Eid Mubarak!
OUR BELIEFS

As shadu-an la ilaha illallahu wahdahu la sharika lahu wa ash dhu-an Muhammad-an 'abduhu wa rasuluhu.

1. We believe Allah to be the Possessor of all the perfect attributes, free from all defects and imperfections, Unique in His Person, unrivalled in His Attributes and Works, and One without a partner.

2. We hold it essential to believe in angels, all of the Divine Books, and all the prophets and messengers of God.

3. We believe that the Holy Prophet Muhammad is the Khatam al-Nabiyyin. With his advent religion has been perfected, so he is the Last Prophet after whom no prophet shall come, neither a new one nor a former one.

4. We believe in the life after death, and in all matters relating to the grave, the day of judgement, and paradise and hell, that are proven from the Qur'an and Hadith.

5. From the depth of our hearts, we hold the Righteous Caliphs, the Holy Companions (ashab), the Purified Wives, and members of the Holy Household (ahl batin, as beloved, worthy of respect, and honourable in the sight of God.

6. We hold the Imams Abu Hanifah, Shafi'i, Malik, and Ahmad Hanbal to be the leaders of jurisprudence (fiqh); and saints such as Shaikh 'Abdul Qadir Jilani, Khwajah Naqshband; and Shaikh Ahmad Sirhind to be leaders of Tusawwaf (the spiritual sciences). We believe all such elders of the religion to be worthy of esteem.

7. In accordance with the Holy Prophet's sayings about mujaddids and muhaddaths, we believe in the truth of the mujaddids of all the centuries, and in accordance with the same tradition, believe in Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian as the Mujaddid of the fourteenth century of Hijrah, not as a prophet.

8. We consider each such person to be a Muslim who professes to believe la ilaha illallah, Muhammad-ur rasul Allah ("there is no god but Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah) and calls himself a Muslim.

9. All the members of the Ahmadiyyah Anjuman Isha'at Islam Lahore believe in acting according to God's Book the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, and if no specific direction is found there, they give precedence to the Hanafi school of jurisprudence.

The Ahmadiyyah Anjuman Isha'at Islam Lahore has not only been proclaiming these beliefs but, for sixty-five years, it has been engaged in the propagation of Islam and service to its cause. The whole world and in particular the Muslim religious scholars of the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent have borne witness to this fact.

SWORN DECLARATION OF HADRAT MIRZA GHULAM AHMAD OF QADIAN:

"I make it clear to the public that I swear by Almighty Allah that I am not a kafir. My belief is la ilaha illallah Muhammad-ur rasul Allah, and regarding the Holy Prophet I believe that "he is the Messenger of Allah and Khatam al-Nabiyyin" (the Qur'an, 33:40). I swear to this statement as many times as the Holy Qur'an, and as many times as there are excellency of the Holy Prophet in God's eyes. No belief of mine is opposed to the directions of God or of the Holy Prophet, and he who thinks otherwise is mistaken. Whoever still considers me a kafir, and does not refrain from declaring me as such, should remember with certainty that God will question him after his death."

"In all matters my beliefs are the same as those of the other ahl sunnah. In this house of God, I admit most clearly that I believe in the finality of prophethood of the Khatam al-aniya, the Holy Prophet. Whoever denies the finality of prophethood, I consider him to be a disbeliever and outside the pale of Islam."

SWORN DECLARATION OF HADRAT MAULANA MUHAMMAD ALLI, FIRST HEAD OF THE LAHORE AHMADIYYA COMMUNITY:

"I, Muhammad Ali, head of the Lahore Ahmadiyyah Community, do swear by Almighty God that my belief is that Hadrat Mirza Sahib was a Mujaddid and the Messiah, but not a prophet, and that a person cannot become a kafir and excluded from the pale of Islam by denying him as such; this was also the belief of Hadrat Mirza Sahib himself. "O God, if I have lied in swearing by Thy name, send upon me such exemplary punishment as could not come from human means, and by which the world would see how terrible and frightening is God's punishment for those who deceive His creatures by swearing falsely in His name."

SWORN DECLARATION OF MAULANA SADR-UD-DIN, HEAD OF THE LAHORE AHMADIYYA COMMUNITY:

"Knowing God to be present and to be our witness, we state on oath that from the beginning we have believed, and we still believe, that no prophet, neither a new one nor a former one, can come after the Holy Prophet Muhammad."
Editorial

As the month of Ramadzan draws to a close, Muslims throughout the world, having participated in the spiritually and morally uplifting fasting over the thirty days, are now brimming with expectant joy of having successfully accomplished yet another of their Beneficent Maker’s commands. Elsewhere in this issue, writers have set out the rationale for the institution of fasting in Islam – an institution which is as old as the religions of the world.

To non-Muslims, the Muslim fasting must appear to be one of daunting rigour. Yet the very eagerness and joy with which the participants “endure” fasting, testifies to the obvious spiritual benefits derived from the act. One only needs to witness the desire of even little children to join in the fasting, or to note the distress of those who, for one reason or another, are unable to partake, to realise that the practice is neither one of daunting rigour, nor is it an endurance, but rather, it is a fountain of spiritual and moral sustenance which is as necessary for our souls as food and drink are for our bodily sustenance. Except, that the benefits derived from fasting have a far more sublime purpose and value than one could even derive from eating or even plain dieting. It is a response to Allah’s call, an affirmation of His Existence and Omnipresence, and an occasion for spiritual cleansing and rebuilding.

