

Quest for Unity

and other works by Imam Achmad Cassiem



And hold fast, all together, by the rope which
Allah (stretches out for you), and be not
divided among yourselves

Quest for Unity

and other works by Imam Achmad Cassiem

And hold fast, all together, by the rope which
Allah (stretches out for you), and be not
divided among yourselves

**IHRC
Press**



www.ihrc.org.uk

First published in Great Britain in 2011
by IHRC Press
PO Box 598, Wembley, HA9 7XH
© 2011 IHRC Press
Design & Typeset: Ibrahim Sadikovic
Cover design: Dawud Mwilwa Kapansa

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereinafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

ISBN 978-1-907517-00-6

The works contained herein were first published by Silk Road International Publishers and Distributors, Cape Town, South Africa

Contents

Profile of the Author	5
Foreword by Imam Mohammed Asi	6
Introduction	8
QUEST FOR UNITY	9
Dedication	10
The Foundation of Islamic Unity	11
The Unity of Islam	12
Unity of Purpose	13
Unity of Expression	13
Unity in Action	14
Causes of Disunity	15
Consequences of Disunity	15
Consequences of Islamic Unity	16
The Global Community	16
The Global Community of Knowledge	16
The Global Community of Compassion	17
The Global Community of Sharing	18
The Global Community of Self-discipline	18
The Global Community of Sacrifice	19
The Global Community of Action	19
The Global Community of Justice	20
The Global Community of Excellence	20
The Creator is One	21
Unity Of Believers	24
The Characteristics Of Those Who Enter Into This Unity	26
The Munafiqun	28
The Enemies within the Ranks of the Ummah	28
What are the Characteristics of the Munafiqun?	29
The Solution	33
Justice In Human Relationships	35
Just Social Order	36
Justice: A Prerequisite for Peace	39
Jihad: Islamic Paradigm	41
Jihad Culminates in Revolution	42
Overview of Unity Initiatives in South Africa	44
Qibla: Aims and Immediate Objectives	56

RAMADHAN: THE MONTH OF HIGH INTENSITY TRAINING	57
Introduction	59
We Change Ourselves in order to Change the World	61
Positive Thinking Produces Positive Action	61
Personal Responsibility	62
What is the Purpose of Fasting?	63
Conclusion	70
Selected Du'ahs	72
Important Events during Ramadhan	82
EID MESSAGE: INTELLECTUAL ROOTS OF THE OPPRESSED AND ISLAM'S TRIUMPH OVER APARTHEID	83
Intellectual Roots of the Oppressed	84
Introduction	84
Death Sentence	85
Islam: Lost Property of Azanians	87
Anti-Racism in Action	87
Alcoholism: Undermining Morale	88
Tuan Guru & the Sunnah	90
Heritage of the Slaves	91
ISLAM'S TRIUMPH OVER APARTHEID	92
Introduction	92
Why Muslims Rejoice	92
Ummah versus Racism	92
Ummah versus Nationalism	94
Ummah versus Absurdity	95
Ummah versus Dehumanization	97
The Ummah versus Oppression, Exploitation and Injustice	98
WHY DO WE CELEBRATE EID?	99
Appendix A: Charter 3:103 Letter	101
Appendix B: Charter 3:103	103

PROFILE OF THE AUTHOR

Imam Cassiem was first arrested in South Africa and detained in August 1964 and held under a 90-Day Detention law. He was later charged under the Sabotage Act and sentenced on 2 December 1964 to 5 years imprisonment. Although he was released on 1 December 1969, he was subjected to a Banning Order for 5 years which expired on 31 December 1974.

In September 1976, Imam Cassiem was again detained for allegedly inciting armed revolt against the State whilst addressing students in a Masjid in Surrey Estate.

He was served with a 5 year Banning Order on 19 December 1979 whilst teaching at Westridge Senior Secondary School in Mitchells Plain.

In 23 April 1980, he was arrested again for organising school boycotts against racist education. He was held incommunicado for 14 days and then detained under Section 10 of the Internal Security Act. He was finally released without charge on 9 December 1980 - 240 days in detention without trial.

The Supreme Court later issued a judgement against the Prison Department for imposing 14 days of total solitary confinement on Imam Cassiem without him being charged. The State had to pay the cost of the application.

Imam Cassiem was re-banned in June 1983 because the previous banning order was abrogated by the Internal Security Act. His new order expired on 31 March 1986.

In December 1984, he was arrested at Jumu'ah with 56 others for attending an illegal/unlawful gathering whilst banned. He was subsequently charged for contravening the banning order by being present at a social gathering, i.e. the Jumu'ah. He was arrested outside Court which sparked off a mass protest and conflict with the Security Police.

He was also charged for being outside his residence after 6.00pm – he was found at his place of employment.

On 2 May 1986, he was arrested and placed under Section 29 of the Internal Security Act. He was charged on 2 December 1986 for Terrorism and sentenced on 28 October 1988.

The State declared that Quranic ayahs were subversive. He was convicted on the basis of Quranic ayah only.

