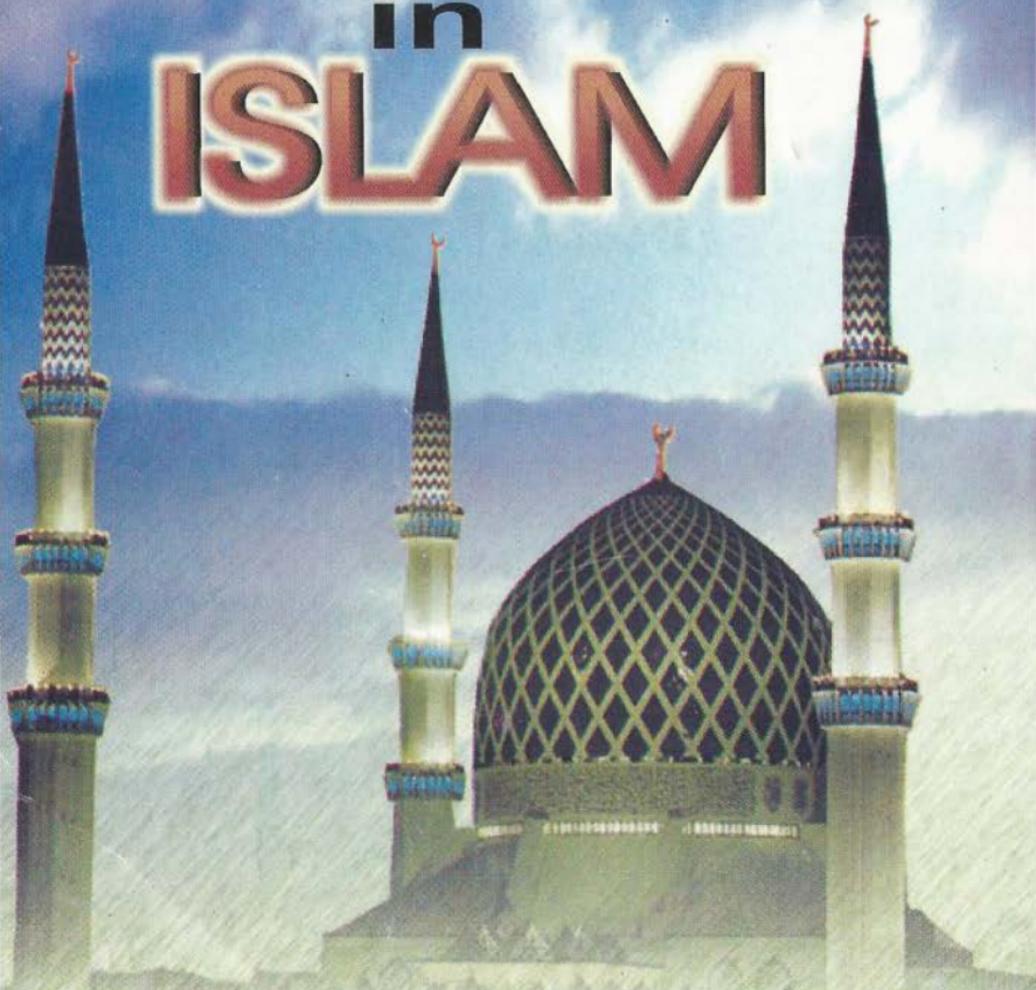


Worship
and
Festivals
in
ISLAM



Sayyid Abul A'la Maududi

**WORSHIP
AND
FESTIVALS
IN
ISLAM**

Sayyid Abul A'la Maududi

English rendered by

Mansoor Durrani

Markazi Maktaba Islami Publishers, New Delhi

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Name of the Book

Worship And Festivals In Islam

English Version of Urdu

*"Shab-e-Bar'at, Rozah Aur Zab-t-e-Nafs, Eid-ul-Fitr Kis ke Liye,
Eid-e-Qurban and Meelad-un-Nabi"*

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In the name of Allah, Most Beneficent, Most Merciful

FOREWORD

Maulana Sayyid Abul A'la Maududi was an outstanding Islamic scholar; a proficient speaker; an accomplished author; a thinker par excellence. He illuminated the Twentieth Century by his endeavours of reviving Islamic way of life in the Muslim society. He laid the foundation of an Islamic movement which is known in the sub-continent as Jamaat-e-Islami.

Maulana Maududi realized that a true Islamic society cannot come into existence unless the basis concepts of Muslims, with regard to Islam are clarified. He chose to educate Muslims from scratch and authored dozens of books which helped in attaining this goal. He noticed that because Muslims, in this part of the world, are living with a huge population of non-Muslim compatriots, they have been influenced, consciously or unconsciously, by their culture and civilization.

Islam is a *deen* which preaches Monotheism, and based on this faith attempts to build a society which retains exclusivity in every sphere of life. The philosophy of Islamic *ibadah* is different and the theory of Islamic festival is distinct. Maulana Maududi illustrated the true spirit of Ramazan. He presented the real objective behind the only Islamic festivals namely; *Eid-ul-fitr* and *Eid-ul-Azha*. He also laid thread bare the significance of the other two supposedly Islamic festivals namely; *Shab-e-Bar'at* and *Eid-e-Meeland-un-Nabee*.

Essentially, he presented lectures on each of these subjects which were subsequently printed in Urdu, in the form of small separate booklets. Now the publishers decided to bring a combined edition so that readers can take a holistic view on not only the philosophy of Islamic festivals but also fasting of Ramazan.

It is a great honour for me to translate these booklets into English. I am convinced that the spirit and charisma that is present in Maulana's own language, could not be translated. I still felt it important to bring forth the true picture of these subjects before the English educated masses.

I am also aware of my constraints that are reflected in the translation, but I have sincerely and honestly attempted to do this in anticipation of a reward in the Hereafter. May Allah accept this meagre effort and reward me as I desire. It goes without saying that all deficiencies in this effort should be solely attributed to the translator.

Mansoor Durrani
New Delhi
December 30, 1998

SHAB-E-BAR'AT

Shab-e-bar'at is generally considered a festival of Muslims. Certain customs have been evolved which are adhered to, vigorously. From celebrations point of view, this is second to only *Muharram*. But the truth is that this is absolutely man-made festival. Neither Qur'an nor *Hadees* and the era of companions of Prophet Mohammed *Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam* indicate the existence of this festival, then. None of the Islamic scholars of early post - *Khilafat-e- Rashida* period have called such a feast Islamic.

As a matter of fact, Islam is not a religion of customs and festivities. It is a straightforward and reasonable religion which restrains human beings from the shackles of rituals, futile and time consuming fete. Islam urges people to save precious time, energy and wealth and pay attention towards unshakable realities of life. It wants people to spend their time on activities, which prove to be the cause of happiness and prosperity in this life and Hereafter.

It is highly uncharacteristic of such a religion to mark one day in a year for fire-cracking and confectionering and allow people to keep on wasting valuable time and hard-earned money every year. It is further remote of the spirit of Islam to make people observe a custom which is not only a drain on time and money but, at times, even proves fatal and reduces property to ashes. Instead of asking people to celebrate such baseless customs, if it was already a trend during the lifetime of Prophet Mohammad

Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam. It would have surely been stopped forcefully. All such festivities, which were performed during those days were banned, as it is.

The matter of confectionery and firework is so explicit that every individual, with even little knowledge of Islam, will instantly acknowledge that these practices are against the values of Islam. When it is endeavoured to figure out link of recognised religious belief, with this specific day of *Shaban*, no such association is traceable. At the most, Islamic literature reveals only an event : once, on the night of *Shaban* the 15th, *Hazrat Ayesha* did not find Prophet Mohammad *Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam* on his bed, so she left in his search and reached *Jannat-ul Baquee*. He was present there. On quizzing, he replied on this night, Allah turns His attention from the sky to this world and forgives as many sins of people as the total number of hair of all the sheeps put-together of the clan, called *Kalb*. But a prominent writer of *Hadees*, Imam Tirmizi has declared this tradition a fragile and has claimed, through his research, that it can not be believed with certainty that *Hazrath Ayesha* was its source. There are other narration which are found in lesser known compilations of *Hadees*. The excellence of this night is said to be only because human fates are decided in this, and affairs of birth and death are finalized. But all these traditions are weak. Every argument, in its favour, suffers one or the other flaw. This is why none of the reliable old collection of *Hadees* mentions about these stories. Even if their authenticity is recognised in toto, then also, the only inference could be that praying and asking for His forgiveness for the sins, during this night, is an appreciable act. If this is done individually, then they will be rewarded. Other than this, the perusal of these narrations does nor prove that either

14th or 15th night of *Shaban* is proclaimed to be Eid or some collective prayers are pronounced for this occasion.