Is there any wonder, then, that at the end of this momentous occasion, the Muslims should joyously celebrate their having successfully answered Allah’s command. Contrary to some beliefs by those not initiated in Islam, the celebrating that takes place at the end of the fasting season is not an expression of happiness at having returned to the carnal pleasures of this life. Rather, it is one of expressing gratitude to Allah at His having given us the opportunity of having attained yet another spiritual and moral uplifting and rejuvenation of our souls. This rebirth, as it were, is an occasion for celebration, as it certainly is, and is characterised by all the joy that one sees in the festival of ’Id-al-Fitr.

The editorial board wishes all its readers a most joyous ’Id!

“‘The Messenger has faith in what has been revealed to him from his Lord and so have the believers; they all believe in Allah and His angels and His books and His messengers; we make no difference between any of His messengers;’ (2:289).

“And those who believe in that which has been revealed to thee and that which was revealed before thee and the Hereafter they are sure” (2:4).
INTRODUCTION

As with all religions of the world, Islam has its festivals, and the two greatest festivals of Islam - universally recognised by its adherents and having the sanction of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), are ‘Id-al-Fitr and ‘Id-al-Adhza. The common prefix; ‘Id, denotes “a recurring happiness”. In ‘Id-al-Fitr, the word “fitr”, means “to begin” and is derived from the Arabic word “fitra”, meaning nature. Thus, “iftar” means the breaking of a fast, since the one fasting is returning to the natural course, or the natural manner of living. Hence the festival of ‘Id-al-Fitr indicates the commemoration of the end of the month of fasting (Ramadzan) and the returning to normal regime. The festival occurs on the first day of the Arabic month of Shawwal. The celebration that is associated with the festival is to indicate that happiness is associated with the performance of a duty — in this case, a month of fasting, in accordance with the instruction of the Holy Quran,

“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-Quran 2:183)

In order that they may offer their thanks to the Almighty that He has permitted them to successfully accomplish this duty, Muslims gather in large congregations as possible for the special ‘Id prayer which marks the beginning of this day of celebrations.

PREPARATION FOR ‘ID PRAYERS

As with the Friday prayers, there is a very special significance attached to the ‘Id service. One must put on one’s best clothes, have fragrance or scents for personal freshness and, in general, to do everything to conform to the special significance attached to the occasion. Homes will be brightened and cleaned, foods and delicacies for the occasion prepared and an effort is made by all to present themselves and their homes in their best.

In countries which have a sizeable Muslim population, ‘Id prayers are generally held in wide, open spaces, since a very large gathering can be expected and which may exceed the congregational capacities of the local mosques. However, mosques are equally common venues for the service, but it can be expected that the mosques and their courtyards will be filled to the capacity, and preparations are made for this contingency such as providing temporary shelters.

‘ID PRAYERS

As already noted, ‘Id services are attended by very large congregations, and every member of a Muslim household will make an effort to attend the ‘Id prayers. Though women take part in all Muslim prayers, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) specially enjoined them to attend the ‘Id service. It is reported that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said that

“the young girls and those that have taken to seclusion and those that have their menses on, should all go out (for the ‘Id) and be present at the prayers of the Muslims.”

(Bukhari 13:15 and 6:23)

It should be noted that in ‘Id prayers, there is no azan (the call to prayer) or iqama (the arranging of the lines). However, there is a large number of takbirs before the commencement of the prayer and during it. There are only two rak’as, with seven takbirs in the first rak’a and five in the second, with recital of the Sura Fatiha in both rak’as. This is based on the best available tradition (Tirmidhi — Mishkat 4:47).

‘Id prayers are not obligatory (farz), but everyone is exhorted to attend the thanksgiving service.

THE SERMON (KHUTBA)

Following the ‘Id prayer, the Imam delivers the Khutba, or the sermon. This is similar to the Friday service sermon, except that it is not broken up into two parts by the Imam assuming the sitting posture. The occasion may be chosen by the Imam to give a discourse on any matter affecting the society or its welfare. Thus, it is reported by Abu Said,

“The Prophet (PBUH) used to go forth on the day of the Fitr and Adhza to the Musalla; so the first thing he did was the saying of prayer; then he turned and stood facing the people while the people were sitting in their rows, and he admonished them and gave them injunctions and commands; then if he intended to raise an army, he gave orders for it, or if he intended to command any (other) thing, he commanded it; then he returned.”

(Bukhari 13:6)

It has also been reported that the Holy Prophet (PBUH) gave a special sermon for the women who were all required to be present, whether participating in the prayers or not.

THE ‘ID SADAQA (CHARITY)

In both ‘Id-al-Fitr and ‘Id-al-Adhza, Muslims are required to contribute to charity by way of money or kind to assist their poorer brethren. Thus, while Muslims may rejoice and celebrate during ‘Id, Islam enjoins on them to ensure that their needy brethren are given the means to celebrate too. The measure of this contribution is three or four kilogram of grain or any staple food of the country (or money equivalent) per head of a family, including the eldest as well as the youngest of both males and females. This charity must be donated before the commencement of ‘Id prayers.

