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In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

The Islamic View

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Universality of Religion

Eid-ul-Fitr Khutba at Darus Salaam, London, 20 March 2026

by Dr Zahid Aziz

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ كُتِبَ عَلَيۡكُمُ ٱلصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى ٱلَّذِينَ مِن قَبۡلِكُمۡ لَعَلَّكُمۡ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٨٣﴾

شَهۡرُ رَمَضَانَ ٱلَّذِيٓ أُنزِلَ فِيهِ ٱلۡقُرۡءَانُ هُدٗى لِّلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنَٰتٖ مِّنَ ٱلۡهُدَىٰ وَٱلۡفُرۡقَانِۚ

فَمَن شَهِدَ مِنكُمُ ٱلشَّهۡرَ فَلۡيَصُمۡهُۖ ... ﴿١٨٥﴾

"O you who believe, fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may guard against evil." — ch. 2, *Al-Baqarah*, v. 183

"The month of Ramadan is that in which the Quran was revealed, a guidance to people and clear proofs of guidance and the Criterion. So whoever of you is present in the month, he shall fast in it… ." — ch. 2, *Al-Baqarah*, start of v. 185

(*Right:* Dr Zahid Aziz delivering the *Eid-ul-Fitr Khutba*)

Today is *Eid-ul-Fitr.* It means the festival of the breaking of the fast. Of course, we had been breaking the fast every day during the month of Ramadan at *iftār* time. But even during those night hours when we were not fasting physically we were still in a state of fasting in a spiritual sense. And just as the effect of the fast of the day continued into the hours after *iftār*, we hope also that the effect of the fasting during the whole month of Ramadan will continue after this great festival of breaking the fast.

There have been many studies on the subject of 'fasting and feasting' because feasting is related to fasting. The two are said to be a pair, creating a balance. In many cultures, feasting **before** fasting was a common practice. For instance, immediately before the forty days of Lent commence there is a festival known as *Mardi Gras* or *Shrove Tuesday*. The words "Mardi Gras" are French for "Fat Tuesday", and it is so called because it is the last day of consuming rich, fatty foods in preparation for avoiding them during Lent. It is said to be a celebration of life before the austerity practised during Lent.

Studies on 'fasting and feasting' have considered the question whether a feast should come **after** a period of fasting or if you have a feast or festival **first** because you are then going to fast. On health grounds, it has generally been concluded that fasting should come

before feasting. This is on the broad basis that if you hold the feast before the period of fasting, you are forcing yourself to over-eat. If the feast is after the fasting then the body is in the state to replenish its depleted resources, and also, having got used to fasting, people will not feel impelled to over-indulge in the feast. From a religious point of view, we may also say that feasting after fasting means that the celebration will be in a moderate and measured way, and not in an out-of-control, immoderate manner because of the self-control developed by fasting.

This festival of *Eid-ul-Fitr* is not held to commemorate some historical event, such as a war or battle, or any famous person's birth or death. Every year it marks the end of fasting, a personal achievement for each Muslim, in perhaps their own individual ways. It is not *Eid-ul-Fitr* which marks a famous event, but actually Ramadan does so. It marks the beginning of the revelation of the Holy Quran to the Holy Prophet Muhammad. To mark that, we copy, on a smaller scale, what the great founders of religions did before they received the Word of God for the first time. They undertook strenuous and severe spiritual exertions through fasting and prayer. We know this about Moses, Jesus, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, who are the greatest of the prophets accepted by Muslims. Moses left his followers to go up to a mountain to be in solitude with God for forty days and forty nights, fasting, and there he received the law of the Israelites from God. Fourteen centuries later, Jesus appeared as a prophet of the Israelites, and following the tradition of Moses he fasted forty days and forty nights in a wilderness before beginning his ministry. To explain the purpose of fasting, Jesus quoted from the already existing Israelite scriptures, and said:

> "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God'." (Matthew, 4:4)

Six centuries later, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, before being appointed by God to his mission as God's Messenger, sought solitude in the cave of Hira to ponder on the purpose of life and how people could be reformed from their evil deeds. Here he prayed and fasted, and his fasting was much harsher and more prolonged than our fasting in Ramadan. These exertions raised him to the spiritual heights which made him capable of receiving the Word of God, and thus the revelation of the Quran began. It was many years later that the verses relating to fasting in Ramadan were revealed to the Holy Prophet, sometime after his arrival at Madinah. Before these were revealed, the Holy Prophet saw in Madinah that the Jews fasted on a certain day every year in commemoration of the day when God liberated them from the Pharaoh, and Moses had fasted on that day. Learning of this, he said to the Jews: "We have more right to commemorate Moses than you." And he ordered Muslims to fast on that day as well.

Turning now to Gautama Buddha, the founder of Buddhism who lived 500 years before

Jesus, he was born a prince, and on growing up in his palace he wanted to discover the purpose of life and find out the ways of moral and spiritual improvement of man. He went to a forest and subjected his body to hardship and deprivation, which included very severe fasting. As a result, Buddha became emaciated and extremely weak. Then he realised that in such a state of weakness he was unable to do anything. He learnt from this experience that you have to follow the path of moderation and not extreme deprivation. He called this the 'Middle Way' and said: "From now on, I will take the middle way. I shall neither starve my body nor feed it too richly, but will eat just what is needed and no more." Islam also teaches us to follow a middle way. The Quran says about Muslims: "We have made you a middle people", a moderate *ummah* (2:143). It also mentions, with approval and praise, those among Jews and Christians whom it calls a "moderate *ummah*", *ummat-un muqtaṣidat-un* (5:66).