The more reliable books on *Hadees* acknowledge that Prophet Mohammad *Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam* used to be in a peculiar state, in the month of *Shaban*, prior to the commencement of *Ramazan*. It is in the month of *Ramazan* that the stupendous honour of Prophethood was bestowed upon him and the revelation of immortal Book, the Qur'an, commenced. Due to these reasons, he not only used to keep unusually regular fasts and perform longer prayers during *Ramazan*, but even in advance, Prophet Mohammad *Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam* would inch closer to Allah. *Hazrath Ayesha* and *Umme Salma* state that besides *Ramazan*, *Shaban* was the only month during which Prophet Mohammad *Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam* fasted most, rather the entire month was spent in fasting. But this practice of his was specifically for his own sake. It was due to his deep spiritual attachment, he had with the month of revelation of Qur'an. For, common Muslims were instructed by him to stay away from fasting during the second fortnight of *Shaban*. He suspected that if Muslims got habitual of fasting during this period, then gradually this would turn into a trend and people will have to bear unnecessary burden of 10-15 fasts, in addition to the compulsory fasting of the entire month of *Ramazan*. Thus people would have borne the burden, which had not been put on them by the injunction of Allah.

Islam has taken necessary care of the fact that its followers do not adopt rituals and rites which Allah has not asked them to. None of the self-created custom, artificial ceremony or any collective practice should take the shape of *Farz*. Allah knows better as

to what will and what will not be beneficial for the people. He also knows that how much of it is necessary for human beings to perform. By exceeding the limits prescribed by Him, if people establish certain customs and rituals of their own, and practice them like *Faraiz*, then they will make the life unnecessarily difficult for themselves. Past nations had committed the same blunder of pioneering rituals and customs and made them essential and part of their religion. Consequently, they were entangled in such a web of their making that they could not find exit route and eventually got paralysed. Qur'an has declared customs as synonymous to "shackles" and the chief objective of the life of Prophet Mohammad *Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam* is said to be setting free the mankind from such chains and shackles. Due to this, the *shariat* of Prophet Mohammad *Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam* has proposed a lean and mean stream of *faraiz* and eliminated all other customs and traditions. There is no third festival in Islam other than Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Azha. There is no pilgrimage other than *Hajj* and besides *Zakah* there is no charity or donation which is declared as *Farz*. Thereafter, a simple rule is laid forever that man is not authorized to cut down on any of the *faraiz*. Similarly, he is not mandated to make any additions either.

Initially, people who understood the spirit of Islamic injunctions, they strictly adhered to these principles. They restrained from pioneering and establishing new customs and when they noticed alarming trends, they were uprooted, for good. They knew that these conventions, though initiated with noble intentions and considered righteousness, would gradually turn into *sunnah*, then *wajib* and finally *farz* and thereafter will even overtake *farz*. Due to sheer ignorance, people tend to mix up this piety with

various ills and make it an ugly practice. Such customs, put together, become a curse for society and impediment for the progress of humanity. It is because of this, the *Ulemah* and *Imams* of early Islamic era used to be very careful in guarding Islam from such unwarranted additions. They had unflinching faith that considering anything as part of *Shariah*, which is actually not, and adding more significance to something than given by *Shariah* : both instances are heresy and every such act was considered to be apostasy.

Unfortunately, in subsequent centuries, Muslims became reckless and gradually started slipping into the vicious circle of customs, as other nations did. One of the primary reasons of this has been that nations which came into Islamic fold in the later era, could not get proper Islamic orientation and training. They embraced Islam along with some of their primitive customs and lifestyles. They were, for ages, accustomed to disgraceful festivities, customs and pilgrimage, without which their religious lives were colourless. After embracing Islamic *Shariah*, instead of feeling relieved from getting rid of old rituals and freeing themselves from the shackles of bad customs, they got worried as to how to recapture the burden which Islam had eliminated and how to wear the shackles which Islam had broken. Thus, they modified the facade of some of their old customs; they invented some others and even turned Islam into the same religion of fun and frolic, as their old religion were. These inventions were made very aptly. Qur'an and Hadees were never scrutinized with the objective of learning the principles and guidelines of leading an Islamic life, rather it was done to find excuses for continuing their old customs and inventing new conventions. When they managed to find a minor

clue, they converted it into a mammoth and perpetual custom. People felt proud on filling the gap by inventing festivities, which were originally not there, without realizing that they have worn the same shackles which were destroyed by Allah, through His Prophet Mohammad *Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam*, and they have again fallen into the trap from which no nation has ever managed to come out.



Fasting and Self-Restraint

Among numerous other spiritual and moral benefits of fasting, one is to prepare man for developing self-control. In order to have a comprehensive understanding of this, one ought to know the Islamic conception of self-restraint and then how fasting helps in achieving this.

The meaning of self-restraint is that man's psyche* exercises blanket control on his body and its energies, and the requisition and desires of baser-self** should be in its clutches to make them abide by its demands. Psyche occupies the same position in a human body as that of a ruler in his empire. Body and its different parts are the subordinates of psyche. All mental and physical powers are meant to be at its disposal. The rule of baser-self is limited to presenting them to psyche, with request. The final decision rests with psyche as to how these energies and tools be put to use and which of the baser-self requisitions be accepted or rejected. If one's psyche is so frail that it is unable to rule the empire of his body, according to its wishes, and begins to take the desires of baser-self as command or instructions, then it becomes a paralysed psyche. Such people cannot lead a successful and purposeful life. Those who have left

* Islam defines psyche as that part of one's self, which takes decision on good or evil deeds.

** In Islamic terminology, baser-self is defined as that part of one's self which motivates people for evil deeds.

a mark in history and human civilization are the ones who had domination on the human energies, at their disposal; who have not lived as prisoners of their wishes and slaves of their desires but have kept their wishes and desires under check; and those who have had firm determination and rock-solid resolution.

But there is a contrasting difference between a psyche which itself assumes the role of Allah and the one which functions under the subordination of Allah. For a successful life, complete domination on psyche is nevertheless a must, but if it is free of its Creator and unmindful of its Lord; which is not restrained by a superior moral system; which presumes that it is not accountable for its deeds, if such a psyche dominates the power of his baser-self and body and becomes a rock like psyche, then it could merely produce Fir'aun, Namroud, Hitler and Mussoline. Such a self-restraint is neither appreciable nor is it desirable in Islam. The self-restraint which is required by Islam is that man's self, firstly, surrenders itself to Allah; makes compliance of His instructions and the desire to fulfil His wishes its sole objective; assumes himself to be accountable to Him, then such a virtuous and Muslim psyche exercises iron rule on its body and wields complete domination on its baser-self and its demands, so that it becomes a strong and vibrant force in this world.

This is the definition of self-restraint, from Islamic point of view. Now, it is elaborated as to how fasting instills this energy into human beings.

If the demands of human body and baser-self are analysed, it will be inferred that three demands are pivotal, and all of them are most vehement. First is the demand for food, on which relies the subsistence of life. Second is the carnal desire,

depends on which the survival of humanity. Third is the longing for rest and relaxation which is a must for reenergising and rejuvenating human physique. All the three demands, within reasonable limits, are absolutely compatible with nature. But the same three loops, at the disposable of baser-self and body are such, that at the slightest lapse, they make man's conscience their own slave. Each of these demands turns into a long list of sub-demands and each one struggles to make man forget his principles and ignore the decries of his conscience, in order to attract his entire attention for its realisation. A fragile psyche, once entrapped, the demand for food makes it a glutton. Sensual desires force him to stoop to inhuman level, and lethargy does not allow him to reach new heights. It, then, becomes the governed rather than the ruler of baser-self and its function is reduced to executing orders of baser-self by hook or crook and through every hanky-pankay route, available to it.