(Continued on page 13)
Theoretically at least, the Quran codified and revolutionised the rights of women in Muslim Society. It is generally agreed today, that Islam did a great deal to present to women rights and obligations in religion which were identical to the rights and obligations attributed to men. Women are promised equality with men in respect of the deeds they are responsible for in this life for “Whoever does good whether male or female and he (or she) is a believer shall enter the garden” (Al-Quran 40:40, 4:124).

In addition to equality from the spiritual point of view, Islam granted to women fairly firm legal and social rights which were originally a part of a more flexibly codified social system. A woman’s right to inherit property, her right to be maintained by her husband, to earn her living, to pray at the mosque — these were rights which were firmly laid down by the Holy Quran and the Hadith of the Prophet Mohammed (Peace and Blessings of Allah be with him) at the earliest times, and in the first Muslim communities which sprung up in Arabia. Subsequently with the stricter codification of the Shariah, by in particular Imam Shafi, these theoretically unalienable rights of Muslim women became submerged. Following the development of Muslim society through the centuries, what was at first a just and commonsensical social system, became a rigid autocratic code of law, becoming so complicated that reasoning by the man in the street of what was acceptable behaviour in Islam became impossible. With the emergence for instance of the concept of ‘mukruh’ i.e. things which although were not ‘haram’, were nevertheless undesirable, and of the ‘purdah’ system, developed a class of ‘specialists’ in Islam, the ‘Mullah’ class.

Slowly in practice the rights of women in Islam became eroded. Today in most parts of the world, Muslim women are not permitted to pray in mosques. In many countries they are encouraged to wear the veil. In some communities the institution of the temporary marriage or ‘mutah’ has been accepted giving women little security, and men, the maximum freedom to do as they wish. Many women are prevented from gaining an education and earning their own living. It is a shocking aspect of Muslim society today, that the few Muslim women who do achieve an education and some measure of financial independence, are able to do so not because they recognise their rights in Islam, but because of their contact with Westernised societies and values. This is often so because 20th Century mullahs advise women to stay out of mosques and within their houses and their veils. Women today are not always able to reconcile their desire to educate themselves to earn their living, own property and to be treated on an equal basis by their brothers, fathers and husbands, with the values expected of them in Muslim society.

It is fortunate that there are some enlightened Muslim scholars who maintain the original principles of equality in Islam and who are learned enough to make them available to society. Perhaps the most important scholar in this category was Maulana Muhammad Ali. In his “Religion of Islam” he states that spiritually and materially a woman is equal in status to a man.

“From a material point of view, woman is recognised as on a par with man. She can earn money and own property just as man can do and therefore she may if she feels the need, follow any profession: “For men is the benefit of what they earn. And for women is the benefit of what they earn. (4:32)” page 530.

Marriage takes none of a woman’s right away from her but her new status carries with it further rights and obligations. It is also clear that the popular practice of ‘purdah’ in the mosque (of putting women in a separate room or enclosure form the men) or of excluding women altogether is un-Islamic and against the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet Mohammed (May the Peace and Blessings of Allah be with him). It is evident from the Hadith that women regularly attended the mosque during the Prophet’s lifetime, that they prayed in separate rows in the same area of the mosques as the men. And that they participated in the activities at the mosque. The Prophet called upon his followers never to prevent women from entering the mosques of Allah. It is unfortunate that this practice of the Prophet has been submerged throughout the centuries so that today, only a very small percentage of Muslim women attend prayers at the mosque.

The veil too, which today has become a ‘symbol’ of Muslim women in the West, is an un-Islamic custom. In the prophet’s day and to this day in Mecca women are required not to veil their faces. From a study of the history of Muslim Society, the veil rapidly became a status symbol for rich and well-born women who could afford to go into seclusion.

Certainly there can be no veil for the Muslim woman who has to earn her living to feed her children, nor can there be a veil for the wives and daughters of farmers who work on the fields.

The veil is essentially an impractical and limiting institution, making it difficult for women to move independently and with dignity in society. The concept of modest dress-meaning in theory that both men and women must dress modestly in Muslim society, in no way incorporates the necessity for either men or women to cover their faces.

(Continued on page 13)
True Concept of Fasting
By Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Ali, M.A., LL.B.

Institution of Fasting in Islam
The institution of fasting in Islam came after the institution of prayer. It was in Madinah in the second year of Hijrah that fasting was made obligatory, and the month of Ramazan was set apart for this purpose. Before that the Prophet used to fast, as an optional devotion, on the tenth day of Muharram, and he also ordered his followers to fast on that day, it being a fasting day for the Quraysh as well, according to A‘ishah (Bu.30:1). The origin of fasting in Islam may thus be traced to the time when the Prophet was still at Makkah; but, according to Ibn ‘Abbas, it was after his flight to Madinah that he saw the Jews fasting on the tenth day of Muharram; and being told that Moses had kept a fast on that day in commemoration of the delivery of the Israelites from Pharaoh, he remarked that they (the Muslims) were nearer to Moses than the Jews and ordered that day to be observed as a day of fasting (Bu. 58:69).