After his fasting experience, this prince became a 'Buddha', which means the *enlightened one*, and he started preaching to people. There is a recent book by a psychotherapist on fasting, and the author writes about this as follows:

> "The Buddha spoke highly of fasting and said that during his fasts, 'my soul becomes brighter, my spirit more alive in wisdom and truth.' … some historians believe that the Buddha's fasting experience was the spiritual vehicle for his enlightenment" (Dr Randi Fredricks, *Fasting: An Exceptional Human Experience*, pp. 241–242).

Moses and Jesus are, as everyone knows, mentioned in the Quran, and Muslims believe in them as prophets. Buddha is not explicitly mentioned in the Quran, but if we apply the principles that are taught in the Quran it becomes obvious from Buddha's life and experiences that he must have been a prophet of God, regardless of how his teachings were later presented by his followers. The Quran tells us that prophets had been sent by God to all nations before the Holy Prophet Muhammad appeared and it also says that there were prophets in addition to those who are mentioned in the Quran.

Why do we, in our Movement in particular, mention the fasting of the great founders of other religions? The reason is that the Quran itself says that fasting was prescribed for the nations and religions before Islam. We also see that, even before the Holy Prophet Muhammad received revelation ordering Muslims to fast in Ramadan, he fasted and told Muslims to fast when he saw the followers of previous religions doing so. This justifies us in enquiring what was the purpose of fasting in previous religions. We accept something from the previous scriptures under the condition that it conforms to the Quran, or that it is consistent with the Quran and not in conflict with it. In this way we learn from the histories and traditions of earlier religions. For example, we read in the Bible:

> "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight." (Proverbs, 3:5–6; NIV translation)

The Quran says similarly:

> "And whoever keeps his duty to Allah, He ordains a way out for him, and gives him sustenance from where he does not imagine. And whoever trusts in Allah, He is sufficient for him. Surely Allah attains His purpose. Allah indeed has appointed a measure for everything." (65:2–3)

The ideas expressed in the Bible and the Quran in the passages quoted above are the same: "Trust in the Lord … submit to Him" in the Bible, and "keeps his duty to Allah … and trusts in Allah" in the Quran. "Lean not on your own understanding … and he will make your paths straight" in the Bible, and "He ordains a way out for him, and gives him sustenance from where he does not imagine" in the Quran.

However, there is another aspect to bear in mind as regards our relationship with the previous scriptures and religions. The Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, has laid great stress on a study of other religions. The reason for this was his belief that in this age we need to lay stress on the teaching of Islam that God had sent prophets and books to all nations, before the coming of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, and that their religions *originated* from God and not man. He wanted to have a dialogue and discussion between Islam and other religions. And if it became necessary due to the attitude of the preachers of other religions, then to have a vigorous and robust debate with them as well.

From his youth, long before he founded the Ahmadiyya Movement, he studied other religions, not only Islam. Later, in 1902, when he started a monthly English magazine of the Ahmadiyya Movement, under the editorship of Maulana Muhammad Ali, the title chosen for it was the *Review of Religions.* He realised that in the modern age, which had already begun in the late 1800s due to what we now call 'globalisation', Muslims will have interaction with other religions, religions will have interaction with each other, much more than ever before. So when Muslims present Islam to others, they need to have knowledge of the religions of those people. It is absolutely essential.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad also realised, and proclaimed it strongly, that those times are now past when wars were fought on the basis of religion and one nation fought another because of difference in religion. The time had now come, he taught, for followers of various religions to discuss and explain their religions to each other, to put forward the positive points of their own religion instead of the negative points of other religions. And, if it was necessary to cross swords, then do it only on paper.

In the second verse that I recited at the beginning, the Quran calls itself three things: "a guidance to mankind and clear proofs of the guidance and the Criterion." As to the first point, it is a guidance for mankind, rather than a guidance only for believers or Muslims. This makes it our duty to present this guidance to the entire world. The man in modern times who was most anxious to do this was again Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. Through his teaching and inspiration, Maulana Muhammad Ali took up this work and produced an English translation of the Quran, with detailed commentary, which was first printed and published right here in England in 1917. At that time there was no other English translation of the Quran by a Muslim available to Western countries. Later on, with changing times and circumstances, it was revised by Maulana Muhammad Ali, and that is available in print and electronic form up to today.

Secondly, the Quran is called here as being "clear proofs of the guidance." It means, again as stressed by the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, that the Quran gives arguments, reasons and evidence in support of any teachings that it asks us to follow. Take fasting. The Quran does not only require us to fast, but it gives the reasons for fasting. These are clearly stated as being that: we may learn to guard against our wrong and bad desires, we may acquire nearness to God, we may be motivated to feed the poor, and we may refrain from usurping and unlawfully taking the property and rights of others people. We often hear Muslims say: "I am fasting because Allah has commanded it." But Allah has commanded it only so that we may achieve certain objectives through it, and if we ignore those then we have not really fasted.