Fasting encompasses these three demands of baser-self and trains the psyche to control them. Fasting notifies the psyche, which is faithful to Allah, that your Allah has prohibited dining and drinking for the whole day; during this period you are also forbidden from carnal pleasures; you cannot, from dawn to dusk, enjoy such pleasure even through means which are otherwise permissible. It also apprises the psyche that the will of Allah is, after breaking the daylong fast, do not slacken and lie down, rather get up and offer prayers longer than normal days. It instructs that after long and tiring prayer, when you go to bed, do not take a long sleep till morning, rather wake up long before dawn, against the normal course and eat something before starting the fast. After communicating these injunctions, the

responsibility of pursuing them is left on every individual. Constabulary, intelligence or any other external agency is not deployed to implement these instructions. If one dines or gratifies sensual desire, clandestinely, then no one is around him, except Allah, to notice. If one makes lame excuses to avoid long prayers in the night (*taraveeh*), then no force on the earth will quiz him. Every thing depends on his own, if the psyche of a Muslim is pledged with Allah and if his will power is strong enough to tame the baser-self, then he will himself mould the demand for food, desire for sex and wish for rest into a system which has been established, against the routine.

This exercise is not restricted just for a day. One day training cannot be sufficient for this kind of activity. This is conducted for a month, at a stretch. This programme has been chalked out for 720 hours in a year; to get up towards the last part of the night; stop eating at the break of dawn (*sahar*); restrict from dining through out the day; break the fast (*iftaar*), immediately after the sun set; then spend early part of the night by standing for unusually long prayers (*taraveeh*); and after relaxing for few hours, repeat the same course the following day. Thus, three strongest and most common urges of the baser-self are moulded, perpetually, to provide strength to the psyche for ruling the baser-self according to the will of Allah. This conditioning programme is not held just once in a lifetime, rather one month is devoted every year, from the age of reaching adolescence till one dies. This repetition is meant to revitalize and strengthen the grip of psyche over baser-self.

This exercise is not carried out to make the psyche of a Muslim control just his hunger, thirst, carnal desires and the urge to relax. Nor is this done to retain control over baser-self and body, for a month

only. Strictly, the primary objective is that after having tamed the three strongest cravings of the psyche, one should emerge strong enough to exercise restraint over his all desires and emotions; and be prepared to comply with the injunctions of Allah during the remaining eleven months of the year as well, through his body; and its forces. One should strive for every piety which consents with the will of Allah, restrict himself from every vice which is abhorred by Allah and strictly adhere to those restrictions which Allah has placed on his demands and demotions. Baser-self should not be put in the driver's seat to steer him at will, the responsibility of navigation should rather be in his own hands to direct the urges as desired by Allah. One should not have such a weak will power that even after recognising the mandatory instructions (*faraiz*) as a must and wishing to fulfill them; but finding the body beyond his control. Never! within the physical empire, should one behave like a dominant ruler who always commands his subordinates according to his own whims. Creating this power is the ultimate objective of fasting. One who fails to achieve this strength through fasting, he unnecessarily puts himself to the inconvenience of hunger, thirst and loss of sleep and rest.

Qur'an and *Hadees* (the sayings of Prophet Mohammed *Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam*) both have clearly elaborated this: Qur'an states: ***Fasting has been made mandatory for you so that you attain the trait of self-restraint.*** *Hadees* of Prophet Mohammed *Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam* is: One who tells lies and practices lies, he is not required by Allah to stop eating and drinking. He further added that most of the fasters are such that they do not gain anything from fasting, except hunger and thirst.

(5th July, 1948)

EID-UL-FITR FOR WHOM?

Some sections of the society are vigorously pursuing the view that Eid-ul-Fitr is a prominent symbol of Islamic unity, therefore all the Muslims should celebrate it on one particular day. Some people hold the view that all the Muslims, across the world, should observe it on the same day, while there are others who feel that at least Pakistani Muslims should certainly have it concurrently. However, these are the flaws of views and thoughts. Such views are floated primarily due to the ignorance of religious values. Moreover, those are the people, on the forefront of such theories, who do not even fast during Ramazan, but are very 'concerned' about Islamic unity with regard to Eid.

The very first misconception these folks have is that, for them, Eid is a festival akin to Christmas, Holi or Diwali or it is a national festival that is manifested as a symbol of unity for Muslims. However, Eid is essentially related to supplication that commences at the beginning of Ramazan and culminates after the end of Ramazan, by thanking Allah, with special Eid prayers. According to the clear instructions of Islamic law, this adoration can not begin until it is ascertained, through reliable sources, that Ramazan have commenced and similarly it can not cease unless it is acknowledged, through dependable authority, that they have come to an end. Holy Qur'an has clearly stated :

شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ
 فَمَنْ شَهِدَ مِنْكُمُ الشَّهْرَ فَلْيَصُمْهُ

"Month of Ramazan is that, in which Qur'an is revealed, therefore each of you who is present, during this month, should fast".

This verse categorically resolves that from the beginning of Ramazan, and till its end, every Muslim should fast and without the fulfillment of fasting during this month, there is absolutely no question of commemorating Eid. This is evident that Ramazan is a lunar month and the commencement of which depends upon the appearance of crescent and Prophet Muhammad *Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam* has very clearly instructed to begin and end fasting only after seeing crescent. But if the horizon is not very clear, complete the fasting of thirty days, unless two reliable witnesses testify the advent of crescent. In this instruction, Prophet Muhammad *Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam* has distinctly notified two points : firstly, the testimony of appearance is required when the horizon is not clear and secondly, in that case, the decision of the appearance of crescent will be based on the testimony of two trustworthy witnesses and not information. Because this is an accepted fact that deposition, through telegram or telephone is invalid. For this, physical presence of witnesses is a must. If you try to testify in a court through telegram or telephone, you would come to know immediately whether it is acceptable to the court or not. Here, the question is that when such "testimony" can not be acceptable to any court in this world, then why are we wanted to rely on this, in a matter of Shariah, depends on which the validity of fasts of millions of Muslims.

Those who toe the idea that Muslims, throughout the world, should celebrate Eid on the same day, clearly speak ridiculously, because the advent of crescent, throughout the world, always and necessarily, on the same day is impossible. Even celebration of Eid, in a country or region, on the same day is not made mandatory in Shariah. If it is made possible in any country through proper system of telecasting and broadcasting to the entire nation, according to the principles of Shariah, then this is not forbidden either. But Shariah never makes it essential, nor Shariah considers it maleficent that people in different regions celebrate Eid on different days.

The canon of Allah is meant for the entire humanity and for all times to come. Today, due to the revolution in information technology that people expect the Eid to be celebrated concurrently. But just a few decades back, leave aside communicating about the appearance of crescent throughout the sub-continent, it was not possible to inform the inhabitants of even one state, if the crescent appeared on the 29th of Ramazan. If Shariah had made it mandatory for all Muslims to celebrate Eid on a single day, then how would Muslims, over the last few centuries, practice this impossible injunction. Even in today's satellite age, it is not possible to follow it strictly. Muslims do not live only in metros and urban towns where they have access to state-of-the-art communication facilities. They are also populated in far-flung rural areas where communication facilities are not available.

Making the celebration of Eid on the same day a Shariah instruction translates that, to be a Muslim, not only one radio station is necessary in a country, but also every individual or family or at least one

radio set in every town would be a must. Or else they will not be able to pursue their religious duties. Will then communication equipment too become an integral part of Islam ? The Shari'ah of Allah has laid down such a smooth set of guidelines by which it is possible for every Muslim to easily perform his or her religious duties. Shari'ah has not specified the timings of *Namaz* according to the movement of watch to make watch an indispensable part of Islamic religion. Rather, it has made universal indicators like ascent and descend of sun for determining the timing of *Namaz*, to which every individual on the earth has access. Similarly, for commencing and ending fasts also, it has declared the appearance of *Shawwal* and Ramazan crescent as a symbol which is a universal indicator and every Muslim, anywhere in the world, can find out when did Ramazan begin and end. Had Shari'ah linked to the dates of calendar, then it would be necessary for every Muslim to learn the art of reading stars or calendar would have become inevitable part of his life without having which he would not be able to perform his religious duties. Or if it was made mandatory that after the appearance of crescent, in one part of the world, the entire world or every nook and corner of the universe will begin to observe and end fasting, then before the invention of present means of communication, it would not be possible for Muslims to practice this religion. Even after the evolution of present communication network, every Muslim would have to bear the burden of subscribing to these services, if they want to remain Muslims, regardless of whether he or she can afford bread and butter for self-feeding.

WHO TRULY DESERVES EID GREETINGS ?