A Universal Institution
In the Quran, the subject of fasting is dealt with only in one place, that is, in the 23rd section of second chapter; though there is mention on other occasions of fasting by way of expiation (fidyah) in certain cases. This section opens with the remark that the institution of fasting is a universal one: “O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may guard against evil” (2:183). The truth of the statement made here — that fasting “was prescribed for those before you” — is borne out by a reference to religious history. The practice of fasting has been recognised well-nigh universally in all the higher, revealed religions, though the same stress is not laid on it in all, and the forms and motives vary, “its modes and motives vary considerably according to climate, race, civilisation and other circumstances but it would be difficult to name any religious system of any description in which it is wholly unrecognised” (En. Br., art Fasting). Confucianism, according to the writer in the Encyclopaedia Britannica, is the only exception, Zoroastrianism which is sometimes mentioned as another exception, is stated as enjoining, “upon the priesthood at least, no fewer than five yearly fasts.” Present-day Christianity may not attach much value to religious devotions of this sort, but not only did the Founder of Christianity himself keep a fast for forty days and observe fasting on the Day of Atonement like a true Jew, but also commended fasting to his disciples: “Moreover, when ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head, and wash thy face” (Matt 6:16,17). It appears that his disciples did fast, but not as often as did those of the Baptist, and when questioned on that point, his reply was that they would fast more frequently when he was taken away (Lk. 5:33,34). The early Christians are also spoken of as fasting. Even St. Paul fasted.

New Meaning Introduced By Islam
Cruden’s remark in his Bible Concordance that fasting in all nations was resorted to “in times of mourning, sorrow and afflictions” is borne out by the facts. Among the Jews, generally, fasting was observed as a sign of grief or mourning. Thus, David is mentioned as fasting for seven days during the illness of his infant son (II Sam. 12:16,18); and, as a sign of mourning, fasting is mentioned in I Sam. 31:13 and elsewhere. Besides the Day of Atonement, which was prescribed by the Mosaic Law as a day of fasting (Lev. 16:29) — the people being required to “afflict” their souls while the priest made an atonement for them to cleanse them of their sins — various other fast — days came into vogue after the Exile “in sorrowful commemoration of the various sad events which had issued in the downfall of the kingdom of Judah” (En. Br.). Four of these became regular fasting-days, “commemorating the beginning of the seige of Jerusalem, the capture of the city, the destruction of the temple and the assassination of Gedaliah” (ibid). Thus it was generally some trouble or sad event of which the memory was kept up by a fast. Moses’ fasting for forty days — which example was later followed by Jesus Christ — seems to be the only exception, and the fast, in this case, was kept preparatory to receiving a revelation. Christianity did not introduce any new meaning into the fast; Christ’s words that his disciples would fast oftener when he was taken away from their midst, only lend support to the Jewish conception of the fast, as connected with national grief or mourning.

The idea underlying this voluntary suffering in the form of a fast in times of sorrow and affliction seems to have been to propitiate an angry Deity and excite compassion in Him. The idea that fasting was an act of penitence seems gradually to have developed from this as an affliction or calamity was considered to be due to sin, and fasting thus became an outward expression of the change of heart brought about by repentance. It was in Islam that the practice received a highly developed significance. It rejected in toto the idea of appeasing Divine wrath, or exciting Divine compassion through voluntary suffering and introduced in its place regular and continuous fasting, irrespective of the condition of the individual or the nation, as a means, like prayer, to the development of the inner faculties of man. Though the Quran speaks of expiatory or compensatory fasts in certain cases of violation of the Divine law, yet these are quite distinct from the obligatory fasting in the month of Ramazan, and are mentioned only as an alternative to an act of charity, such as the feeding of the poor or freeing of a slave. Fasting, as an institution, is here made a spiritual, moral and physical discipline of the highest order, and this is made clear by changing both the form and the motive. By making the institution permanent, all ideas of distress, affliction and sin are dissociated from it, while its true object is made plain, which is “that you may guard (tattaquun).” The word ittiga, from which tattaquun is derived, means the guarding of a thing from what harms or injures it, or the guarding of self against that of which the evil consequences may be feared (R). But besides this, the word has been freely used in the Quran in the sense of fulfilment of duties, as in 4:1 where arhan (ties of relationship) occurs as an object of ittaq, or, as generally in ittaq-Allah where Allah is the
object of ittiqa in all these cases is a fulfilment of obligations. In fact, in the language of the Quran, to be a muttaqi is to attain to the highest stage of spiritual development: “Allah is the friend of the muttaqiin” (45:16); “Allah loves the muttaqiin” (3:75; 9:47); “Allah is with the muttaqiin” (2:194; 9:36; 123). “The good end is for the muttaqiin” (7:128; 11:49; 28:83); “For the muttaqiin is an excellent resort” (38:49) — these and numerous similar passages show clearly that the muttaqi, according to the Quran, is the man who has attain to the highest stage of spiritual development. And as the object of fasting is to be a muttaqi, the conclusion is evident that Quran enjoins fasting with the object of making man ascend the spiritual heights.

