



The First Islamic Mission in UK, established 1913 C.E.

Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam Lahore (UK)

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March, 2000 C.E. Bulletin

'Id al Adha

You, your family and friends are welcome to join us for 'Id on
Thursday 16th March.

Prayers start at 11:30.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

March 2000 C.E. Meeting

Assalamu alaikum

Venue: *Dar-us-Salaam*

Date: Sunday, 5th March 2000

Time: 3 p.m.

Topic: The Spirit of Sacrifice

'Id al Adha

'Id al Adha follows the Haj. It commemorates the sacrifice of Hazrat Ibrahim, Hazrat Ismael and Hazrat Hajrah and their achievement. Islamic religious festivals do not generally celebrate individuals or their achievements. For example, although Muslims in many parts of the world celebrate the birth of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), this is not a formal part of Islam. Despite this, the religion of Islam celebrates the activities of a family which, on the face of it, belongs to a different religion. That is to say that in Islam, a part of the reli-

gious ritual, is to remember once a year the sacrifice made by Hazrat Ibrahim, Hazrat Hajrah and Hazrat Ismael (may Allah bless them all).

This is the only instance in the religion of Islam where Allah has decreed that Muslims celebrate the actions of other human beings by way of a religious festival. Nay, it is the only instance in the history of human kind that the followers of one faith celebrate and commemorate the deeds of religious leaders of another faith. For, if we look at Hazrat Ibrahim, Hazrat Hajrah and Hazrat Ismael, we will say that they belong to the Jewish religion and not Islam. But this is not true, for all prophets of Allah were Muslims, because, a Muslim is one who willingly submits to the Commands of Allah. Therefore, we are Commanded by Allah to accept and to revere all prophets.

The reason for giving Hazrat Ibrahim, Hazrat Ismael and Hazrat Hajrah this honour is, that, by rebuilding the Holy Kabah they were laying down the first stone in the construction of the edifice of the unity of human kind. The complete submission of these three humans to the Will of Allah sets forth an example to show us that this is the first condition that human kind is to fulfill if it is to become one nation. **They obeyed**

Allah without question and without thought of the physical danger that they put themselves in, by doing so. This allowed them to construct the Kabah, a project which would have been impossible in normal conditions. Without help, in a hostile environment, they managed to rebuild the First House devoted solely to the worship of Allah.

On the one hand, celebration of 'Id al Adha reminds us of the sacrifice made by this family to lay the foundation stone of the unity of Godhead. On the other hand, **the Haj itself is a reminder of what human kind should be striving to achieve — Unity.** The ritual of the Haj has in it the lesson of how this unity can be achieved. The first step is to free oneself of worldly desires and ambitions. That is why we even shave our hair. It is a symbolic gesture to show that we are ridding ourselves of our worldly desires. We put off our every day garments symbolizing the fact that we must rid ourselves of desires for worldly acquisitions. All of us put on the same simple garb of two white sheets to show that, once all worldly acquisitions have been taken away and **no artificial means of determining rank and wealth remain, all human are the equal. It**

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also shows that now the only means of distinction and distinguishing humans is their conduct and behaviour.

To the pilgrim, the Haj must mean that, as he sets off on this journey, he is leaving behind his temporal desires, ambitions and his worldly acquisitions. He was born with nothing and he goes to Haj with nothing of this world, in exactly the same way as he will leave this world to go and meet his or her Maker.

Unity of human kind will only become possible when people put aside their vain and egotistical desires for extracting political, military, strategic or financial advantage, when they meet to discuss plans for the unity of human kind. So long as each nation tries to extract advantages for itself, human kind will not unite.

Humankind has always tried to unite the world. There are numerous examples of such attempts. Alexander, Caesars, the Mongols, Napoleon, and Hitler, among others, tried to unite the world by military means. They all failed. Their attempts to unite humankind led to great destruction and misery. Others tried to unite humankind on the basis of political philosophies. They too failed. The destruction of the mighty Soviet Union, established on the ideas of Karl Marx, is a lesson to us all. It proves, that, by itself, humankind is incapable of achieving this great prize. The reason for failure is obvious.

These attempts to unite humankind were not for the benefit of every one. These were attempts to install one country or one race as a master over the others in order that it may use them for its own benefit. Smaller and weaker nations were used as pawns in global strategies by bigger and more powerful countries. The destruction of Vietnam and Afghanistan are a reminder to us all of human greed for power. The homelands of the mighty military powers engaged in these conflicts were not touched by destruction but both Vietnam and Afghanistan were devastated.

Islam wants to unite humanity for humankind's benefit. Islam does not want to establish the hegemony of one nation, race or country over others so that they exploit the rest of the world. Just imagine the benefits of a united humankind, free of conflict. There will be no military force of any kind; the resources thus released could be used to better the living conditions of people. A small fraction of the money saved would be sufficient to provide clean drinking water to the whole world.

The ritual of Haj shows that when humankind is bound together by a principle then even millions of them can live in close proximity without even the most trivial crimes marring their existence. All Islamic devotions set forth examples of how we may all live together in harmony. Yet, even Muslims choose to ignore the Islamic teaching. Even if only Muslims observed what Islam teaches, we would have one country and one nation stretching from Morocco to Indonesia. The influence of such a state would be many times its physical size.

Yet all of these political matters are incidental. The sacrifice of Hazrat Ibrahim, Hazrat Hajrah and Hazrat Ismael shows that those who truly believe in Allah and live and die in accordance with His commands, live on forever.

A Muslim is required to perform the Haj only once in his life time, after fulfilling all other obligations. A Muslim, in the words of the Holy Quran, must make provision for it. This is a reply to those who leave home without adequate finance saying that as they are going to Haj, Allah will provide. On the contrary, Allah clearly tells us that we have to make provision for the Haj ourselves. According to Islam, trust in Allah does not mean a lack of effort by one's self.

Making a provision for Haj may, also, be taken to mean that, as the Haj is a spiritual journey one must also make a spiritual provision for it. Speaking of the ritual sacrifice of-

ferred at the time 'Id al Adha, the Holy Quran warns us that it is not the blood or the meat of the animals that reaches Allah. What reaches Allah is righteousness. Haj should take one even closer to Allah. This will only happen if, when going for Haj, one leaves behind one's temporal desires. If, even during Haj, one is calculating one's profit and the terms and conditions of the next contract; this could have been done by staying at home.

Once a year, all Muslims are united. They live together, they eat together, they sleep together, they pray together. They all pray together regardless of race, colour, creed or sect; united together in their pursuit of closeness to Allah. What a magnificent sight it is to see Muslims gathered together in unity. How sad it is that, no sooner do the pilgrims depart, that this sense of unity fades away, like the morning mist. **We forget that the lessons of Islamic devotions are meant to stay with us permanently. They are not meant to be transitory like the new year resolutions which fade from memory and are forgotten before January ends.**

Ideally each pilgrim should take back with him or her this little seed of unity and plant it in their own homeland. This does not happen because we have forgotten the spirit behind Islamic devotions. They have become physical rituals devoid of spiritual meaning. If only we learnt the lessons Islamic devotions are meant to teach us rather than just perform them in a mechanistic manner.

Congregational prayers, especially on Friday, when the whole population of a town prays together, is meant to foster unity amongst the Muslims. Zakat is an obligation for a Muslim, because concern and caring for one's brothers and sisters in faith engenders a feeling of belonging and unites the ummah. The same applies to saum (fasting). Sharing in the deprivation of the needy by the rest brings together the ummah. We overlook these lessons even though the magnificent gathering at Makkah, the Haj, reminds us of this.