

EID-UL-FITR SERMON

18 July 2015

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Once again, through the sheer Grace of Allah we are given the opportunity to assemble here to celebrate Eid ul Fitr. *Al hamdo lillah*. There is joy in our heart because there is permission from Allah to rejoice. Today is the day when we are allowed to do what we were not allowed to do whilst we were fasting these past thirty days. We are allowed to eat and drink and to be happy. Merry making within the bounds of Islamic teachings also are not forbidden at all. So today is a day for all Muslims to be happy because the month of Ramadan with all its restrictions has come to an end and normal life for another eleven months starts again.

So after about thirty days of restrictions in food intake and after additional worships in the form of *Tarawee* and *Tahajjud* and in the additional efforts to read and understand the Holy Quran and in giving as much in charity as is in our capacity and after trying to remember Allah as much as we could our heart is gladdened by the arrival of Eid. As I have explained in the past the word Eid comes from the Arabic root *ain yeh daal* which has the meaning of that which returns. The word itself means a festival that returns periodically as our two Eids which recur every year. Today it is forbidden to fast. Observe this contrast and see how the Muslim believer is expected to submit to the will of Allah. Most of the 1.6 billion of Muslims around the world have fasted because they know in their heart of heart that it is an order from Allah that they should fast. Similarly on Eid day Allah has forbidden fasting and all these Muslims know that they should not fast. In this behaviour is the essence of submission to what Allah says. When He asks us to do something we just do it. When He forbids us doing something we just do not do it. We see the same lesson in fasting on a daily basis. We should start fasting before sunrise and stop fasting after sunset. All of us are very keen in observing these time constraints. So it is with everything that Allah ask us to do and not to do in the Holy Quran. It is this lesson of submitting to what Allah says that I think is the essential teaching of the Holy Month of Ramadan that we should strive to carry into the other months of the year if we want to be counted as true Muslims. In fact we should do so because although the month of Ramadan for this year has come to an end it does not at all mean that we have been given a license to do as we please as from now on. What is expected from us is that we build upon the additional *taqwa* that we have cultivated during the month of Ramadan to increase our God consciousness and our piety. The degree of our consciousness of Allah before and after the month of Ramadan cannot be the same. If it is it means that we have

not gained anything from fasting because the aim was that we should get an increase in our fear and love of Allah. So if we have fasted and done whatever was expected from us we should be having a better and an increased consciousness of Allah after the month of Ramadan. The signs of this increased consciousness of Allah is that we should be carrying out more of our duties to Allah and to our fellow human beings. Hence we will each see to it that we are regular in our prayers and whilst we pray we are conscious of Allah's presence with us. We take time to entreat Him to "Guide us on the straight path". We think of Him when we say "*Subhana rabbi al azim*" and also when we are in *sajda* we solicit Him a lot. We do not pray as chickens eat maize and we rush through all the different postures of Prayer. Similarly in the month of Ramadan we have done our best to read more of the Holy Quran and to understand it. This should now become a part of our daily routine. I know that there is a lot of negligence in this matter. But I tell you truly that each one amongst us should develop a love for this book and we should try to understand it from beginning to end. Examine your life on a daily basis and see how much time you waste in frivolous pursuit. If you study two *rukus* per day before the end of the next month of Ramadan you will have completed the entire book. The study of two *Rukus* from the five volume commentary might take less than twenty minutes per day. In one year it will take approximately 120 hours. Ask yourself if you cannot be grateful to Allah to devote twenty minutes per day to the study of His message which will help you to better understand why you have been created and what is the purpose of your life. The study of the Holy book will help each one to know exactly what is expected of him or her as a Muslim.

Similar during this month of Ramadan we have devoted ourselves to additional prayers to Allah. We should aim at keeping this practice up. If we aim at building a solid relationship with Allah we cannot do without devoting more time to reading *Nafil* prayers. From a hadith Qudsi we understand that Allah said to the Holy prophet Mohammad (saw) **"Whoever shows hostility to a friend of mine, then I have declared war upon him. My servant does not grow closer to me with anything more beloved to me than the duties I have imposed upon him. My servant continues to draw near me with extra works until I love him. When I love him, I am his hearing with which he hears, his seeing with which he sees, his hands with which he strikes, and his foot with which he walks. Were he to ask something from me, I would surely give it to him. If he were to ask me for refuge, I would surely grant it to him. I do not hesitate to do anything as I hesitate to take the soul of the believer, for he hates death and I hate to disappoint him."**(Hadith 6137 Bukhari)

So we should take some time and reflect well on our life mission. Additional prayers or other additional good deeds will help us to draw nearer to Allah. Another hadith which

helps us to understand the importance of the five daily prayers and the *Nawafil* is as follows:

“The first actions for which a servant of Allah will be held accountable on the Day of Resurrection will be his prayers. If they are in order, then he will have prospered and succeeded; but if they are lacking, then he will have failed and lost. If there is something defective in his obligatory prayers then the Lord the Exalted will say: See if My servant has any extra prayers which can complete what is defective in his obligatory prayers. Then the rest of his actions will be judged in the same way.”(Sunan At-Tirmidhi 413)