After necessary clarification on this subject, I extend my greetings to you and to all of my Muslim

brothers. People who genuinely deserve the greetings of Eid are those who fasted for the whole month of Ramazan; who endeavoured to take maximum benefit from the instructions of Qur'an; who tried to read, understand and take guidance from Qur'an and took advantage of the character-building exercise which Ramazan seeks to impart to every Muslim. Qur'an explains only two primary objectives of the month of Ramazan : firstly, Muslims should build their character

”كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ“

and secondly, Muslims pay gratitude to Allah for the favour He has bestowed on Muslims, in the form of revealing Qur'an, during the month of Ramazan.

”لِتُكَبِّرُوا اللَّهَ عَلَى مَا هَدَاكُمْ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ“

If there is one biggest favour Allah has done to the humanity, it is the revelation of Qur'an. This is the greatest divine blessing, because food and other resources, for instance, oxygen, water, food grains and similar sources of economy, through which man earns the bread, constructs house, provides clothing, though these provisions too are the blessings and kindness of Allah, but they are merely meant for the human body. Holy Qur'an, is the blessing which is conceived for the soul of man, for his character and essentially for his real altruism, is the ultimate benediction. A Muslim can offer true gratitude to Allah only in a situation when he thanks on the food provided by Him and also on the gracious commandments which have been issued to him in the form of Qur'an. The most appropriate way to thank Him is not just verbal appreciation that thank

you Allah for giving us Qur'an, rather the precise approach for doing that is to acknowledge Qur'an as the well-head of guidance ; recognize it as a true navigator and take practical advantage of its counseling.

Qur'an gives you instructions about your personal life that how should you lead a devout life. It forbids you from deeds that are harmful in shaping a characterful life. It gives you guidelines, by pursuing which, your personality will develop in an upright manner and you could become an exemplary human being. It also provides extensive guidance about your collective life. How to shape your social life and your domestic life? What should be the outline of your culture and civilization. How should you conduct the affairs of your state? What would be your constitution? How should you manage the social life? What should be the avenues to earn your bread and butter? Where should you and should not spend your earned money? How should be your relation with Allah? How should be your relation with your own conscience? What should be the nature of your relationship and behaviour with other human beings, your spouse, your off-springs, your parents, your folks, members of your own society and the entire human population of the earth, even with plants and animals, and with various blessings of Allah? Qur'an gives you specific instructions about each of these aspects of life. The obligation of every Muslim is to accept it as real fountainhead for guidance; turn towards it for counseling; truly recognize those instructions, directions and principles which it is dispensing. Muslims should reject all those beliefs and practices which contradict them, whatever is there source. If an individual has, during the month of Ramazan, read through Qur'an and understood it

from this perspective. And has endeavoured to absorb its teachings and instructions, to the maximum possible extent, in his life and character, then he has offered true gratitude to Allah for this divine blessings—in the form of Qur'an. For this, he literally deserves the greetings that he has completely fulfilled the responsibility, which the month of Ramazan placed on him.

Second and equally important objective of fasting, in the month of Ramazan, for which it has been made mandatory is that you should lead a pious and righteous life. If you consider the reality of fasting, then you would know that righteousness and piety can not be injected in a better and more effective way than this. What is righteousness and piety? Righteousness is, essentially, to refrain from violating the commands of Allah and adhere to His guidelines. Fasting allows you to continuously practice this for a month.

Deeds which are usually permissible in your life, they too are forbidden during fasts, by the order of Allah, and continue to be so until they are again permitted by Allah only. Even water which is pure and permissible, during fasting when Allah instructs you not to consume this, then not a single drop can be swallowed down the throat, even if the throat begins to crack by thirst. However, the moment drinking of water is allowed by Allah, then you tend to rush towards it as if you were tied down and you have just been released. This process of caging and freeing persists, for a month, so that you are prepared for the complete submission to Allah. You get used to stay away from those activities, which are banned by Him and undertake things, which are permitted by Him. You manage to exercise full control over your inner-self that it could not force you to

carry out its unwarranted demands, against the will of Allah. This is the second real motive for which fasting is made mandatory for you.

If during the month of Ramadan any individual has imbibed this spirit of Fast, then he truly justifies the greetings of Eid. And the one who does not throw up this month-long training on the very first day after Eid, but keeps benefiting from this for the remaining eleven months of the year, he is even more worthy for Eid greetings. Consider a hypothetical situation where an individual eats highly lavish food, which is extremely nutritious for him. But immediately after feeding, he vomits it out by putting a finger into the throat, then there will be no benefit of this diet, because he has not allowed the food to digest and translate into blood. On the contrary, if an individual eats and digests food and then blood is made which circulates in his body, then this is the actual reward of eating which he has gained. Eating and digesting simple food is better than eating very lavish food and throwing it up. This is the case of Fasts of Ramazan. The real payoff of Ramadan can be gained only when, after Eid, you do not puke the vigorous training, imparted to you for a month. Rather, for remaining eleven months, allow its effects to work on your life. If one can achieve this goal from Ramazan, then he truly deserves hearty greetings; that he has bagged a very precious blessing of Allah.

OUR TREATMENT WITH ISLAMIC CHASTITIES

Unfortunately, a large number of people among us are those who do not turn towards Allah even during Ramazan. The holy month comes and goes but their homes do not indicate any sign that these are inhabited by Muslims, for whom this month has any special significance. Leave fasting, they do not

even care to show any respect for this month. Their eating and drinking persists even during Ramazan, like any Christian, Hindu or Sikh. Clearly, those who behave like this are akin to a situation of a barren land that, even during monsoons, when every inch of land turns lush green and the crop blooms and flourishes, does not produce a single leaf of grass. The way monsoons are a season of cultivation and growth for land, similarly Ramazan is an era of sprouting and flowering of the spirit of Islam. If Allah had issued the directive of fasting, giving an option to Muslims to keep 30 days fasts at their own convenience, then there would have never been this season-like feeling in our religious life. But, the direction of Supreme Sage has been that all Muslims fast together, in one particular month only. This move has created the feeling of a season. When the season comes, leave aside high quality fertile lands, even those pieces of land which have limited level of fertility, buds of vegetable begin to sprout even in those lands. The bounty of season is such that land with even limited potential of growth is not deprived from its blessings. And the land that does not grow even a bud, during monsoons, is indicative that it is free from the faculty of growth. Similarly, Ramazan is such a period that those Muslims having a ray of Faith and a shred of Islamic emotions, comes this month and the deeply buried Faith in them becomes restless, however insensitive has been their lifestyle during remaining eleven months.

Getting up of all Muslims together for *Sahar*, for a month; fasting together the whole day; breaking the fast simultaneously; and offering *Taraveeh* during nights at various places creates an impressive collective environment in Muslim districts, by virtue of which Mosques get flooded. Reciting of Qur'an

becomes a common sight everywhere, even those who do not pray otherwise, start offering prayers regularly; those also start fasting who are not inclined towards Islamic way of life, in ordinary months. If a person is relentless even in this ambience; he does not develop any leaning towards Allah; his heart is still not inclined for prayers; fasting and reciting of Qur'an, then this is a clear indication that his heart is absolutely empty from the feeling of Faith. He has no link left with Islam. All ties, which he could have had with Allah and His religion, and with the Muslim community, he has severed them all. Thus, how can you trust that, a person who was born and has opened his eyes in, and being a part of Muslim community, severs his holiest bonds and connections with the lifestyle and religion of this community, in future, he will not attempt to backbite and desert this community. This is obvious that his conduct is only to satisfy desires of his inner-self. Here the question is, when his desires are making him behave like this, the same desires, in future, may move him on a worse course.

Gentlemen, we need to think very sincerely about the reasons that have resulted into this situation. If handful of people behaved like this, it could have been ignored. But we find hundreds of thousands of people present among us, who very vocally and proudly keep eating and drinking in Ramazan and perversely humiliate to those who fast. This is clearly a very alarming development and we should attempt to understand the causes behind this.

This situation is actually born because for a long time we are oblivion of the fact that the greatest reforms Allah, His prophet, His book had affected in our lives is still left in our society or it is lost. We have been very conscious about the economic pros-

perity of our community, and we have been making great efforts for this. But we have no concerns about those grand moral and spiritual reforms on which the nation of our society was established. Rather, there is widespread existence of such education and training, law and order system, which is disastrous for Islamic system. Consequently, we are witnessing that the influential sections of our society care less for the destruction of most sacred places of Islam than they do for the crease of their trousers.