Thirdly, the Quran is called here the *Furqān* or Criterion. It contains the criteria or standard for distinguishing between right and wrong beliefs. There are many important issues on which Muslims in general have made mistakes, and as a result they have caused harm to themselves and to the reputation of Islam by not taking the Quran as the Criterion. Instead, in many matters they have been following certain ideas not traceable to the Quran but which developed in the later history of Islam, or they have been adhering to cultural practices which are often in conflict with the Quran. The most important of these issues are: Islam's attitude towards other religions, the meaning of *jihad*, freedom of religion, rights of women, and tolerance of differences among Muslims themselves. All these issues can be clarified and resolved by treating the Quran as the standard and not placing later Islamic sources as being above it. This is the position and status accorded to the Quran by the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement in all its literature.

Let us pray that after Ramadan we are thankful to Allah for giving us the opportunity to reform ourselves, and to re-dedicate ourselves to acquiring knowledge of His revelation, the Quran, which He sent for all mankind, and which our elders in this Movement tried to propagate in the world. Let us be thankful for the blessing of food and other physical

necessities and comforts He has provided us with, and resolve to use them within the proper limits for ourselves, while remembering our duty to provide the same to those people who are deprived of them — *Ameen*.

Note: The audio form of this *khutba* is available at the following link. It contains also a reading of the *Eid-ul-Fitr* Message sent by Hazrat Ameer, Dr A.K. Saeed, and the brief Friday *khutba*:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=SZAmxtO3XqI

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Photos from *Eid-ul-Fitr*, at the Lahore Ahmadiyya Centre, Darus Salaam, London

Men at prayer
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Khutba *being delivered (see also first photo on the next page)*

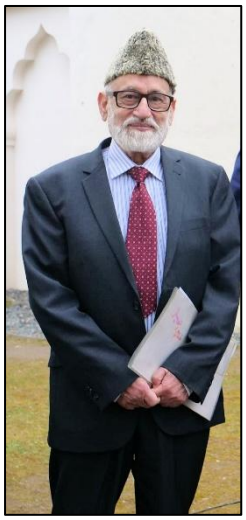
Some of the men and ladies after the Eid *and Friday prayers*

Eid-ul-Fitr Message, March 2026

by Hazrat Ameer Dr A.K. Saeed

"He indeed is successful who purifies himself." — The Quran, 87:14

Dear Sisters and Brothers,
As-salāmu 'Alaikum wa Raḥmatullāhi wa Barakātuhū.
Eid-ul-Fitr Mubarak!



As we mark the completion of Ramadan, my heart overflows with gratitude to Almighty Allah for granting us another priceless opportunity to purify our souls through fasting, prayer and charity during this month. It has been a time of spiritual renewal — a time when we drew closer to our Creator, softened our hearts, and remembered those in need. I pray that He accepts every moment of devotion, every prayer whispered in the night, and every act of kindness done by all *Jama'at* members.

At this moment, I would like us all to reflect on the verse from the Holy Quran quoted above:

"He indeed is successful who purifies himself."

Eid is not merely a celebration; it is also a new beginning. It reminds us that the purification of the soul is a journey that continues beyond Ramadan, shaping who we are and how we live each day. This purification rests on three sacred pillars:

First, *Tauhid*—the unwavering belief in the Oneness of Allah. It calls us to free our hearts from all forms of *shirk*, including the idols of ego, self-projection and worldly attachment. When we purify with *Tauhid*, we find the path to Allah.

Second, following the example of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (may peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him) in every aspect of our lives. His life is a living guidance, a light that shows us how to walk in this difficult world and in this difficult time with integrity, compassion and grace.

Third, our dealings with one another, for the way we treat our fellow beings is a mirror of the state of our souls. When we replace hatred with love, jealousy with appreciation, suspicion with trust, and grudges with forgiveness, we cleanse our hearts and make room for Divine light to enter. The Holy Quran reminds us that those who purify their hearts are indeed the successful ones.

We thank Almighty Allah, Who granted us an opportunity in Ramadan to purify our souls. It is now up to us to continue to nurture the spiritual well-being that we have acquired in this holy month.

I pray to Almighty Allah to help us progress on this path of goodness and help us achieve His nearness — *Āmīn, summa Āmīn.*

Professor Dr. Abdul Karim Saeed,
Ameer and President, Worldwide Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement
14 March 2026

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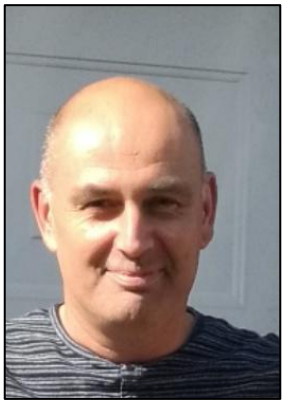
Eid Mubarak

by Iain Dixon

(Iain Dixon is a Christian friend of our *Jama'at* and attends meetings and gatherings at our London Centre, Darus Salaam, Wembley.)