A Spiritual Discipline

Fasting, according to Islam, is primarily a spiritual discipline. On two occasions in the Quran, those who fast are called sa’ih (from sahi meaning is travelled) or spiritual wayfarers; and according to one authority, when a person refrains, not only from food and drink but from all kinds of evil, he is called a sa’ih (R). While speaking of Ramadzan, the month in which fasting is ordained, the Quran specially refers to nearness to God, as if its attainment were an aim in fasting, and then adds: “So they should hear My call (by fasting) and believe in Me, that they may walk in the right way” (2:185). In tradition too, special stress is laid on the fact that the seeking of Divine pleasure should be the ultimate object in fasting: “Whoever fasts during Ramadzan, having faith in me and seeking My pleasure” (Bu. 2:28). The Prophet said: “Fasting is a shield, so the faster should not indulge in foul speech and surely the breath of a fasting man is pleasant to Allah then the odour of Musk; he refrains from food and drink and other desires to seek My pleasure’ fasting is for Me only (Bu. 30:9). No temptation is greater than the temptation of satisfying one’s thirst and hunger when drink and food are in one’s possession yet this temptation is overcome not once or twice as if it were by chance, but day after day regularly for a whole month, with a set purpose of drawing closer and closer to the Divine Being. A man can avail himself of the best diet, yet he prefers to remain hungry; he has the cool drink in his possession, yet he is parched with thirst; he touches neither food nor drink, simply because he thinks that it is the commandment of God that he should not do so. In the inner recesses, there is none to see him if he pours his dry and burning throat a glass of declicious drink, yet there has developed in him the sense of the nearness to God to such an extent that he would not put a drop of it on his tongue. Whenever a new temptation comes before him, he overcomes it, because, just at the critical moment, there is an inner voice, “God is with me,” “God sees me”. Not the deepest devotion can of itself develop that sense of the nearness to God and of his presence everywhere, which fasting day after day for a whole month does. The Divine presence which may be a matter of faith to others, becomes a reality for him, and this is made possible by the spiritual discipline underlying fasting. A new consciousness of a higher life, life above that which is maintained by eating and drinking, has been awakened in him, and this is the life spiritual.

A Moral Discipline

There is also a moral discipline underlying fasting, for it is the training ground where man is taught the greatest moral lesson of his life — the lesson that he should be prepared to suffer the greatest privation and undergo the hardest trial rather than indulge in that which is not permitted to him. That lesson is repeated from day to day for a whole month, and just as physical exercise strengthens man physically, moral exercise through fasting, the exercise of abstaining from everything that is not allowed, strengthens the moral side of his life. The idea that everything unlawful must be eschewed and that evil must be hated is thus developed through fasting. Another aspect of the moral development of man by this means is that he is thus taught to conquer his physical desires. He takes his food at regular intervals and that is no doubt a rule of life, but fasting for one month in the year teaches him the higher lesson that, instead of being the slave of his appetites and desires, he should be their master, being able to change the course of his life if he so wills it. The man who is able to rule his desires, to make them work as he likes, in whom will-power is so developed that he can command himself, is the man who has attained to true moral greatness.

Social Value of Fasting

In addition to its spiritual and moral values, fasting as prescribed in the Quran has also a social value, more effective then that which is realized through prayer. Rich and poor, great and small, residents of the same vicinity are brought together five times daily in the mosque on terms of perfect equality, and thus healthy social relations are established through prayer. But the commencement of the month of Ramadzan is a signal for mass movement towards equality which is not limited to one vicinity or even one country but affect the whole Muslim world. The rich and the poor may stand shoulder to shoulder in one row in the mosque, but in their homes they live in different environments. The rich sit down on tables with dainties and with these they load their stomachs four, even six, times daily; while the poor cannot find sufficient food with which to satisfy their hunger even twice a day. The latter often feel the pangs of hunger to which the former are utter strangers; how can the one feel for the other and sympathise with him? A great social barrier thus exists between the two classes in their homes, and this barrier is removed only when the rich are made to feel the pangs of hunger like the poorer brethren and go without food throughout the day, and this experience has to be gone through, not for a day or two, but for a whole month. The rich and the poor are thus, throughout the Muslim world, brought on the same level in that they are both allowed only two meals a day, and though these meals may not be exactly the same, the rich have perforce to shorten their menu and to adopt a simpler fare and thus come closer to their poorer brethren. This course undoubtedly awakens sympathy for the poor in the hearts of the rich, and it is for this reason that the helping of the poor is specially enjoined in the month of Ramadzan.

Physical Value of Fasting

Refraining from food during stated intervals does no physical harm to a healthy person. On the contrary, it

(Continued on page 12)
Fasting
by Shaukat A. Ali, General Secretary, Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat-I-Islam (Lahore) Fiji

"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 Quran-Ch.2v.183).

In this article I have dealt with fasting during the month of Ramadzan only as this is obligatory on Muslims generally. There are other voluntary and expiatory fasts recognised by Islam.

