist, my Lord! We do desist"**

The surah then goes on to put the whole matter in its proper perspective: **"Obey Allah and obey the messenger, and be ever on your guard. But, if you turn away, then know that the duty of Our messenger is only to convey (Our message) clearly."**

Do This Today

Set out the following TEN rules and goals for today and see the results

1: *I will not strike back:*

If someone is rude, if someone is impatient, if someone is unkind .. I will not respond in a like manner.

2: *I will ask Allah to bless my enemy.*

If I come across someone who treats me harshly or unfairly, I will quietly ask Allah to bless that individual. I understand the "enemy" could be a family member, neighbour, co-worker or a stranger.

3: *I will be careful about what I say.*

I will carefully choose and guard my words being certain that I do not spread gossip.

4: *I will go the extra mile:*

I will find ways to help share the burden of another person.

5: *I will forgive:*

I will forgive any hurts or injuries that came my way.

6: *I will do something nice for someone, but I will do it in secret.*

I will reach out anonymously and bless the life of another.

7: *I will treat others the way I want to be treated:*

I will practice the golden rule – "Do unto others as I would have them do unto me" – with everyone I encounter.

8: *I will raise the spirits of someone I discouraged.*

My smile, my words, my expression of support, can make the difference to someone who is wrestling life.

9: *I will nurture my body:*

I will eat less; I will eat only healthy foods. I will thank Allah for my body.

10: *I will grow spiritually:*

I will spend a little more time in prayers today: I will begin reading something spiritual or inspirational today; I will find a quiet place (at some point during the day) and listen to God's voice!

Companions of the Promised Messiah

Dr. Basharat Ahmad

(Compiled by Dr. Zahid Aziz, UK)

Dr Basharat Ahmad was a leading Islamic intellectual, scholar and author of the Lahore Ahmadiya Movement, noted particularly for his fresh and inspiring expositions of the Holy Qur'an.

He was born on 3rd of October 1876 at Bagsoor in Dharamshala Cantonment, district Kagra, India. His grandfather, Shaikh Ahmad Ali Faruqui, was a tutor of Persian and Urdu to British Army Officers in the Dharamshala Cantonment. It was there that he spent his childhood until his grandfather, after his retirement, moved to Sialkot. He received his school and college education at Sialkot in the Scotch Mission High School and Murray College. When he obtained admission to the Medical College in Lahore (later known as King Edward Medical College), a prestigious medical institution, and his grandfather also moved to Lahore to provide all possible care and attention to his education. His first appointment as a doctor was in East Africa where he stayed for one and half year during the late 1890s. He then returned to India and worked first as Medical Officer and then as Officer-in-Charge of the hospitals in major cities of the Punjab, such as Gujrat, Rawalpindi and Mianwali. When he retired from government services in Ludhiana in 1931, he was offered the high post of Chief Medical Officer by the state of Malerkotla, but on the suggestion of Maulana Mohammed Ali (may Allah shower his mercy on him), he decided to settle down in Lahore to serve the cause of Islam with his vast knowledge of Islam, deep understanding of the Holy Qur'an, and true comprehension of the claims and teachings of the Founder of Ahmadiya Movement, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad.

For almost thirty years, he wrote extensively in the Urdu organ of the Lahore Ahmadiya Movement, *Paigham-i-Sulh*, on a wide range of issues relating to the Holy Qur'an, Islam and our movement. To ques-

tions posed to him, he replied in a most cogent and authoritative manner which not only satisfied the questioner but also showed the rationality and deep Divine wisdom underlying the Last Word of Allah. A large number of such articles relating to Islam were later compiled by his elder son, Mumtaz Ahmad Faruqui, in book form and published in three volumes under the title *Basharat-i-Ahmadiyya*. Some of his lengthy articles have also been published as separate booklets during his lifetime. During his government service and even after the retirement he regularly delivered Dars-i-Qur'an in the afternoons. His exposition was eloquent, impressive, convincing and relevant to the present circumstances and it attracted Muslims of all persuasions and sections and even non-Muslims.