LA TUFISIDU FIL ARDE...

Gentlemen, reforming human beings is a gigantic task; while vitiating them is amazingly simple. Reforms are brought about by years of hard work and perpetual efforts while corrupting them takes no pains or special efforts. At times, only negligence of pursuing reforms is enough for this fallout. Take the case of a child. If you want to groom him as a nice and chaste human being, you will have to make years of painstaking efforts, only then you will be able to shape his mind, character and traits. But if you want to pervert him, he will not require any special efforts for that. Giving him a long rope would be enough. Merely staying in the company of crooks and culprits will spoil him on his own. Efforts and stress are required for construction and not for destruction. If you want to take a vehicle to a steep hill, it will go up in a bigger gear, but if you want to bring it down, no gear is needed, just leave the breaks loose and it will descend as long as there is downward slope. Same situation exists in a human society. Making a society adhere to noble ideology and very high quality of deeds, by carefully shaping it, is a demanding job which requires struggle of centuries. But the fruits and results of these efforts can go waste, by just

stopping the efforts of preserving and maintaining them and; when the decline spreading in the society goes unnoticed.

The traits, which Muslims had, were not born out of coincidence. Prophet Muhammad *Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam* and his companions and subsequently hard work and devotion of virtuous, pious theologians and jurists of Muslim nation, for centuries together, pulled out billions of human beings from the gloom of infidelity and polytheism. Destroyed customs and conventions of ignorance. Prepared them for the worship of one and only Allah. Convinced and instilled faith in them about the quiz of Hereafter. Developed their strong character by imparting superior ethical training and coaching. Established the practice of chaste rituals like Prayers, Fasts, *Hajj* pilgrimage and *Zakat* and prepared a strong mould of Islamic system of culture and civilization, due to which Muslims attained those characteristics which fascinated others. This, which has been developed with hard work of centuries and unceasing efforts, if we wish to lose and destroy it, we can very easily do it. But if we want to regain this, it shall again require centuries.

It is extremely unfortunate that the reforms our ancestors had made in us, with their efforts of centuries, we have badly let it go in the last one century only. Firstly, we lost it during the period of British imperialism and now our own leaders are causing us greater damage. This is the same aberration on which Qur'an has pointed out at various places "***After having achieved peace on the earth, do not deviate from that.***" All the reforms, in the life of inhabitants of the earth, have been due to the result of the efforts of thousands of years of Prophets of Allah and chaste individuals of humanity.

In the destruction of every single evil and establishment of each virtue, pious subjects of Allah have strived for years, only then the development of human culture, on the lines of universal ethics, could be made possible in the world. This can very easily be devastated but rebuilding the same is not a kid stuff. Look at a very tiny example, only convincing, ensuring and establishing as a strict regulation that sexual relationship between a man and a woman should not occur, without entering into *Nikah*, was such a tough task that Prophets and theologians must have struggled for this, for thousands of years, only then this single social reform must have got implemented. Since cardinal urge is so intense in human beings, that regulating it on purely ethical basis is not an easy job. Eradication of this reform, though, does not call for great efforts. Just throw the doors of intermingling of men and women wide open. Allow common men to have access to the ways and means of family planning, then the bull of sexual anarchy, which was caged with great difficulty, once freed, would demolish the change, which was achieved after thousands of years of struggle. But after seeing disastrous consequences, the way western society is facing them in an extremely dreaded form, if you attempt to cage the bull again, it will not be a cakewalk. This will again need pains of centuries. To check this, Qur'an warns the destroyers of humanity that ***you do not let go by your idiocy the reforms which have been brought about with great pains.***

On the basis of this single case, you can guess that how tedious would have been the development of the greatest heritage which is called Islamic culture and civilization. By wiping out how many ignorance and deceptions and by destroying so many evils,

the ground would have been prepared for this asset. How many forfeiture it would have taken to drill true convictions and correct beliefs into human minds. What labour must have gone into practically implementing moral guidelines and regulations in the society, and then in supporting this entire structure, by firmly laying the five pillars of Islamic system namely *Shahadah* (Testimony of Allah and His Prophet), *Tawheed* (Belief in the Unity of Allah), *Namaz* (Five Prayers a day), *Roza* (Mandatory Fasting for the whole month of Ramazan) and *Haji* (Annual pilgrimage at Makkah, once in a lifetime). Whatever is achieved is due to the painstaking effort of our ancestors. We have inherited this great wealth absolutely free of cost, if we can not add to this, at least we must not impair this either.

The manner and speed at which our system of education and training, our literature, our *cultural* views, and overall our laws and rules & regulations; and the whole system of sociology and economics, producing an army of people to disregard and erode this wealth, on a daily basis, we cannot rule out the possibility of completely losing this one day. And once it is lost, replenishing this from scratch will not be a simple exercise. Allah forbids if we ever come across such a situation and may Allah open our eyes prior to that.



EID-UL-AZHA

Festivals and social life of human beings are closely inter-related. Since man has commenced social life on the earth, festivals have, perhaps, been held right through. There is no nation in the world, and has every been, which has not earmarked a few days for this purpose. The festivals are, in fact, the life line of the society. Getting together of individuals, demonstration of common sentiments, collective merry-making, performing uniform rituals signifies the binding trait, by which people collectively transform into a well-knit society, and not only spirit of unity takes route but gets refresh and revived, intermittently.

Usually, an analytical study of festivals celebrated in different countries and among various nations shows that every festival is celebrated in memory of prominent events, either linked to a revered personality or concerned with a specific religious occasion. Nevertheless, one such celebration is necessary for a festival, which has common interest for members of a nation or citizens of a country and towards which they have deep emotional attachment. For this very reason, people of one nation or country do not take any interest in the festivities of another nation or country, and even if they want to take, for some formal compulsions, they can not. The reason for this is, traditions which are linked to the festivities of one religion can not, as much, stir the sentiments of people of another nation, as they can in its own race.

There are numerous ways, in various nations, of celebrating festivals. Some carnivals are confined to dancing and singing, fun and frolics. In others, revelry exceeds all perimeters of civilization to reach indecency, coercion and horror. In still others, decent recreations are performed along with serious rituals. While in some cases, capitalising on social gatherings, people are infused with superior values and efforts are made to make them enamoured and endear some singular objective. In other words, the style in which festivities are conducted, is a scale on which the nature, ambitions and longings of a nation can be smackingly gauged. Higher the moral spirit in a nation, more civilized and temperate will be its festivities. Similarly, the more morally depraved will a nation be, the more degenerating scenes it will present in its feasts.

Since Islam is a universal reforming movement, which is not related to a specific nation or country, rather invites people of the whole world towards a single Allah-worshipping culture. Hence, where it has moulded every part of human life into a peculiar mode, festivals of Islam have also been given a unique shape, which is contrasting to all the other festivities in the world. The significance of festivities in a social life and the urge for collective celebrations, felt in the society, is not ignored in Islam, rather all efforts have been made to derive maximum benefit from such occasions, but the style and celebrations of festivals and its moral values are fundamentally differentiated. Here, an attempt is being 'made to draw the attention of the readers towards the three most significant aspects of which:

A global movement can not favourably view the national festivals which are based on varying national traditions, to which are associated the interest and

sentiments of just one community and in which it is naturally impossible for one community to wholeheartedly celebrate with another. Such are, in fact, the forces which trigger the national division and disintegration. As they facilitate one community to consolidate within itself, similarly they also assist in detaching and driving away one community from another. Thus, a movement which skips nations and addresses humanity as a whole and strives to bring all the human creatures on a uni-culture platform, will not only reject such festivals but can not even tolerate them because they prove to be stumbling block in the achievement of its objectives of global unity and universal brotherhood. The natural need for its objective is that all nations, which are in its fold, get rid of their national festivals and earmark festivals in which all of them could participate: which be simultaneously national and international. The base of which be not on national traditions and sentiments but on the customs and maxims having common significance for humanity.

Additionally, when a global movement is Allah fearing too, then it forbids all such festivals and celebrations which remind of pristine faith. Islam replaces them with festivals which strongly reflect worshipping of the singular Allah.

Along with the worship of Allah, the objective of high morality mandatorily comes into existence which demands that a God-worshipping movement should offer its followers such festivals which are free from cruelty, arrogance and indecency; in which fun and frolicing is within civilized limits and expression of joy is with sophistication; which should not merely end on carousing, rather the fervour brought about by festival, in a collective life, should be fully utilised to attain ultimate moral goals.