The Arabic word for fasting is “saum” which means abstaining. Fasting as an institution was ordained and made obligatory in the second year of Hijrah and follows prayer as one of the five pillars of Islam. Under Islamic Law, fasting means total abstention from food, drink and sexual intercourse from dawn till sunset.

The subject of fasting is dealt with only in the twenty third (23rd) section of the second Chapter of the Holy Quran. The section commences with verse 183 which I have quoted above. Here we are told that fasting was prescribed to other religions before the advent of Islam. The truth of this testimony is borne out by a reference to religious history. You will find that the practice of fasting is recognised in almost all the revealed religions, though the same stress is not laid on it in all. Its modes and motives vary considerably according to climate, race, civilization and other circumstances; but it would be difficult to name a religion in which it is totally unrecognised.

The reason for fasting in Islam is also given in the above quoted verse of the Holy Quran i.e. "so that you may guard against evil". Thus, fasting is made a spiritual, moral and physical discipline of the highest order. The Holy Quran and Hadith have laid a lot of stress on this, as will be seen from the various quotations given below.

According to one Hadith, Abu Hurairah is reported to have said that the Holy Prophet said:

"He who does not give up uttering falsehood and acting according to it, Allah has no need of his giving up his food and his drink." (Sahih Bukhari 30:8).

It is therefore, incumbent on everyone who fasts to abstain not only from food and drink but also from lying, falsehood and doing anything that may be harmful or unpleasant to someone else. Although these are some of the things one must refrain from, in one's normal everyday life, one is especially reminded to bear these in mind during the month of Ramadzan.

The directions for the commencement and the completion of the month-long fast is also contained in the Holy Quran. "The month of Ramadzan" in verse 185 makes it clear that the fast is to be kept during the month of Ramadzan. As the Islamic calendar follows lunar months, the number of days is either 29 or 30. Fasting commences with the new moon of Ramadzan and ends with the new moon of Shawwal. Hence the Holy Quran says "For a certain number of days." i.e. either 29 or 30 (2:184).

As Islam was destined to be a universal religion, the choice of a lunar month is very appropriate. The advantage of the system is that a lunar month advances by some eleven (11) days against the solar year (Christian Calendar). It therefore follows that those who have to fast in the long and hot days of the summer months will have the advantage of short and cool days of the winter months after a period of time and vice versa. The advantages of fasting during the shorter and cooler days are therefore available with the geographical distribution of the population as a result of the rotation of the lunar months.

(There are a lot of discussions these days about the sighting of the new moon and there appears to be some misunderstanding on this issue. However, in view of the importance of the subject and in order to keep this article as short as possible, it may be more appropriate to cover the subject under a separate article.)

A day's fast is kept from dawn till sunset. The Holy Quran says: "... and eat and drink until the whiteness of the day becomes distinct from the blackness of the night at dawn, then complete the fast till nightfall ...." (2:187)

Continuing the fast throughout the night and the next day so that there is no break from dawn till next day's sunset, is definitely prohibited (BU, 30:48,49). However, one hadith permits continuing the fast till next morning (BU.30:50). This would mean that one could take, if one chooses, only one meal in 24 hours, before dawn.

According to one hadith, Anas reported that the Holy Prophet said: "... Have the meal before dawn, for there is blessing in the meal before dawn."

Although fasting as an institution is made obligatory for all Muslims, there are certain exceptions to this general rule. The Holy Quran states: "But Whoever among you is sick or on a journey, shall fast a like number of other days. And those who find it extremely hard may effect redemption by feeding a poor man." (2:184).

The Holy Prophet has elaborated it further and there are various authentic hadith to show when fast may be omitted.

Keeping the fast when one is journeying is permitted, unless it entails hardship. According to one hadith, Anas is reported to have said, "We used to be on journey with the Prophet, and he who kept the fast did not find fault with he who broke it, nor did he who broke the fast find fault with one who kept it."
Here we are told that Allah revealed the Holy Quran on the ‘Lailat-al-Qadr’. By revelation is of course meant the commencement of the revelation of the Holy Quran. In other words, the first five verses of Chapter 96 — ‘Al Alaq’ or ‘The Clot’ were revealed on the ‘Lailat-al-Qadr’ or the night of Majesty.

In another place it is called “Laila mubaaarakaa” or “a blessed night” i.e. “By the Book that makes manifest! We revealed it on a blessed night (Lailatim Mubaarakaa)” (44:2, 3).

The revelation of the Holy Quran had started at a time when the Arabs were sunk deep in ignorance and immorality. Within a very short span of time the whole country changed beyond recognition as a result of the civilization brought about by Islam. Therefore the night on which the revelation began cannot be said to be anything but “Grand” or “Majestic”.

During the month of Ramadan, Lailat-al-Qadr is observed annually as an anniversary of the commencement of the revelation of the Holy Quran and to seek the pleasure of Allah as the angels and the spirit descend on that night. This is of course a spiritual experience which is witnessed by those who spend their time in devotion. In fact one is encouraged to spend as much time as possible in prayers, sacrifices and for the cause of poor and needy during the month of Ramadan at least.