As we leave Ramadan once again and enter into *Eid*, we are reminded that the word 'Ramadan' actually means a sort of 'burning'. There was a feeling of burning as we struggled with managing our hunger and thirst, and wrestled with other desires that sought to dominate us. We were reminded that just as gold purified in a crucible heated by fire removes impurities, so the month of Ramadan was a tool in the hands of the Master Refiner, purging and cleansing us from that which was unclean, and perfecting that which was good and worthwhile. Allah was that Master Refiner. All praise and glory be to him!

The Prophet Job (Ayyub) said:

> "He (Allah) knows the way that I take; when He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold" (Job 23:10).

Leaving Ramadan

As we leave Ramadan behind, may we learn once again from the Prophet Job, and recognise that hardship can bring purification, and that struggle brings strength.

How did you view Allah over Ramadan? Did you see Him as a 'private investigator' following you around seeing how many mistakes you made and quick to point out your faults, writing a detailed report that will be used in evidence against you? Or did we recognise Allah more like a loving father, seeking to guide, direct and encourage? The
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Prophet Malachi reminds us:

> "Have we not all one Father? Has not one God created us?" (Malachi 2:10).

We are also reminded that Allah "teaches us what is best for us, and in the way that we should go" (Isaiah 48:17).

May we always see Allah as a Creator that corrects, not as a dictator that destroys and down-treads; a faith-inspirer, not a fault-finder.

Remember the other months

A story is told of a beautiful bride. On her wedding day she promised her husband that she would love him, cherish him, adore him, serve him. She promised to keep the house clean, cook amazing food. She promised in the house to bathe, wear beautiful perfume, be romantic, and be the perfect wife.

And then she said, "But only for one month a year. The rest is my time. I will do just as I want, when I want. I don't care about you for the rest of the year."

May we not just 'leave Ramadan behind' and forget our devotion to that which is good. May we never forget our devotion to the One that is good. Our year consists of more than just the thirty days of Ramadan. Allah is looking for the loyalty of our hearts every day. Every day *Mubarak*! *Eid Mubarak!*

So with warm Christian love I wish you and your families a wonderful *Eid*, filled with joy and good things. May the sweetness of *Eid* replace the trials and bitterness of Ramadan, and may laughter and joy wipe away the tears and pain experienced during these last thirty days. If Ramadan is the furnace, may *Eid* be the tranquil lake of refreshing and coolness. If Ramadan is a picture of the trials and sufferings of this world, may *Eid* be a picture of the glorious world to come — a Kingdom promised, that shall never end; a place of rest, a place where peace reigns … nothing broken, nothing missing.

> "And God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be any more pain, for the former things have passed away. Then He that sat on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new" (Revelation 21:4–5).

In that day, the whole of creation will declare "*Eid Mubarak!*" May I echo that refrain even now with prophetic voice, and say to you all, *Eid Mubarak!*

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Eid-ul-Fitr date, 20 March 2026

Not by moon sighting, but by bungling

The date of Friday 20th March 2026 had been set last year by the UK Lahore Ahmadiyya organisation as the date of *Eid-ul-Fitr* in full confidence. According to calculations of the science of astronomy, the birth of the moon was to be of 19th March at 1:23 UT (this is the same as GMT). The other criterion that we apply (that at local sunset the moon altitude should be at least 5 degrees, with an 8-degree separation from the sun) was also satisfied for the sunset of 19th March throughout Europe and North-West Africa. Even as regards actual visibility, the moon would be visible in North and South America but not in Asia and most of Africa.

As Ramadan came to a conclusion there was the usual speculation in the Muslim world of when the new moon would be sighted so that the date of *Eid* could be announced. In Saudi Arabia the authorities attempted to sight the new moon by eye on the evening of Wednesday 18th March (if sighted, it would give a Ramadan there of 29 days). This attempt was entirely futile and ridiculous, as they were trying to sight the moon some ten hours before its birth! It is like trying to hear a newborn baby cry long before its birth! Of course, they failed to sight it, and it was known for certain, and probably known to them also, that they would not sight it. Sunset at Makkah was at 18.31, while moonset was before this, at 18.03. For the new moon to be seen, it must set *after* the sun has set.

Those who attempted to see it on 18th March would say that they were acting on the saying of the Holy Prophet Muhammad that a month may be of 29 days since it is possible that the moon might be sighted on the 29th of Ramadan. By making this argument, they are inviting ridicule on the sayings of the Holy Prophet because they are suggesting that even if we know it for a fact that the moon cannot be sighted on the 29th of Ramadan, the Holy Prophet still requires us to try sighting it that evening!

Even on Thursday 19th March it would have been extremely difficult to sight the new moon at Makkah, with sunset still at 18.31 and moonset at 19.01. According to information published by the UK Hydrographic Office, which is an Executive Agency of the UK Ministry of Defence, the new moon would not have been visible in Makkah on 19th March. This also implies that it would not be visible anywhere in Saudi Arabia, since Makkah is located close to the western end of the country, giving it the best prospect of sighting the new moon in the whole country.

The problem at *Eid-ul-Fitr* arose for Saudi Arabia and the countries which follow them because they had started Ramadan on Wednesday 18th February. They did this despite the fact that the new moon could not have been sighted almost anywhere in the world on

17th February. This premature start meant that *Eid-ul-Fitr* for them could only be on 19th or 20th March. They were thus forced to attempt their so-called observation on the evening of 18th March, which led to the absurdity of trying to sight the new moon before its birth. The next day they had no choice but to announce that the new moon had been sighted, regardless of any actual sighting, otherwise Ramadan for them would have been of 31 days!