All the three traits are apparent from the festivals earmarked by Islam for its followers. Islam dispensed with all national and religious festivals of nations, in Iran, Egypt, Arabian Peninsula and Syria, which came into Islamic fold. They were replaced by festivals which are known as *Eid-ul-Fitr* and *Eid-ul-Azha*. Former is celebrated after successfully completing 30 days of fasting during the month of *Ramazan* - observed to obey the instructions of Allah. Thus after complying with His instructions, Muslims are required to thank Him, for enabling them to do so. Latter is commemorated in the memory of an unparalleled sacrifice, offered over 4000 years ago by a truly loyal individual, to his Allah. It can be distinctly established that none of these two festivals are associated with a specific nationality. Rather two such factors are made the basis of their festivals with which the sentiments of all single-Allah-worshipping human beings can be evenly attached. Thus both the festivals are a reflection of pure obedience of Allah. There is not an iota of hero-worshipping or devotion to some human being. Further, the course prescribed for the celebration of these festivals is such that a style more decent, sophisticated, sober and brimming with moral benefits can not be hypothesized. Subsequent generations of Muslims have smudged, to some extent, the true glory of Islamic era, by ignorant deeds.

The form of celebrating Eid during the lifetime of Prophet Mohammad *Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam* is outlined below, to give readers an idea, by which they can accurately visualize the decency of festival.

On the morning of Eid, all Muslim men, women and children would bathe and slip into the best apparels, provided to them by Allah. Before leaving for the prayers of *Eid-ul-Fitr*, all the affluent people donated a specific mount as *sadaqah*, to ensure that

nobody remained unfed on Eid. On the contrary, after the prayers of *Eid-ul-Azha*, animals were sacrificed, at the early hours of the day people would come out of their homes. It was mandatory for men, women and kids to exit so that the strength and glory of Muslims is demonstrated; everyone participated in prayers and also got an opportunity to enjoy this get-together. Eid prayers were held on the outskirts of town for enabling larger number of people to participate. All the Muslims would chant:

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ
وَاللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ وَلِلَّهِ الْحَمْدُ

Allah is great, Allah is great. No one but Allah be worshipped. Only Allah is great. All the praise are reserved for Him—on their way to prayers. The atmosphere of every lane, by-lane, market and street used to be filled with these slogans, by which the entire town would echo. After assembling at the *Eidgah ground*, the entire gathering would line-up to perform prayer under the stewardship of Prophet Mohammad *Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam*. Then Prophet Mohammad *Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam* would get up to deliver sermon. Unlike Friday prayers, the sermon was delivered after the prayers to allow maximum number of people to listen to the most important speech of their leader. This occasion came just twice a year. In the absence of microphone, then, first address used to be to the gathering of men, then Prophet Mohammad *Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam* would move to that part of the ground where women were gathered, to address them separately. These sermons, besides educating and persuading, counseling and preaching, would throw light on all the critical issues, concerning Islamic society, which were present at that time. In

case of a potential armed or political mission, the arrangements to be made were also announced there and then. Attention of the people were also drawn towards the organizational requirements and every individual, in accordance to his status and capacity, would partake in fulfilling them. There are some precedents where women even offered to remove their jewellery, to present to the Islamic organisation. This gathering would then return from *Eidgah*, and the instruction was to return from a different route from the one they came, so that no part of the town remains untouched by their rejoicings and from the echo of — *Allah is great*.

On their return from the prayers, all the affluent Muslims would offer sacrifice on *Eid-ul-Azha*. This sacrifice is not only meant to recap the event but also the spirit of an aged alien from Iraq, who offered to sacrifice his only son, at the behest of Allah, and by His grace Allah, just in time, permitted him to sacrifice the lamb, instead. Exactly on the same date and time, every year, Muslims the world over repeat the same act and revive their spirit that they too, like Prophet Ibraheem *Alaihissalam*, are submissive and docile subjects of Allah. Like him, they are also prepared to sacrifice their lives, offsprings, wealth and every other belonging, on the will of Allah and their life and death is just for Allah. This spirit is reflected by the act of sacrificing animal and by the words uttered at the time of sacrificing animal.

إِنِّي وَجَّهْتُ وَجْهِيَ لِلَّذِي فَطَرَ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضَ، حَنِيفًا وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ، إِنَّ

صَلَوْتِي، وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ،
لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَبِذَلِكَ أُمِرْتُ وَأَنَا مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ.
اللَّهُمَّ لَكَ وَمِنْكَ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ.

I have turned to the One who is the Creator of the skies and the earth. I follow the same path, followed by Prophet Ibraheem, and I am not among those who share others with Almighty. My prayers and my sacrifice, my life and my death, every thing is devoted to Allah—the Sustainer of the world—Who has no associate. This is what I have been ordered and I am among the obedient subordinates of Allah. O Allah! this belongs to You and is being presented to You, in the name of Allah, Who is great.

While cutting the animal, the above words were voiced and this scene was watched by all women and children in the family so that all of them have the same spirit of sacrifice and obedience revived. Then the meat was distributed among relatives and under-privileged. Skin of the animal or its monetary value was donated to poor folks. Additionally, charity was done generously and wholeheartedly so that the Eid is not reduced to be the festival of only prosperous section of the society.

This was the Eid, celebrated during the era of Prophet Mohammad *Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam*. Besides these "Official celebrations", youngsters would organise some games privately and girls would get together, at homes, for singing folk songs. But this practice was confined within the acceptable limits and nobody was permitted to exceed that. Rather, the leaders and prominent figures would even maintain

arm length distance from these permitted forms of rejoicings of youths so that they are not encouraged and do not dare to indulge in unwarranted exhibits.

The attitude of leaders, at that time, can be judged from an instance, quoted in authentic traditions that once, on the day of Eid, Prophet Mohammad *Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam* entered his house and found that two girls from the neighborhood were sitting with his wife *Hazrat Ayesha* and singing songs. The songs were not based on romance and passion or boozing and reveling, rather they were the songs written at the time of Battle of Baghas. Even the girls were not professional artists or vocalists but belonged to respectable families who, when getting together, would sing virtuous songs for the sake of relaxing and entertaining themselves. Prophet Mohammad *Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam* did not interfere in their self-entertainment and quietly went into a corner and lied down by covering himself, with a bed sheet, from head to toe. After a while, *Hazrath Abu'bakr* turned up and scolded his daughter *Hazrath Ayesha* saying what menacing act is going on at the residence of Prophet of Allah. Hearing him, Prophet Mohammad *Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam* removed the sheet from his face and said: leave them, every nation has an Eid, today is ours. On this, *Hazrath Ai'sha* remained silent but the girls stopped singing. As soon as *Hazrath Abu'bakr* turned his back from them, *Hazrath Ayesha* signalled them and the girls quickly disappeared. It is evident from this instance that youngsters were allowed to enjoy, through decent games and singing, but seniors never participated or encouraged them. Subsequently, the rope was let loose and the elders ignored to keep a tab. As a result, in addition to rejoicing and freaking out, the situation has arisen where :

روز عید است لب خشکِ مے آلود کنید
چارهٔ کارِ خود اے تشنه لبانِ زود کنید

It is the day of festival,
Let dry lips soak wine,
O people having thirsty lips!
Manage it as soon as you can.



MEELAD-UN-NABEE

I

Today is the day of great bounties for the world, because on this date, the trailblazer of this planet, Prophet Muhammad *Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam* had arrived in this world. Though, Islamic law has not declared the birthday of Prophet Muhammad as Eid, nor has it established any customary practice for its celebration, but if people consider it as Eid, due to this being the day of arrival of the greatest Prophet of Allah and the peerless saviour of the world, and observe it as a day on which the biggest blessing of Allah for mankind came into existence, then there is no harm either. However, the manner in which it should be celebrated is not all about eating and drinking, electrification of private and public premises, taking out processions and parades, and undertake wasteful and exhibitory activities for mere entertainment and self satisfaction. If you do this, then there will be no distinction between you and the ignorant communities. They too celebrate distinguished events of their history through fun, fete and frolicking and if you also ape their style of celebration, then you will meet their consequences only.