The rich who normally eat three to five times a day are expected to be content with only two meals a day during the month of Ramadan, as is the case with the poor. This helps to bring about a greater awareness of the plight of the poor in the hearts of the rich. Even regular prayers during the month of Ramadan by those who do not attend congregational prayers regularly have a levelling effect as the rich and the poor stand shoulder to shoulder in the same row.

I have quoted earlier a verse of the Holy Quran which states: “... Allah desires ease for you...”. In fact the Islamic principles on fasting is not as difficult as some people make it. There are many authentic hadith which allow several things but which are now being prohibited. For instance, Abu Hurairah reported that the Holy Prophet said: “When one forgets and eats or drinks, he should complete his fast, for Allah made him eat and drink.”

Abbas reported: BU.30:26

“There is no harm on one tasting food in a cooking pot or anything else while one is fasting”.

Hassan reported.

“There is no harm in rinsing the mouth with water or gargling and getting cooled, when one fasts (BU: 30:25).

Abu Hurairah reported.

“When a person vomits, he should not break the fast.” (BU: 30:32).

These hadith show that Allah desires ease for us and he has made the religious tenets very simple and flexible so that the people could follow them without too much hardship.

May Almighty Allah have mercy on us and shower His blessings so that we could follow the path of those upon whom He has bestowed favours — Amen
President Desmond Hoyte addresses
Ahmadiyya Muslim Convention in Guyana

On 29th March, 1986, Desond Hoyte, President of Guyana, was the principal guest of honour at the inauguration of the new two-storey mosque for the Guyana Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat-i-Islam. The new mosque, named “Darus Salaam” (Abode of Peace) was also the venue for the World Convention of Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat-i-Islam (Lahore) following the opening ceremony.

President Hoyte remarked that “Islam is a religion of peace and unity. It is a religion of universal beauty.” He noted that in Islam, there were no barriers of race, colour, geographical location or nationality. The President also commented on the beauty of the new mosque and said that it was going to become a major architectural landmark in Guyana, and that it should serve as a shining example of the religious freedom practised in the country. He also urged that the Muslims should continue to practise the religion of Islam freely, worshipping in the new mosque in peace and compassion.

The full text of President Hoyte’s address is given below:

“My dear fellow citizens and distinguished guests from overseas,

May I be permitted to extend to you the salutation with which the followers of Islam so graciously greet one another ‘Assalam-O-Alaikum’. In so doing, may I extend a very special welcome to the son and representative of Dr. Saed Ahmad Khan Head of the Ahmadiyya Organisation who has come all the way from Pakistan to be with us on this happy occasion. May I also extend an equally warm and sincere welcome to all the distinguished delegates who have come from so many missions and Muslim communities from so many different parts of the world. I bid you a very warm welcome on behalf of the Government and People of Guyana.

I feel very happy and honoured this afternoon to have been invited to share this happy occasion with you — the formal opening of the Masjid Darus Salaam and the Headquarters of the Guyana Ahmadiyya Anjuman. This Masjid is very aptly named, for I have been told that it means the ‘abode of peace’.

Islam is a religion of peace and unity. It is a religion of universal appeal which transcends irrelevant and extraneous considerations such as race, colour, geographical location and nationality. It embraces all men and women of goodwill who are prepared to accept its principles and tenets and who live their lives according to those principles and tenets.

In our own country here in Guyana, Islam has been a great force for good in the development of our country and in the shaping of our national destiny. The ideals of Islam accord very well with the ideals of the Guyana society; for peace and unity have been our main objectives and, above all, respect for our fellow men and the judging of our fellowmen on the basis of their individual work and contribution to our society.

In the Holy Quran, we are told that all people are but a single nation and, in our own country, we have adopted a motto — One people, One Nation, One Destiny, — and we try very hard to make a reality of that motto by our work and our deeds. And we seek also to give every man his due and to give him the respect which he deserves, because of what he does and what he is. And in doing so, we are fortified by the remarks attributed to the Holy Prophet (On Whom Be Peace) when he said that the Arab has no precedence over the non-Arab; nor the non-Arab over the Arab; the Whiteman over the Black man or the Black man over the White man except by excelling in righteousness. And that regard for individual work and individual contribution to this society is something that we in Guyana cherish and it is an objective which we pursue.

And so Islam is a unified religion and because of the high principles which inform the religion, we have found that over the years, the Islamic community in our country has played a tremendous role in the development of a stable, unified and self-respecting society.

Here today we are seeing, as a living reality, the freedom of religion which is enshrined in our constitution, a freedom which we all cherish as Guyanese.

We have a diverse society made up of many cultures and many religions, but the great thing about our country is that the diversity has not been a means of dividing the people and promoting conflict. We have turned it into a source of strength and so it becomes a great force for unity and cohesion.

I listened to Maulvi Rasheed as he spoke of the problems and difficulties which you had in your effort to build this beautiful structure. We always have problems, we always have difficulties in this life. What is important is how we face those problems and those difficulties. And I am sure that all members of this Anjuman as they face various problems and difficulties must have had foremost in their minds the verse from the Holy Koran which says, “verily with every difficulty there is relief”. And there has been relief because today we have the good fortune to be standing here in a very beautiful structure in the very abode of peace.