So find a moment each day and ask yourself if you are in order with regards to your prayers, *zakat*, *roza* and how far your belief in the credo of Islam is sincere. If in your heart of heart you are satisfied then you are safe; Allah will most surely treat you with His Mercy. But if you give anyone else more importance than Allah and His prophet then you should take care and correct this situation before it is too late. If you have shown neglect in observing the fast and in your prayers then you should take corrective action before it is too late by making additional fasts and additional prayers. If you are liable to pay *Zakaat* but you did not care to do so you should beware because you like it or not we will be questioned about all these matters. So try to understand the purpose of your life as soon as you can and try to fulfill that purpose until you die. I have said all this in order to bring home to you how you should build on what you have received during the month of Ramadan and not lead a life of negligence where you make a new start every month of Ramadan. The aim should be that our *Taqwa* level should go on increasing every day and then indeed we will be progressing. Sometimes it will happen that you will slip. But you should not get discouraged and abandon your efforts. On the contrary despite your lapses you should increase your efforts and expect pardon and mercy from Allah for He is the Most Forgiving and Merciful and you should hurry in seeking forgiveness. He knows our limits and He has not burdened anyone beyond his capacity. So remember that even if Ramadan has come to an end this year, the true believer who understands the aim of his life knows that his efforts should not flag in his desire to walk the path to Allah. It is my prayer and hope that each one amongst us will tread the path that will take us to Allah.

Now we will say a few words about events which took place in 1915 with regard to the establishment of the Ahmadiyya Jamaat in Mauritius. Some of our youngsters do not like that we should talk about the mainstream Jamaat. The fact is that we cannot deny our roots. Most of the elders who are sitting here have grown up and even become old in the other Jamaat. We were sincere in our beliefs and we did our best to put into practice the teachings of Islam. Personally I have been in the other Jamaat for almost 47 years. So we

cannot erase that part of our history from our memory. It is part and parcel of our being. So the history of how the Jamaat was established in Mauritius is quite important for us and whatever has been written during the past 100 years on the history of those early years has not yet fully recognized the contribution of those early elders of the Jamaat as it should have been recognized. To the Jamaat these days the history of the Jamaat starts with the arrival of the first missionary from Qadian. The fact is that through the efforts of Mr Noormamode Nooraya(1880-1944) contacts were established with the Review of Religion's Editor, Molvi Mohammad Ali around 1907. At that time Mr Nooraya was the editor of a newspaper known as "L' Islamisme" which he started publishing in November 1906 and which he continued to publish until 1914. In this paper there were articles in French, English and Gujrati. He became an Ahmadi around 1913. Wherever he went he spoke about Ahmadiyyat. Eventually around that time he met Al Hajj Azim Sooltangos (grandfather of Bye Mahmood and Bye Zahoor) when he came from Phoenix to teach at the Rosehill Mohammedan Aided School. The latter was convinced of the truthfulness of the claims of the Promised Messiah and he became an Ahmadi. Al Hajj Azim Sooltangos (may Allah illumine his tomb) talked about the matter with his maternal uncle Soobhan Rajaballee who was quite well versed in Urdu literature and the latter also joined the Jamaat. It was these three individuals who were the pioneer Ahmadis in Mauritius. When Sufi Saheb came on 15th June 1915 the work of the Jamaat became more organized. An association was set up on Sunday 20th June in Highlands where Sufi Saheb assumed the presidency and Mr Nooraya was nominated as the Secretary and Al Hajj Azim Sooltangos was nominated as the Treasurer. *Incha* Allah we will have a publication where we will speak more about these individuals soon. Eid day in 1915 was celebrated in Mauritius on Friday 13th August . According to a report written by Sufi Saheb and which was published in Al Fazl we understand that he was living somewhere around Remono Street in a small room and it was there that he celebrated Eid. He said that there were at least thirty persons who were present for Eid prayer (they were not all Ahmadis). Later on he read Jumma prayer and after that he went to Phoenix. That was the first Eid of Jamaat Ahmadiyya in Mauritius. That is all that is known about that first Eid and I have shared it with you. By the grace of Allah I have been able to get my hand on some source materials about the history of the Jamaat. *Incha* Allah in our publication we will speak about them all in order to present a true picture of what went on in that early period of our history.

So we will end the sermon here. My prayers and hopes are that Allah keeps us on the path that will lead us to Him. Others may try to frighten you that you are being misguided but I tell you "he who is guided by Allah there is no one to misguide him". So continue seeking your guidance from Allah directly. He will show you who he is little by little. Let

us all take the training that we have adopted during the month of Ramadan to be a stepping stone that will help each one amongst us to scale the spiritual heights that have been destined for he or she who is sincere in following the guidance provided by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as). He expected his followers to scale spiritual heights and not to be bogged down by paying lip service to his teachings. May Allah be with you all always. May He also be with our friends who are not physically present with us but who share our views.