As most mosques in the UK follow Saudi Arabia, they held *Eid-ul-Fitr* on Friday 20th March. However, according to the UK Muslim organisation, the New Crescent Society, *Eid-ul-Fitr* was on Saturday 21st March, and several mosques in the UK held it on that day. This Society not only believes that moon sighting by eye is obligatory, but further that it must be by the naked eye. They state:

> "Optical aids can be a useful tool for locating the moon and assisting observers, … but it becomes problematic when the month is started solely on the basis of optical sightings, especially where there is no supporting naked-eye sighting. … a suitable long-term calendar cannot be established without confirmation of a naked-eye sighting."

What this statement amounts to is that you should only use any viewing instrument, such as a telescope, as an aid to locate the new moon. If it can be seen through the telescope, you then need to sight it by the naked eye. If you can only see the new moon through a telescope, but not by the naked human eye, the sighting is not acceptable! We find this method to be bizarre in the extreme.

Any method requiring actual observation, whether by the naked eye or by the use of optical aids, suffers from the drawback that the start of the month cannot be known till the evening before. The next problem is: whose observation is to be accepted as authentic and binding? Is it a report by any random Muslim individual, or by a self-appointed voluntary organisation, or by a government body of a Muslim country? And from which country is the sighting acceptable: your own country, and if you are in a non-Muslim country, then is it the nearest Muslim country or any Muslim country at all, or Saudi Arabia?

The Quran says: "And most of them follow only conjecture. Surely conjecture will not avail at all against the Truth" (10:36). When you know the truth, why follow conjecture? The known truth is the date and time of the birth of the new moon, known also as *conjunction*. When will the new moon be visible to the human eye in a given location is a matter of uncertainty. If some people consider the time of birth as far too earlier than visibility, then some other determinable factor could be added; for example, requiring a fixed amount of time to have passed since the birth, or moonset to be later than sunset by some

specified number of minutes. An existing independent and reputable international body, having no religious or political affiliation, could be asked to produce Ramadan and *Eid* dates at least one year in advance. Otherwise, there is no foreseeable end to this annual problem.

It is a curious and glaring anomaly that while Muslims are frequently proclaiming that some modern discovery or other of science had already been mentioned in the Quran, yet they refuse to use, *for their own benefit,* the discovery by science of the ability to calculate the phase of the moon at any time and its location in the sky as seen from any place on earth. They ought to ponder that human beings reached the moon, orbited around it and landed on it more than fifty years ago. Moreover, humans are in orbit around the earth all the time, from where they can observe the moon with the naked eye easily. Would such observation be acceptable in Islam to determine the new moon? Traditional Muslims say that, according to Islamic law, only a report by a Muslim can be accepted. But Muslims have been in orbit as well, and more will go in the future! (— Zahid Aziz)

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Eid-ul-Fitr Message from the President of Germany to Muslims of Germany through our Berlin Mosque

Last year, on 12 March 2025 during Ramadan, the President of Germany, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, visited the Lahore Ahmadiyya Berlin Mosque at fast-breaking time. Before the fast ending, he delivered a speech inside the Mosque to a large gathering which had entirely filled the building. The news media and photographers were also present in the Mosque. The photo on the left shows the President in the Mosque grounds on that visit.

For details, please visit this link:

www.berlin.ahmadiyya.org/news/reports-2025/president-visit.htm

This year the President sent an *Eid-ul-Fitr* greeting to our Mosque, for circulation to the general Muslim community. Originally in German, of course, we reproduce it below in English translation.
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Written greeting for the Festival of Breaking the Fast

For the Festival of Breaking the Fast, I send warm greetings and best wishes to all Muslims in our country! After weeks of conscious abstinence and in a time unfortunately also marked by concern about international crises, I wish you hours of togetherness, sharing meals and celebrating with your family and friends, and above all, I wish the children much joy with their gifts. Ramadan has become a festival also in Germany and is part of the religious life of our country.

This year, too, many mosque communities and families will be inviting their neighbours. This is a wonderfully generous gesture that makes it easy for many people to learn about the customs and traditions of the Islamic religion and to strengthen the cohesion between different religions and social groups through direct encounters. Thank you for this hospitality and openness!

As Ramadan draws to a close, it is customary to donate to those in need. For weeks, you have abstained from food and drink during the day, yet you haven't forgotten that many people have to make sacrifices in their daily lives and depend on support. But it's not just these individual donations — many of you are involved year-round, driven by your faith, some for decades. This is a gift to society as a whole, one we cannot value highly enough.

I am therefore particularly pleased that many Muslims want to participate in the commemoration on May 23rd. With this new initiative I launched, we want to celebrate the anniversary of our Basic Law throughout the country. On this day, we want to appreciate what unites us in terms of values and goals, despite all our differences. The idea is for as many citizens as possible across Germany to volunteer on this day, thereby strengthening social cohesion and democracy. There will be a multitude of activities throughout the country in which everyone can participate, regardless of their faith. And everyone is welcome, including those who may not have been involved before or haven't yet found the right activity for themselves. On this day of honour, we want to come together and make our country a better place, and you can all help. I thank you most sincerely for your commitment!