I feel very honoured to be with you this afternoon. As I look at this building I am struck by its architectural beauty. In a city which is famous for its many architectural landmarks I make bold to say that this Masjid-Darus Salaam will be one of the major architectural landmarks in our beautiful city of Georgetown.

I hope that it will continue to be a shining symbol of that religious freedom which we practise and which we enjoy in this country. I call, therefore, upon the Muslims and, indeed, upon all Guyanese citizens to practise their religious faith freely, publicly and courageously. I hope that all who worship here will be strengthened in their pursuit of peace, compassion and love for their fellow men.

Thank you.”

**Id-al-Fitr**
(Continued from page 4)

**ID CELEBRATION**

It is traditional for Muslims to visit their friends and relatives during ‘Id celebrations, to foster and strengthen ties of brotherhood of Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) exhorted his followers to go to ‘Id prayers by one route and return by another, to allow maximum number of homes to be visited. It also permitted the public to see the great numbers of Muslims who attended these prayers and thereby sought Divine Communion, even in their festival days. Bukhari reports,

“The Prophet used to change the route on the day of the ‘Id.”

(Bukhari 13:24)

**True Concept of Fasting**
(Continued from page 7)

does some good. But fasting has yet another, and a more important, physical value. The man who cannot face the hardships of life, who is not able to live, at times, without his usual comforts, cannot be said to be even physically fit for life on this earth. The moment such a man is involved in difficulty or distress, as he must be every now and again, his strength is liable to give way. Fasting accustoms him to face the hardships of life, being in itself a practical lesson to that end, and increases his powers of resistance.

**The Month of Ramazan**

With some exceptions, which will be mentioned later on, Muslims are required to fast for 29 or 30 days of the month of Ramazan. The exact number depends on the appearance of the moon which may be after 29 or 30 days. Fasting commences with the new moon of Ramazan and ends on the appearance of the new moon of Shawwal. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is reported to have said: “We are a people who neither write nor do we keep account; the truth is thus and thus, showing (by his fingers) once twenty-nine and against thirty”. (Bu. 30:13).

“O you who believe! Believe in Allah and His Messenger and the Book which He has revealed to His Messenger” (4:136).
A Comparative Study
BELIEFS OF THE TWO SECTIONS OF THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT

**Lahore Section**

1. Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is *Khutam al-Nabiyyin*, the interpretation of which is that he is the greatest and last of all the prophets.

2. The Holy Quran is the final *Shariah* (code) for the world.

3. No prophet, whether new or old, shall come after the Holy Prophet Muhammad.

4. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian was not a prophet but a *Mujaddid* (Reformer) and Promised Messiah and Mahdi in Islam.

5. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad never changed his claim, views or definition of prophethood in 1901 with the Publication of *Ek Ghalati ka Izala*.

6. Belief in the advent of Mirza Sahib as a Mujaddid is not essential for becoming Muslim but his acceptance is necessary in the interest of progressive Islam.

7. Any one who professes faith in the Kalima *La-ilaha illa ilaha Muhammad ur Rasul Allah* (there is only one God and Muhammad is His Apostle) — is a Muslim and not a *kafir*.

8. It is permitted to say prayers behind any Muslim Imam provided he is not guilty of dubbing other Muslims *kafirs*.

9. Marriage relations with non-Ahmadis are permitted.

10. After the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) Wahi-e-Nabuwat has ceased, only Wahi-e-Walayat (Saintly revelation) is continued. Hazrat Mirza Sahib's revelation was Wahi-e-Walayat and not Wahi-e-Nabuwat.

11. The Founder of the Lahore Section was Maulana Muhammad Ali, M.A., L.L.B. Translator of the Holy Quran into English, a companion and disciple of the Founder of the Movement.

12. The members of this section call themselves Ahmadis, and are generally known also as Ahmadis or Ahmadis of Lahore Movement.

**Qadian Section**

1. Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is *Khutam al-Nabiyyin*, the interpretation of which is that he is the greatest though not last of all the prophets.

2. The same.

3. Prophets may come after the Holy Prophet Muhammad.

4. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was a prophet as well as Promised Messiah and Mahdi in Islam.

5. The first written evidence of the change of belief with regard to prophethood was the poster *Ek Ghalati ka Izala*.

6. Belief in the mission of Mirza Sahib as a prophet is essential for becoming Muslim.

7. Any one, who does not believe Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian to be a Prophet, is a *kafir*.

8. It is not permitted to say prayers behind any Imam who does not recognise Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's claims.

9. Marriage relations with non-Ahmadis are permitted.

10. After the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) Wahi-e-Nabuwat is continued. Hazrat Mirza Sahib's revelation was Wahi-e-Nabuwat.

11. The Founder of the Qadian Section was Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, who was the son of the Founder of the Movement and was a young man in his teens at the time of his noble father's death.

12. The members of this section call themselves Ahmadis, but are generally known as Qadianis.
اتخاذ قلم إسلامي وسمى بـ نظير كامليبي

وادي أسباب كتبة على أساس نامي سيد أور إلقت نجوم

(1) ديوان مقتطفات من تصنيف مؤلفات الفلاح

"إرشادٌ وإفرائٌ للأمم المشرفة، département sur les sciences et les arts"