Towards the closing years of his life, he wrote an extremely enlightened commentary of the 30th and then the 27th part of the Holy Qur'an, entitled *Anwarul Qur'an* (the Blessings of the Qur'an). In an inspiring article, he related the events that led to his joining Ahmadiyya Movement. In 1901, his eldest son became critically ill and doctors lost all hope of his survival. By that time Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, promised messiah and founder of the movement (may Allah be pleased with him), had become well-known for his spiritual eminence. Dr. Basharat Ahmad specially went to Qadian to request him to pray for the child. He describes how he met Maseeh-i-Maood (as) and became totally captivated by his humble, hospitable manner and spiritual aura. When Maseeh-i-Maood (as) answered some of his questions requesting spiritual guidance, he began to feel as if Maseeh-i-Maood's (as) replied were entering deep into his heart, removing the doubts within, and purifying his soul. He felt inwardly compelled to take the pledge there and then to join the movement. It was only at the end of their talk that he remembered the original purpose of his visit; to request Maseeh-i-Maood (as) for prayers for his son! He made the request and Hazrat Mirza prayed for the child. He later learnt, to his astonishment, that the

child had started to recover the same day that Maseeh-i-Maood (as) had prayed for him, when everyone had become completely despondent, and by the third day the child had fully recovered. This extraordinary acceptance of prayer further intensified his faith in the truth of Maseeh-i-Maood (may Allah be pleased with him).

With the passage of time, he became convinced that he must write a comprehensive, authentic biography of the Maseeh-i-Maood (as) covering his life and works, dealing particularly with the unique services to Islam of this outstanding Islamic revivalist of the age. He compiled and published his monumental research work in three volumes entitled *Mujaddid-i-Azam* (the Great Reformer). It is widely considered, by friends and foes, to be the most authentic biography and a true depiction of the yeoman's service performed by the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement. The first two volumes, published in 1939 and 1940, consist of the Maseeh-i-Maood's life history, and also contain a synopsis of each of his major Urdu, Arabic and Persian works. The third volume deals with his Islamic philosophy, thoughts, exposition of Islamic concepts, defense of Islam in reply to non-Muslim critics and opponents, and his mission to carry the message of Islam to the West. This volume was published shortly after the death of the author.

In 1914, there occurred a split in the Ahmadiyya Movement because Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, son of the Founder, was propagating the wrong doctrine that the Founder was a prophet and all those Muslims who did not accept him were disbelievers and outside the pale of Islam. Dr. Basharat Ahmad, from that time onwards, wrote numerous articles and booklets refuting these false doctrines and clarifying the true nature of the claim and status of Maseeh-i-Maood, the holy Founder. In January 1943, he went to Bombay to stay with his younger son, Naseer Ahmad Faruqui. Being ill already, he died there peacefully on 21st of April 1943. His body was brought to Lahore for burial.

Significance of the Islamic sacrifice at

'Id-ul-Adha

by Dr Zahid Aziz

[Khutba delivered on the occasion of 'Id-ul-Adha, which took place on February 12th, 2003.]

We learn from the studies of scholars of history and of human customs that rites and ceremonies of sacrifice, where something or someone is offered as a sacrifice to a deity or a god, are found universally among all the nations on earth, and can be traced back to the earliest times that we know about in human history. This fact can be quickly verified from various encyclopaedias under the entry 'sacrifice'. The Holy Quran says in connection with sacrifices:

“And for every nation We appointed acts of devotion [sacrifices are meant here] that they might mention the name of God on what He has given them of the cattle quadrupeds.” — 22:34

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, to whom this verse was revealed, himself knew of only a few nations in his part of the world, and could not possibly know the fact that is disclosed here, that sacrifice has been a universal practice among all people on earth. This revealed statement has been confirmed by modern studies in history and anthropology.

Similarly, in the case of fasting, it is a universal practice, so widespread that it was even practised in the original religion of the native American Indians, just as the Quran tells Muslims that fasting had been “prescribed for those before you”. So the Holy Prophet Muhammad informed the world of this great truth that fasting and sacrifice are both universal institutions. And the same applies to the remaining two practical ordinances of Islam: prayer and charity. These traditions are spread throughout humankind because, according to Islam, God raised prophets in all nations on earth, and they taught human beings to serve the One God in the ways that are an innate part of human

nature.

However, all these widely-prevailing practices had, in various religions, become corrupted and surrounded by a mass of misconceptions, and Islam came to restore them to their true significance, meaning and purpose.