Strengthening our cohesion is also achieved through traditions and rituals, like the Festival of Breaking the Fast, which we are now celebrating and which brings so many people together. I wish all Muslims in Germany a happy, peaceful, and blessed festival!

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Eid-ul-Fitr photos from our Mosque in Berlin, Germany, 20 March 2026

Scenes inside the Mosque

Due to the large attendance, some people had to say prayers in the Mosque grounds

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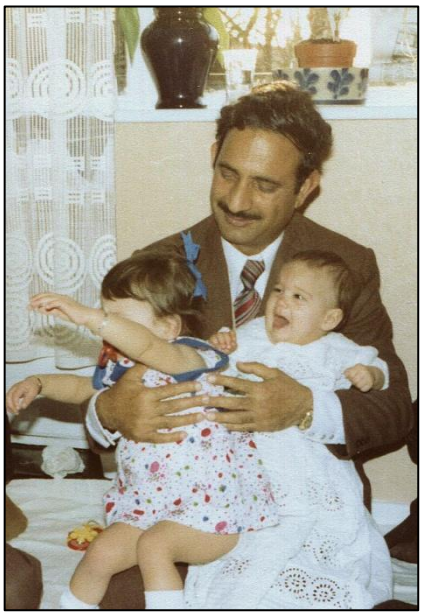
Remembering Imam Muhammad Anwar *Shaheed*

by Zahid Aziz



Editor's Note: It was forty years ago this month that Mr Muhammad Anwar, our first *Imam* of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Centre, Darus Salaam, Wembley, London, was martyred on 9th April 1986 while visiting the country of Guyana to attend an International Convention of our *Jama'at* in Georgetown. *Innā li-llāhi wa innā ilai-hi rājiūn* — "Surely we belong to Allah, and to Him do we return."
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Dr Zahid Aziz wrote an article about him at the time which was published in *The Islamic Review* of California (under the editorship of Chaudhry Masud Akhtar), June/July 1986 issue. At the 30th anniversary of his martyrdom, commemorated on 3 April 2016 at Darus Salaam, Wembley, Dr Zahid Aziz presented another talk about him. Now at the 40th anniversary in April 2026, he has compiled the following article, taking information from the two earlier articles and making further changes.

On Saturday 12th April 1986, an informal gathering of members of a shocked and grieving UK *Jama'at* and its friends was held in this Centre. The Head of our Movement at the time, Hazrat Ameer Dr. Saeed Ahmad Khan, had instructed on the phone from Lahore that the following verses of the Quran should be mentioned in particular at the gathering:

> "Say (to people): Nothing will afflict us except that which Allah has ordained for us. He is our Patron; and on Allah let the believers rely. Say (to them): Do you wait for one of **two most excellent things** to happen to us?" (9:51–52)

When these verses were revealed, the enemies of the believers were attacking them with the aim of wiping them off the face of the earth. The believers are here told to reply that one of **two most excellent things** will happen to us: either we will attain victory, or we will die in the struggle. Both are most excellent. The believers who struggle in the path of God cannot be losers, whichever of the two happens.

The Quran also says: "And do not speak of those who are slain in Allah's way as dead. Rather, (they are) alive, but you do not perceive. And We shall certainly try you with something of fear and hunger and loss of property and lives and fruits. And give good news to the patient, who, when a misfortune befalls them, say: Surely we belong to Allah, and to Him do we return" (2:154–156). It is from here that the well-known expression is taken which Muslims mention on hearing of someone's death.

As we can see, this expression occurs in the Quran particularly in connection with suffering some loss *in the way of Allah*. Everyone suffers the trials and the kinds of losses mentioned here, but those who strive in the way of Allah are, by their own choice, taking a much greater risk of suffering loss than other people. Muslims, when they were persecuted at Makkah, could have chosen to renounce their faith, or after their migration to Madinah they could have refused to defend themselves and surrendered to the powerful Quraish armies. By adhering to Islam in all these testing circumstances, they put themselves in the way of suffering loss for the sake of the cause. It is because they put the cause above everything else that the Quran says that they cannot be called dead, because the religion they were defending was still alive.

The Quran defines a true believer in these words:

> "The believers are those only who believe in Allah and His Messenger, then they do not doubt, and struggle hard with their wealth and their lives in the way of Allah. Such are the truthful ones." (49:15)

In this verse the word in Arabic for "struggling hard" comes from the word *jihad.* Here it is said that only those are true believers who take part in *jihad.* In modern times, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad has explained to the world the true meaning of *jihad.* It never meant war or armed fighting. It was the special circumstances under which the early Muslims had to fight, which made their battles into one form of *jihad.* Hazrat Mirza showed that the collective *jihad* of the Muslims in this age is to strive hard to spread the truth of Islam by means of the written and the spoken word. And to do this, one needs to sacrifice money and life, just as in the early Muslim wars. He was able to influence many persons in his time to devote their lives to that struggle. His influence has been so penetrating that its effect has continued for long after his death. Mr Anwar was in the illustrious list of persons who devoted their lives at the call of the Messiah and joined this *jihad.*

Mr Anwar was not born into an Ahmadi family. After his early education he joined the education department of his province, then known as the North-West Frontier Province of Pakistan. Out of his own interest he also read Ahmadiyya literature given to him by some Ahmadi relatives. Impressed by the literature and by the character of the Ahmadis whom he knew, he joined the *Jama'at.* Because of this, he faced strong opposition from his closest relations. He continued his studies while in employment as a schoolteacher, and eventually was promoted to become Headmaster of a government high school. During the 1974 anti-Ahmadiyya riots in Pakistan, he and Mrs Anwar suffered loss of much household property which was looted and burnt by the rioters.