Islam has evolved a noble style for commemorating remembrance. The most remarkable of which is the sacrifice of Prophet Ibraheem, to commemorate which, Allah has laid down the criterion of Prayers and Sacrifice of Eid-ul-Azha and *Hajj*. After considering this, you can assess as to how Muslims should

celebrate the memory of great historical events. You should also ascertain that how does this date of 12th of Rabi-ul-Awwal holds any significance for you. It was not because a baby boy was born in the family of an Arab individual, but because that day the greatest Prophet was sent down on the earth and through whom humanity received guidance of Allah, and through whom man literally learnt to be human, whose individuality was the blessing for the entire humanity and who spread the light of faith and noble deeds across the earth. Thus, if these are the reasons for the significance of this date, then it should be observed by extending the same message of Prophet Muhammad, more on this day than any other day. Take some lessons from his character and from his teachings, and at least his message should be resonated in such a manner that it remains effective for coming one year. If you commemorate like this, then it will truly demonstrate that you sincerely consider the birthday of Prophet Muhammad as Eid. But if it is confined to fun, food and frolicking then it will not be an Islamic Eid but it will only be an ignorant celebration that has no significance.

In line with today's pertinence, I shall deliver the sermon, relevant to the occasion. Allah has stated in His Holy Book that the Prophet whom I have sent, has been sent so that he is followed. This is also the reason why it is mandatory for every Muslim to follow him, because he was also Prophet of Allah. Besides this generic instruction, Allah has also issued specific commands to Muslims pertinent to the status of Prophet Muhammad, which are given below :

Say : "If you do love Allah, follow me : Allah will love you and forgive your sins : For Allah is oft-forgiving, Most Merciful." (3 : 31)

The answer of the Believers, when summoned to Allah and His Messenger, in order that he may judge between them, is no other than this: They say, "We hear and we obey." (24 : 51)

Is it not fitting for a believer, man or woman, when a matter has been decided by Allah and His Messenger, to have any option, about their decision : If anyone disobeys Allah and His messenger, he is indeed on a clearly wrong path. (33 : 36)

But no by the Lord, they can have no (real) faith. Until they make you judge in all disputes between them, and find in their souls no resistance against the decisions but accept them with the fullest conviction. (4 : 65)

Deem not the summons of Messenger among yourselves like the summons of one of you to another. (24 : 63)

Nor is it right for you that you should annoy Allah's Messenger. (33 : 53)

Those who annoy Allah and His Messenger, Allah has cursed them in this world and the Hereafter, and has prepared for them a humiliating punishment. (33 : 57)

Let those beware who withstands the messenger's order, lest some trial befall them. (24 : 63)

O you who believe ! Raise not your voices above the voice of the Prophet, nor speak aloud to him in talk, as you may speak aloud to one another, lest your deeds become vain and you perceive not. (49 : 2)

You will not find any people who believe in Allah and the Last Day, (but) loving those who

oppose Allah and His Messenger, even though they are their fathers or their sons, or their brothers or their kindred. (58 : 22)

Say : If it be that your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your mates, or you kindred : the wealth that you have gained; the commerce in which you fear a decline or the dwellings in which you delight are dearer to you than Allah or His Messenger, or the striving in his cause ; then wait until Allah brings about His decision: and Allah guides not the rebellious. (9 : 24)

It is difficult to state all relevant verses here. My sole objective is to make you understand as Muslim that what is the nature of your relationship with Prophet Muhammad *Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam*. This fact is highlighted by few verses that I have stated above. It is evident from them that an individual ceases to be Muslim unless he is obedient to Prophet Muhammad *Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam*. If Prophet Muhammad *Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam* gives some instructions and in turn if some one says that I do not accept this, then it shows that his heart is free from Faith. The demand of Faith is to bow down after hearing the command. Faith can not co-exist with ifs and buts.

Now please listen carefully, the instructions Prophet Muhammad *Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam* has given on behalf of Allah. Thereafter every individual should go on assessing the level of Faith in his or her heart and how sincere Muslim he or she is.

1. Muslim is one from whose tongue and hand Muslims are safe. Means who does not trouble his fellow brothers-in-Islam either through his tongue or his hands.

2. None of you can be Faithful unless he prefers the same path for others, which he chooses for himself. Means the way you want your own well-being, similarly you should desire it for your brothers-in-Islam and the way you do not want to harm yourself, do not wish the same for your brother.

Hazrat Abuzar Ghafari *Razi Allahu Anhu* narrates that once I had picked up fight with some one and I abused him. Prophet Muhammad *Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam* heard it and said, " You still have shades of ignorance left in you and Islam has not completely entered your life."

Prophet Muhammad states that there are four attributes of hypocrisy and the one who has all of them is an accomplished hypocrite and the one who has one of them, he too has one part of duplicity. First sign is that when some thing is handed over to him in good faith, he swindles it ; secondly, when he converses, he certainly misrepresents ; thirdly when he promises or enters into a contract with someone, he invariably backtracks ; and finally, when he has a brawl with somebody, he turns abusive and gets down to humiliate his opponent, through wrongful means.

Prophet Muhammad *Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam* stated : A Muslim is the brother of another Muslim, he himself will not suppress him nor will he hand him over to a cruel. One who is busy fulfilling the needs of his brother, Allah does the same for him ; and the one who saves fellow Muslims from inconvenience, Allah will curtail one of his pains of the Day of Judgement ; and the one who conceals the deficiencies of a fellow Muslim, will receive the same treatment from Allah on the Day of Judgement."

Prophet Muhammad *Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam* says : "Help your brother, whether he is tyrant or aggrieved." When his companion sought clarification that we shall

certainly aid the oppressed but how should we help the cruel ? He replied, "The aid of an oppressor is to hold his hand so that he does not commit atrocities."

On another occasion he said : " Beware of the curse of an oppressed, because there is nothing between him and Allah, means it directly flies to the thorn of Allah."

Prophet Muhammad *Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam* stated : The one who deprived his Muslim brother from his rights or has caused damage to his respect, wealth or any other thing, he should compensate him in this life only or else if it is carried forward to the day when money or other material objects would not exist, rather he will have to pay out of his good deeds or a part of a tyrant's burden will be shifted to his account. "

Prophet Muhammad *Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam* enumerates : "If someone has grabbed even an inch of land, he will have to wear a collar in his neck, seven times the weight of that land."

Prophet Muhammad *Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam* said that three sins are the gravest : (1) Sharing the Unity of Allah with some one (2) Disobedience of parents and recklessness towards their rights and (3) Lying and false testimony.

He further stated that Gabriel (Jibra'eil) told me so repeatedly about treating the neighbour decently, that I began to wonder whether they would be entitled to share the inheritance as well.

On another occasion, Prophet Muhammad *Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam* said, "That person is absolutely apostate, completely faithless whose neighbour is scared of his mischief."

One more tradition of Prophet Muhammad *Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam* is : The one who is faithful, should not

cause pain to his neighbour, treats his guest with respect; and when speaks, it should be with kindness or else remain quiet,

Prophet Muhammad *Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam* stated that one of the worst persons, on the Day of Judgment, would be the one who has dual face, means if he meets one of the two rivals, he speaks in his favour while meeting the other rival, takes his side ; speaks one thing on the face and another behind the back.

Prophet Muhammad *Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam* said :

بَيْنَ الْعَبْدِ وَبَيْنَ الْكُفْرِ تَرْكُ الصَّلَاةِ

Abdication of prayers (*Salat*) lies between man and infidelity. It means that there is one stage in between approaching infidelity from Islam and that is forsaking prayers. If you have renounced prayers that means you are hanging between Faithlessness and Islam, one step more and you will enter the boundary of apostasy.

On one occasion, Prophet Muhammad *Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam* enumerated : those who stay at home, even after hearing *azaan*, I feel like torching their homes. There are numerous traditions for the reiteration of prayers, but I have talked about these two only, from which you can assess that how strong is this instruction, and what is the meaning of this defiance. This is with regard to that *farz* from which Muslims are becoming usually oblivious these days.

Secondly, you must also know about the sin which is proving most disastrous for Muslims, meaning interest based financing. Prophet Muhammad *Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam* has categorically stated that taking interest, paying interest, keeping record of and

being witness to it are all prohibited, and men committing any of these acts will be punished in hell.

Brothers, you celebrate EID-E-MEELAD UN NABI, it is very nice, but I would only say that at the time of entering the *darbar* of our chief, just think what face are taking to that pious spirit. If a servant lapses, then he fears in facing his employer and tries to hide away. Then how should we face someone whose one or two instructions are not defied every day but numerous. O Allah ! Guide me to comply with the instructions of my Prophet Muhammad *Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam* and to my brothers as well.

