

What After Ramadan?

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**Unity In Celebrations Or Unity In
Concerns Of The Ummah? - Sayyid
Muhammad Rizvi**

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Sayyid Muhammad Rizvi

What After Ramadan? Unity In Celebrations Or Unity In Concerns Of The Ummah?

(Based on Eidy 'I-Fitr 1428 Sermon)

What Is The Message Of Ramadan?

People always think of the 'Eid as the basis of unity. To some extent that may be true but the question comes: unity for what? The unity in doing Salat al-'Eid together and that's it?...

No, my brothers and sisters, this is not the basis of unity. So what should be the basis of unity?

The answer lies in the fating of Ramadan and 'Eid al-Fitr itself – in the issue of fitra: a clear message of uniting in the matter of concern for the less fortunate brothers and sisters of our community, locally as well as globally.

Unity is not on the eating of baqlawa and cake with coffee together after Salat al-'Eid where some people show up only once in a year. Real unity is in being concerned for the well-being of the Muslims.

The Daily Du'a Of Ramadan

Look at the du'a (prayer) you recited in Ramadan every night. A du'a which has come from our own Prophet Muhammad al-Mustafa (s.a.w):

(1)

اللهم أدخل على أهل القبور السرور

O Allah, bless the departed souls with joy and happiness.

Don't forget those who have passed away, especially those related to you: pray for their forgiveness, do good deeds on their behalf, and do their unfulfilled obligations.

(2)

اللهم أغن كل فقير

O Allah, make every poor free from need.

Now that you have been blessed by Allah, have you looked for an opportunity for being used by Allah as an intermediary in providing for others? In du'a Sha'baniyya, Imam Sajjad (a.s), teaches us to pray : “ Since You have increased Your grace upon me ,bless me to be charitable towards those whose sustenance You have straitened.” This is, in essence, a prayer to use us as intermediary in conveying Allah's grace to the less fortunate human beings.

Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s): “... and whenever my father used to give anything in charity, he would first put it on the hand of the beggar, then he would take it back (for a moment), kiss it ... and then give it back to him. And he used to do this because charity reaches the hand of Allah before it reaches the beggar's hands”.

(3)

اللهم أشبع كل جائع

O Allah, feed every hungry person.

Have you thought about participating in the process of helping the poor in the Muslim world—especially in Iraq where there are many Shi'a orphans and widows as result of Saddam's brutal rule as well as the continued occupation of that land by US-led forces which further breeds insecurity created by al-Qaeda and its supporters in Jordon and Saudi Arabia.

One of the signs of those who don't take the Day of Judgement seriously is:

وَلَا يَحُضُّ عَلَى طَعَامِ الْمِسْكِينِ

“they don’t encourage (themselves as well as others) to feed the poor” (107:3).

(4)

اللهم اكس كل عريان

O Allah, clothe every naked person.

What about the women and children in Darfur who live in inhuman conditions? What do you know about the situation of the Shi’as in Afghanistan? So, you know the after effects of the brutality of the Taliban regime upon them? Are you aware of the projects organized by Shi’a organizations to help them in Afghanistan? If not, then try to find out and do something.

(5)

اللهم اقض دين كل مدين

O Allah, fulfil the debts of all those in debt.

Look around among your family and friends’ circle. Is someone is really in debt because of economic circumstances, then see how you can help them: encourage them to go for counselling for debt management or see how much you can relieve them of their debts. Has your concern increased during this month?

(6)

اللهم فرج عن كل مكروب

O Allah, relieve the distress from every person who is in distress.

What about the distress of the people living in Gaza Strip which is known as the biggest prison on this earth? Do you think about them? Do you educate yourself about the Palestinian struggle? Have you thought of participating with Canadian groups that try to highlight the misery and distress of the Palestinians?

Are you concerned about the distress that the Iranians are going through because of the present threat

against that Shi'a country? If the USA – against the advice of its prominent statesmen and politicians – decides to attack Iran, are you willing to join the protest movement against that war?

(7)

اللهم رد كل غريب

O Allah, return all the refugees to their homes safely.

Refugees are becoming a very common feature of this era, even in the Muslim world –do we think about them or is our attitude like of those mentioned in the Surah Yasin:

أَنْطَعِمُ مَنْ لَوْ يَشَاءُ اللَّهُ أَطْعَمَهُ

“Why should we bother- if Allah wished, He could have feed them Himself!” (36:47).

(8)

اللهم فك كل أسير

O Allah, grant freedom to every innocent prisoner.