As regards sacrifice, in various religions such as the Jewish and Hindu religions, the worshippers offered a sacrifice as a gift to God, to the One God or to some other deity that they believed in, in order to please that god, to assuage the anger of the deity or to get some favour from it. For example, the Vedas of the Hindus show that the sacrifice was in fact a bribe given to secure the favour of a particular god. It was believed that if you offered the proper victim as sacrifice, the gods could not refuse your prayer and had to grant you what you asked for.

The Holy Quran corrected the notion that God, like a human being, requires some gift to make Him happy and pleased with you. The Quran says that God is above need of anything that could be supplied by His creation: “Allah is above need, and you are needy” (47:38), He is above need of your thanks (39:7), He is above need of the things in this world (3:96).

It is also fitting to quote here the verse:

“Shall I take for my friend and protector someone other than Allah — *He feeds and is not fed.*” — 6:14

This is significant because in most sacrifices what was offered in sacrifice was some eatable, ranging from grain and butter to, of course, animals such as cows and sheep. In a Hindu sacrificial rite, wood and *ghee* (clarified butter) are fed into fire, and it is believed that the god in the fire, called Agni, carries these offerings to the gods in the skies. But the Quran tells us that God is the One Who feeds and is not fed.

Regarding the animal that Muslims are required to sacrifice, the Quran says:

“Not their flesh, nor their blood reaches Allah. What reaches Him is

your righteousness.” — 22:37

What reaches Allah is your sacrifice of yourself, that is, the sacrifice of your desires. When the animal is sacrificed, you are making the statement by this act that you are sacrificing the animal desires, the lower desires, within yourself. That is the purpose of the sacrifice which has been continued as a practice in Islam.

Another way in which the institution of sacrifice had been corrupted and perverted was by the custom of sacrificing human beings, often children or maidens. Again, the hideous idea behind this was to offer to a god something that is most pure and unsullied. It was also the most valuable thing that could be sacrificed. Human sacrifices prevailed very widely in the world among most races and in most regions, for example, among the Greeks, Romans, Northern Europeans, Britons, various Middle Eastern nations and among Hindus in India. Several of the gods worshipped by certain castes of the Hindus are said to be appeased by the sacrifice of a human life, and such sacrifices were offered when some calamity or disaster befell the community. Indeed in Hindu scriptures human sacrifice is sometimes mentioned as part of the religious rituals. Such sacrifice was banned only in modern times under British rule in India. Nonetheless, even during the 20th century there were cases brought to court in South India in which a human being — usually a child or even the sacrificer's own son — had been sacrificed among certain Hindu castes, as offerings to please certain gods of those people.

Abraham's sacrifice

This brings us to the subject of the sacrifice which Abraham was intending to make of his son, Ismail, and how, through that incident, God communicated to mankind that human sacrifice is not what is required.

It was after much prayer that Abraham had a child, a son, and that too in old age. When Ismail reached his early teens, Abraham saw in a

dream that he was sacrificing him. As human sacrifice, particularly of the first-born son, was a practice prevailing among various nations, Abraham came to believe that he was being instructed by God to sacrifice Ismail. Having obtained Ismail's agreement, Abraham tried to perform this act but God stopped him and said: "You have already fulfilled the vision" (Holy Quran, 37:104–105). To mark this event, the practice of the sacrifice of an animal was instituted, which takes place annually at the time of the Pilgrimage to Makka.

This incident, apart from having many other important lessons and significances, showed that human sacrifice is a mistaken and wrong notion which is not warranted by God. This was a great blessing to humanity, and one of the aspects that we mark by recalling this event every year is how God disallowed this cruel and barbaric practice which was spread among all countries and nations.

Was Abraham actually commanded to slaughter Ismail

A question arises whether God actually ordered Abraham to sacrifice Ismail, and when he showed his readiness to do so, God told him that his willingness to make the sacrifice was tantamount to fulfilling the vision. Was the Divine purpose to test Abraham to see if he would carry out this order? A famous Indian Muslim scholar, author and historian, Maulana Shibli Nu'mani (a contemporary of Hazrat Mirza) writes in his well-known biography of the Holy Prophet Muhammad *Sirat-un-Nabi* as follows:

"It must first be explained that in the religion of Abraham, the same word was used for both making a sacrifice and devoting something to God. If it was said that a child should be sacrificed in the temple the meaning was that he should be taken from his house and given to the service and custodianship of that temple. But when the same word was used about an animal, then physical sacrifice of life was meant. It is said in the Torah from the mouth of God: 'For all the first-born among the people of Israel

are mine, both of man and of beast' (Numbers, 8:17). It is also mentioned in detail in the same book of Numbers (ch. 8) that the Levites should be offered 'before the Lord as a wave offering ... that it may be theirs to do the service of the Lord. Then the Levites shall lay their hands upon the heads of the bulls' who will be sacrificed.