II

Today is the anniversary of the birth of an incredible personality, who arrived as a boon for the entire humanity and brought with him a set of principles, pursuing which guarantees even triumph and well-being for every individual, every nation and country and the whole mankind. Though this day comes every year, but this year it has come at such a crucial time when inhabitants of the earth are more indigent of the guidance of that sagacious person, than ever before. It is difficult to say whether Mr. Bernard Shaw made this statement consciously or not, but whatever he stated was absolutely fitting that "Had Muhammad *Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam* been the dictator of the world, at present, then peace would have been prevailing in the world." I would go one step further and say that, though Prophet Muhammad *Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam* is not present in this world, yet the doctrine presented by him are available hook line and sinker. If we sincerely presume his tenets as Dictator, then all the evils can be rid, the fire of which has turned the abode of humanity into hell.

Over fourteen hundred years back, when Prophet Muhammad *Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam* set his foot on the earth, that time his own nation had reached the nadir of moral ebb, chaos and turmoil. Qur'an has explained the situation of that, in these words : you were standing on the edge of fire-filled pit, from which Allah rescued you. Other countries of the world had no better condition than this. Persian and Roman empires were, then, the biggest cradle of human civilization, and both of them were engulfed in mutual hostilities on the one hand and domestic economic inequality, economic distinctions and religious rifts on the other hand. Under these circumstances, Prophet Muhammad got up and within a span of 23 years, not only did he change the shape of Arabian peninsula, but the movement which set off under his command from Arab, within a quarter of a century, reformed a large portion of the earth, from the borders of India to North Africa, in culture & civilization, economics & politics, and all other spheres of life.

How this revamping was achieved? It is difficult to spell out the details in one brief talk, but I shall present you its broad principles :

The very first point which he stressed upon was that all human beings should recognize only Allah as their real King, real Owner, the Most Wise and the Sovereign. Do not accept to be the subject of anyone else other than Allah, should bow down to the highest authority of Allah, not only within the limited confines of religious matters, but in every sphere of life. Besides, second important aspect of his preaching was that human sovereignty and recklessness should come to a grinding halt. Every person, individually, considers himself to be accountable to Allah, and similarly human organizations too, whether they are in the form of families and clans or sections

; in the form of nations or governments and states. Nevertheless, all of them should consider themselves responsible and accountable before Allah. The very image of men, which Prophet Muhammad *Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam* presented was that of a representative or deputy of Allah on the earth. In whatever and whichever capacity he is empowered, that is essentially not his own rights, rather they have been entrusted by Allah and in its dispensation he is answerable to Allah.

On the basis of supreme sovereignty of Allah and every human being his deputy, Prophet Muhammad *Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam* established the relationship of equitable unity and cooperation among human beings which could not have been achieved otherwise. Race and lineage, language and colour, national and economic interests and all other elements forming the genesis of the society, necessarily divide human beings into various groups and make them rival of one another. Even if they find unanimity among themselves, that compatibility is temporary and purely on selfish motives. Conflicts and hostilities are the natural outcome of this division and injustice is its mandatory consequence. There is no way to avert this, except having the entire humanity united on the allegiance of Allah and by making them aware of their accountability before Allah, they should be persuaded to do justice.

Instead of nationalism and socialism, Prophet Muhammad *Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam* laid the foundation of universal social life on the basis of obedience of Allah and *Khilafah*. He molded every aspect of that life into durable moral principles. His morality were not meant for reclusive saints, but for very people who run the show on the earth like farmers, landlords, labourers, industrialists, traders, customers,

cops, jurists, administrators, governors, soldiers, supreme commanders, ministers, and diplomats. Each of these functionaries were made to adhere to moral code within its precincts, the bolting and unbolting of which and the making and breaking of its principles would not rest on the desires of any individual or masses. He disciplined all facets of human life on the basis of rectitude, whether it is social or interpersonal relation, art or culture, trade or commerce, politics or administration, international relations or war and peace. Everything that is linked to human life was denied the right to bloom and prosper independent of moral restrictions.

These are the broader principles depended on which the reforms program of Prophet Muhammad. The strategy he adopted to implement this program commenced from individual reform. He did not overlook the fact that every map of collective reforms eventually depends upon the success of individual reform. Even the best of programs can not be successfully implemented with having people of loose character and questionable standing along. Flaws in the character of individuals may cause serious damage in the implementation of a noble system, which can not be averted by merely theoretical remedies. Theoretically, whatever imaginary precautions one can take for the prevention of deficiencies. But practically, if the people who are responsible for executing the conceptual plan are vulnerable to desires, vested interests and partisan; if they lack true piety and character, then despite your utmost caution, there would be impediments for your plans and that too from quarters which you never expected. On the contrary, by looking at the black board, you can prove the possibility of a number of loopholes. But if a reliable team is available for executing this plan, then their correct

actions will plug the holes, which you think can pop up in your hypothetical simulation.

This is why Prophet Muhammad *Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam* expended all his energy on the grooming of such human capital that could put his plan of transforming the world into action in the best manner. He produced people who were God-fearing and pious under every situation. Who held themselves accountable to Allah in every sphere of their lives. Who restrained themselves from every single deed which they suspected could make Allah furious with them and who were willing to dedicate themselves to a cause which they felt would please Allah. Who could sacrifice everything which could win them favour of Allah. In whose heart there was no fear, no greed of favours or desires of awards from anyone other than Allah. For whom there was no distinction between their private and public lives. Who were as pious, decent, and virtuous behind the veil as they appeared in front of the whole world. Who could prove to be trustworthy, if they were entrusted with the responsibility of protecting the life, property and honor of the servants of Allah. If they took oath on behalf of their self, nation or government, they would not backtrack. If they were made jurist, they would not be held cruel. If they undertook commercial transaction then they would not be declared as crooks. They might be slow in claiming their rights, but will be quick in dispensing others. They used their intelligence, prudence, diligence and qualifications for truth and justice and for the welfare and prosperity of humanity and not for deceiving and depriving others from their rights because of individual and national gains.

After spending full 15 years for the development of such people, Prophet Muhammad raised a task

force of handful of true believers which was not committed to the reforms of only Arabian peninsula but for the mankind of the whole world, and which was comprised of people other than Arab nationals also.

Having raised this team, he moved on to make large scale efforts to bring about social reforms and in merely eight years, brought comprehensive social, economic, cultural and political revolution on the land of Arabian peninsula, spreading over 15,00,000 square miles. Then, the same team, which was integrated by him, accomplished its task of reforming Arabs, proceeded further and showered the grace of this revolution, which was initiated in Arab, over a large part of the then civilized world. These days we hear the idea of new world order everywhere, but we fail to understand that how the very fundamental flaws which have ultimately turned the old system into turmoil, if still exist in the new system, with a different face, can be considered a new order? It would essentially be the same system whose bites and stings have pushed us to the deathbed for which we are seeking antidote of the new system. Fearlessness and apathy towards Supreme authority of Allah by human beings, national and racial distinction, political and economic self-interests of nations and regions and non-god-fearing people ruling the roost are the real drawbacks which have been destroying the humanity till date and will continue to do so if our lifestyle remains the victim of the same evils. If reforms are to be brought about, then only on those principles through which one of the greatest well-wisher of humanity not only guided us, centuries back, but practically showed us reforms.



(This speech delivered on 30th March, 1942, from All India Radio Station, at Lahore)

Maulana Sayyid Abul A'la Maududi

(1903-1979), one of the chief architects and leaders of the contemporary Islamic resurgence, is the most outstanding Islamic thinker and writer of our time. He devoted his entire life to expounding the meaning and message of Islam, inviting individuals to renew their commitment to their Creator, and to organizing a movement to establish Islam fully. In this struggle, he had to pass through all kinds of suffering : between 1948 and 1967, he was put behind bars on four occasions, spending a total of five years in different prisons of Pakistan; in 1953, he was also sentenced to death by a Martial Law court for writing a 'seditious' pamphlet, this sentence later being commuted to life imprisonment. In 1941, he founded Jama'at Islami, of which he remained *Amir* (Chief) until 1972 and which is one of the most prominent Islamic movements of our day. He authored more than a hundred works on Islam, both scholarly and popular, and his writings have been translated into forty languages.



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