When we uttered these words or heard them or read them on the screen with its English Translation on the monitors during the nightly programs at our centres, did the pictures of innocent prisoners come to our minds? What about those who are in Israeli jails? What about those likes of Maher Arar who are in secret prisons run by the USA in different parts of world?

How much do we know and care about those Muslims in Canada who are in jail based on the so-called security certificate where the accused or his lawyer cannot even see the evidence used against him. Do we know that prominent non-Muslim Canadians have spoken against this injustice?

(9)

اللهم أصلح كل فاسد من أمور المسلمين

O Allah, reform whatever is wrong in the affairs of the Muslims.

We probably don't have the means to bring about the change in the ummah on a global level –but what have we done for the betterment and reformation of our own community?

Do we participate in the community issues?

The new community centre project is an important issue; what about the three Sunday madrasas with a combined forces of 1500 to 1700 students; then we have the As-Sadiq Islamic School; there are also opportunities to serve as volunteers at various centres in a variety of subcommittees; youth and senior groups – do you participate in any of these?

If things are not working as we wish. What have we done besides complaining? We can't always get consensus on all things–but we cannot afford to ignore the ultimate goal of making this community a better God-fearing, Allah-conscious community, we cannot afford to abandon the most important social principle of Islam: amr bil ma'ruf and nahi 'anil munkar. Imam 'Ali has said in his will that if you abandon amr and nahi, and then evil ones will rule over you, and then you will sit down and pray for relief – Allah will not listen to your prayers because you abandoned amr and nahi.

(10)

اللهم اشف كل مريض

O Allah, provide the cure for every sick person.

How do you care for those who are sick among circle of friends? What about those who are sick in the community and are alone? Is there a mechanism to know about them and provide support for them?

(11)

اللهم سد فقرنا بغناك

O Allah, eliminate our poverty by Your benevolence

اللهم غير سوء حالنا بحسن حالك

O Allah, change our bad situation by the grace of Your benevolence;

اللهم اقض عنا الدين وأغننا من الفقر

O Allah relieve us of our debts and make us free from need.

إنك على كل شيء قدير

You surely have power over every thing.

The sequence of this du'a is a message by itself—only after praying for others (the dead ones; the poor; the hungry; the naked; those in debt; those in distress; those who are away from their homes; the innocent prisoners; the Muslim ummah at large; and the sick). The Prophet is teaching us to pray for ourselves.

Build in yourselves the concern for the others; we need the unity in the concern for the less fortunate ones and for our community.

That is the message of 'Eid al-Fitr even expressed in the verse recited in that prayer.

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ تَزَكَّى

“Indeed, success is one who pay charity” (87: 14).

وَذَكَرَ اسْمَ رَبِّهِ فَصَلَّى

“And remembers the name of his Lord and prays” (87: 15).

This refers the issue of paying the fitra (charity) on the day of 'Eid al-Fitr before going for the Salat al-'Eid. The Surah goes on:

بَلْ تُؤْثِرُونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا

“Nay! You prefer the present life” (87: 16).

وَالْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَى

“While the hereafter is better and ever-lasting” (87: 17).

إِنَّ هَذَا لَفِي الصُّحُفِ الْأُولَى

“Most surely this [message] has come in the earlier scriptures” (87: 18).

صُحُفِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَى

“The scrolls of Ibrahim and Musa” (87: 19)

So let us unity with the prophets, with Ibrahim and Musa, with the Prophet of Islam and the Imams of Ahl al-Bayt, with the Present Imam in imbining the concern for the and fellow human beings in our hearts. This is, indeed, the true basis of unity.

Message Of The 2nd Khutba

Once Imam ‘Ali bin Abi Talib (a.s) said in his khutba of ‘Eid al-Fitr:

“O people!... This day is like the day of your resurrection:”

“So, consider your coming out of your homes to your places of ‘Eid prayer like your coming out of the graves towards your Lord”.

“And consider your presence in this place of prayer like the day your will be presented before your Lord (for judgement)”.

“And consider your return to your homes like your return to your homes in the Paradise!”

“O servants of Allah! The least that the people who fasted can expect on the last day of Ramadan is that an angel will announce: ‘Good-tidings, O servants of Allah for your past sins have been forgiven; so be careful in what you do from now on”.

Now that Imam ‘Ali has asked us to consider our return from this ‘Eid prayer is like returning to our homes in the Paradise, try to maintain the spirit of Paradise in your behaviour with your wife /husband, your parents and your children.

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