In 1979 Dr Saeed Ahmad Khan sahib asked Mr Anwar to devote his life for the service of Islam, and he agreed. Initially he took long-term leave from his job. After a year's missionary training in Lahore in 1980, he came here to London as our *Imam* with Mrs Anwar in March 1981. After this centre at Wembley was purchased, Mr & Mrs Anwar moved into it in 1982. At the end of his long-term leave from his post in Pakistan, he resigned his job to continue serving this Movement as our *Imam* in the UK.

Here we witnessed that he had devoted his life to the cause of Islam, through the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement, and he bore cheerfully, without the slightest complaint, all sorts of hardships in the conduct of his mission. Day in and day out he was engaged in a struggle in the way of Allah, working with the utmost humility. We remember how Allah's name and His praise were ever on his lips, and his prayers were sincere, humble and charged with spiritual life. He was a deeply godly man.

Doing his duty, Mr Anwar went with other Lahore Ahmadiyya delegates to attend our convention in Georgetown, Guyana, in 1986. After the convention had concluded, and he and a few delegates from abroad were still there, he was murdered by an assassin. *Innā li-llāhi wa innā ilai-hi rājiūn*. Sadly, the assassin believed that by this vile and inhuman act, of shedding the blood of a wholly innocent and harmless person, he was performing a service to Islam.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad had written in a book in 1894:

> "He who goes to the Western countries purely for the sake of Allah to preach Islam, he will be one of the righteous ones, and if he meets with death there he will be from among the martyrs (*shaheed*)." (*Nur-ul-Haq*, Part 2, p. 55)

This word *shaheed* is badly misused among Muslims, and has been cheapened and debased. The Holy Prophet Muhammad made it clear that even a person who is ***not*** killed can be a *shaheed* if he dies in the way of Allah, whether naturally or by a disease, or in his bed at home. The word for 'martyr' in Arabic is *shaheed*, which means 'a witness'. Someone who devotes his life to the cause of Islam so that even at the time of his death, by whatever means it comes, he is working for that cause, he is himself a witness whose life provides evidence of the truth of Islam. On the other hand, the Holy Prophet Muhammad said that even if a Muslim is killed in battle, he is not a *shaheed* if he was a hypocrite, or fighting for some worldly reward or honour, or if he had committed certain sins. A *shaheed* should have been leading a righteous life, making sacrifices in the way of Allah while alive, and then dying in that state. Mr Anwar most certainly possessed all these qualities in abundance.

Mrs Anwar — Bano — has herself played a key and distinguished role in the running of this mission and this centre. She and Mr Anwar were a team who did so much work. As you all know, after his tragic and untimely death, she volunteered to continue looking after this building and all those who come here, and she has done this with the utmost devotion for the past forty years after losing her husband. She also brought up Habiba in this building, who is a much-valued member of the *Jama'at* and makes important contributions to the work of the *Jama'at*.

Let us pray in the end that may Allah accept the struggles, services and sacrifices of Muhammad Anwar *Shaheed*, and raise him to the highest ranks in the after-life, may Allah grant perseverance and strength to Mrs Bano Anwar and the other bereaved relatives, always protect them, bless all the work that they do, and may Allah enable us to take Mr Anwar as our model and example in the service of Islam — *Ameen.*

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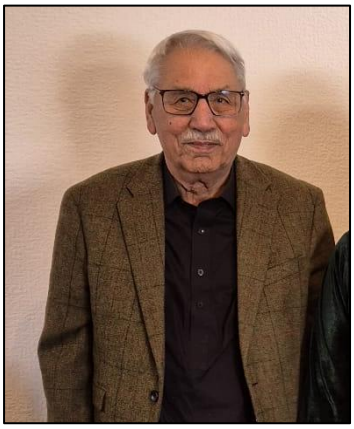
Muhammad Anwar — A dearest friend, brother, and *Imam*, Darus Salaam, Wembley, London

by Arjumand Sadiq, UK



(*Editor's Note:* Mr Arjumand Sadiq is the brother of Imam Muhammad Anwar's wife, Mrs Bano Anwar. He wrote this brief life of Imam Muhammad Anwar for our UK monthly meeting of April 2021 and presented it at that meeting. Here we see him, pictured on the left, at last year's *Eid-ul-Fitr*, on 31 March 2025.)

Anwar *shaheed* (martyr) was my first cousin. I spent my childhood in his company and grew up with him. I will share that side of his life that very few people know.