The command given to Abraham in his dream to sacrifice his son meant that the son should be devoted to the service of God. Abraham at first took this dream literally and actually, and tried to act on it exactly. However, it later became clear that it was a symbolic dream. On that basis, Abraham devoted his son for the service of the House of God." (pages 136, 137)

A little further on, he writes under the heading *The nature of the sacrifice*:

"Leaders of Sufi thought have written that the dreams shown to prophets are of two kinds: those meant exactly as seen and those meant symbolically. In the former, what is seen in the dream is exactly what is meant. In symbolic dreams, the significance is conveyed by means of similitude and illustration. The dream shown to Abraham meant that the son should be devoted for the service of the House of God, so that he is not to pursue some other walk of life than service of the Ka'bah. In the Torah the word 'sacrifice' is repeatedly used with this meaning.

Abraham took this dream literally and tried to act upon it exactly as he saw it, though his thinking was an error of judgment which prophets can make, but such error is removed through a warning from God. So Abraham was stopped from carrying it out." (pages 145–147)

Thus Abraham was informed by revelation that he had already fulfilled the vision by leaving Ismail, and his mother Hagar, at the site of the Ka'bah in the service of God.

Whatever interpretation we take, the lesson for us in the sacrifice of Abraham is to be ever-prepared to sacrifice, when required in the

Divine cause, whatever we hold dearest to us, be it our lives, wealth, position in society, relationships, etc. **It is not the thing we sacrifice that matters, but the sacrifice of our attachment to it and of our desire to possess it, when that desire conflicts with doing our duty to God.**

It must be emphasized that sacrifice of life, as required by Islam, does *not* consist of throwing away your life by committing an irrational, reckless act of intentional suicide for some object, or by urging and teaching others to do so. Through the incident of Abraham's dream, Allah has taught His prohibition of literal human sacrifice. So if any people or community sends its young sons to their certain deaths by getting them to undertake premeditated suicide attacks, this is not the sacrifice of life required by Islam; indeed it is disallowed by Islam. **True sacrifice of life is to spend your life working for the cause of Islam.**

There is another kind of 'sacrifice of son' as well, which is greatly beneficial. Often parents pander to the wrong ambitions, habits and desires of their sons, out of misguided love, rather than correcting them. Fathers in position of power or authority misuse their position to allow wrongdoings, flagrant misdeeds and injustice by their sons to continue unchecked. The worst examples of this are when sons of presidents and rulers feel free to violate the law of the land as well as transgress the rules of morality because the father does not stop them nor allow the law to take action against them. **Those are occasions when a father should sacrifice his love for the son in the path of justice.**

In conclusion, we must remember that the sacrifice of an animal at *'Id-ul-Adha* is only a token of our resolve to make real sacrifices of the animal desires within us. Maulana Muhammad Ali often used to exhort the members of this community in his *'Id-ul-Adha* addresses that, on every such *'Id*, they should strive to give up one bad habit permanently. It is doing that which is the real sacrifice.

Forward Planner - 2005

January	2 nd	Monthly meeting
	Friday 21 st	<i>'Id al Adha</i> - Prayer 11 am
February	6 th	Monthly meeting
March	6 th	Monthly meeting
	Friday 25 th	Good Friday Bank Holiday
April	3 rd	Monthly meeting
May	1 st	<i>Millad un Nabi</i>
June	5 th	Elections & AGM
July	3 rd	Monthly meeting
August	7 th	Monthly meeting
September	4 th	Monthly meeting
October	2 nd	Monthly meeting
	Wednesday 5 th	<i>Ramadaan</i> starts
	Saturday 8 th	1st Ifftari
	Saturday 15 th	2nd Ifftari
	Saturday 22 nd	3rd Ifftari
	Saturday 29 th	4th Ifftari
November	Friday 4 th	'Id al Fitr - Prayers 11 am
	6 th	Monthly meeting
December	4 th	Monthly meeting

Other activities will be announced in the Monthly Bulletin.