He was born in September 1938 in Malaya, now Singapore, where his late father, Muhammad Akbar Khan, was serving in the British Police Force. After the Second World War ended, they came back to this part of the country, which is now known as Pakistan. When he was in high school it was his routine to come and spend his school holidays and some weekends with us. I remember waiting for him as we used to have some extra free time away from schoolwork. While he stayed with us, he would read *Paigham Sulah* and *Ruh-i Islam* regularly. When he went back, he would always take them with him and on his next visit there used to be a discussion with my late father. During this, we all sat together and he would argue with my father that maulvi sahib said this, and this article differed with that. He was born in a family who, in spite of being our very close relatives, were not Ahmadis. Not only that, they were learned and religious people. These visits and reading of just the weekly journals kept going, and then he started reading other Ahmadiyya literature.

In 1962 in a teachers' training school in Haripur, during a religious discussion there was an argument about Ahmadiyyat with one of his teachers, which ended in a big fight, and he was close to being expelled from the training school. He came to our home and told my father of the whole incident instead of going to his own parents. Anyway, he got saved and completed his training and became a schoolteacher. He continued his hard work, studied privately, and did his BA and later on his MA in Political Science. In 1963 he went to Peshawar University from where he did his degree in Education.

He started taking part in activities of the Ahmadiyya Young Men's Association in Peshawar University. In 1964 the Ahmadiyya Anjuman, Lahore, celebrated its golden jubilee and he came to Lahore to attend. Here he decided to take the *bai'at* [pledge of allegiance] and formally become an Ahmadi. This started what was the beginning of his troublesome worldly life, which never ended. None of us can think of the problems and hardship he had to face from his family. When he returned from Lahore the news broke in the family that he was now an Ahmadi. The same family who were ready to die for us in 1953 during the first anti-Ahmadiyya agitation in Pakistan now stopped any kind of communication with their own son. There was a complete boycott. He was then teaching in Government High School, Mansehra, and living in a joint family house about two miles from Mansehra. When he would come back from school, he would go to his parents to greet them but neither would even answer his *salaam*. He had to live all that time in one room without even having a single word with any of his family members.

While all this was going on, he never forgot his family duties. On the first day of every month he would return home and give his salary to his mother. He managed the studies of his three younger brothers and two younger sisters. He was always there for them, and all this could not stop him from being a very active and dedicated believer.

In 1970 his father was diagnosed with cancer and admitted to Khyber Teaching Hospital. We both went to see him in hospital. His father even at that time refused to answer Anwar's *salaam*. A few weeks later his father passed away and brother Anwar was not allowed to join his father's *janaza* [funeral] prayer. This was the price he paid to be an Ahmadi. On the one hand this boycott never ended and on the other hand Anwar fulfilled his all obligations towards his family.

On the 6th of April 1970 he got married to my sister, Bano appa. In 1974, during the anti-Ahmadiyya riots, our ancestral home was raided. Luckily none of us were there, but Bano appa and Anwar lost every single thing except for the few clothes they had with them. I never heard a word of complaint from this couple. Anwar was happy and contented. He would always say to me: "Arjumand, Allah will give us everything again."

They had been moving from city to city and place to place in the North-West Frontier Province (now called KPK) during their service and he lived as a very honourable and staunch Ahmadi. I never saw him weak for a moment.

Then one day the late *Hazrat Ameer*, Dr. Saeed Ahmed Khan, who was Vice President and in charge of the foreign missions of the Ahmadiyya Anjuman, Lahore, called both of us to Abbottabad and asked brother Anwar if he wanted to go to London. He told him of the difficulties he would have to face. Anwar was a Grade 18 officer in the Education Department, a headmaster in a high school in Chital, and a very bright and promising

future was in front of him. But he didn't think about all of that. He took leave from school and went to Lahore for about a year or so and finally took off for London in 1981.

In the early morning of the 9th of April 1986, while I was in Lahore, my telephone started ringing. On answering, I learnt from the late Ch. Mansoor Ahmad that something had happened to Anwar in Guyana. He then told me that Anwar had been shot and had passed away. That was the most difficult day of my life. It took me what felt like a lifetime to understand what he had told me. I travelled from Lahore to Islamabad to wait there for my sister Bano to come from London.

This was Anwar, who was born in Singapore, grew up in Pakistan, and who had surrendered himself to his Maker in Guyana (South America). He lived for a cause and died for that cause. He is a *shaheed* (martyr) who taught us how an Ahmadi has to live his life as a son, a brother, a husband—a normal person.

Please let me say a few words to my beloved sister: Appa, you are not an ordinary woman. You were the companion of a *shaheed*, you lived an exemplary life while he was here, and now you are alone. You are a chosen one, and lucky. On the Day of Judgement, *inshallah*, you will be standing by a *shaheed.* We can never forget that you sacrificed, and Allah too will not. May Allah bless you and your late husband, and may Allah guide us all to follow the right path and be Ahmadis. *Ameen.*

Outside Darus Salaam, Wembley, London, summer 1984.

From right:
1. Mr Anwar,
2. Mrs Bano Anwar,
3. Mr Faiz Khan,
4. *Hazrat Ameer* Dr Saeed Ahmad Khan,
5. Chaudhry Saadat Ahmad,
6. Professor Imad-ud-Din.

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