He was released on bail on 22 February 1991 with the following stringent conditions:

- I) R5.000 bail;
- II) May not travel 100kms from his home, i.e. Cape Town;
- II) May not speak on behalf of QIBLA or PAC;
- IV) May not call for Mass Mobilisation or promote Unlawful Violence;
- V) He must sign at the nearest police station at least once per week.

From the original profile by QIBLA

FOREWORD

by Imam Mohammed Asi

I have known brother Imam Achmad Cassiem for over two and a half decades. Our first coming together was during the struggle against Apartheid. I had been introduced to the Qibla movement in South Africa by a mutual friend, and the Qibla movement invited me to give some talks and have some brotherly get-together with activists who were on the liberation-path against the racist South African Apartheid regime. Since that time my relations with the brothers in South Africa has grown into one that has me involved in the progress of the movement of oppressed peoples in South Africa. I still remember the warmth and hospitality of the brothers and fellows I met there throughout those historical years. And Imam Achmad Cassiem was always there in Cape Town to help out – many times from behind the scenes – with the activities and programs that were scheduled for me while I was in the Cape area, and elsewhere.

I remember the Mass Jumu'ah that was held upon my arrival to Cape Town and the tense and charged atmosphere of those times. There is always a sweet core to the bitter crust of a struggle and a revolution; and in the 1980's you could taste that in the dynamics of South Africa. Since that time, many sincere and struggling brothers who were around Imam Achmad Cassiem have passed away. I have observed over the years is that Imam Achmad Cassiem remains committed to the Islamic objectives that bind committed and revolutionary Muslims all over the world.

There are, from time to time, Islamic programs that bring us together. I see him from time to time, infrequently as that may seem. And he still is the dedicated Muslim that he was the first time I met him. Being locked up on Robben Island for many, many years did not take away from his belief in the fact that, as the Quran tells us, the final days will eventually see the triumph of the oppressed peoples over the oppressive elites. Many Muslims who are incarcerated lose sight, lose momentum, or lose interest altogether in this futuristic inevitability, but not Imam Achmad Cassiem.

I therefore recommend reading his writings with the mind and heart of a Muslim and a revolutionary. Remember, Achmad Cassiem is a pioneer. He has his own personal experience, one that should be observed closely by others who want to take the struggle forward.

We may not see eye-to-eye on certain particular details, and that is natural. Even the companions around the Prophet (P) had their independent opinions; but they remained true to their concern for Islamic solidarity and cohesion.

I remember, after I had the first couple of volumes of my tafsir published, Imam Achmad Cassiem told me that while he was in bed from an ailment taking his medication, he could not put down the tafsir. I felt sincerity and earnestness in what he said.

I hope that Muslims will give a listening ear to what Imam Achmad Cassiem has to say; and may I also hope that in the future Imam Achmad Cassiem will consider writing his memoirs about the struggle for freedom, equality, and justice in that dear part of the world.

Imam Mohammad Asi
Washington, DC area, USA

INTRODUCTION

These works of Imam Achmad Cassiem have been chosen as the first publication for IHRC Press. Related to IHRC and its existing publishing arm Islamic Human Rights Commission, IHRC Press seeks to put into the public arena, polemical, theological, creative and other works that push the reader towards an understanding of the struggle for universal justice.

Given the Islamic underpinnings of the lead organisation, and its publishing ventures, what better start than the words of a veteran from the anti-Apartheid struggle in South Africa. Cassiem leads Qibla, the Islamic movement that took part in the struggle at every level based on Quranic injunctions to struggle for justice for all. The chosen texts were written towards the end of the apartheid regime in the late 1980s and early 1990s and reflect the revolutionary spirit of those times. Whilst many, both contemporary Muslims and currently, may object to Cassiem's interpretations of the Quranic injunctions to struggle for justice, they remain deeply rooted in Islamic thinking as well as current world events. As the world struggles with many apartheids by other names in 21st century, it is worth asking what principles if not these, do Muslims call upon if they are to be considered part of the global network looking for a just social order world-wide?

In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful

RAMADHAN

THE MONTH OF HIGH
INTENSITY TRAINING

Achmad Cassiem

RAMADHAN: THE MONTH OF HIGH INTENSITY TRAINING

شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ
وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْهُدَىٰ وَالْفُرْقَانِ

'Ramadhan is the (month) in which was sent down the Qur'an, a guide to Mankind, and also clear (Signs) for guidance and judgement (between right and wrong).'

[Qur'an 2: 185]

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ
عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

'O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you, as it was prescribed to those before you, that ye may (learn) self-restraint, -'

[Qur'an 2: 183]

NIYYAH FOR FASTING

'I intend to fast for the coming day in order to perform my duty towards Allah in the month of RAMADHAN of the present year.'

نَوَيْتُ صَوْمَ غَدٍ عَنْ أَدَاءِ
فَرِيضَةِ رَمَضَانَ هَذِهِ
السَّنَةِ لِلَّهِ تَعَالَى

DUAH FOR BREAKING FAST

'O Allah, for Thy glory have I fasted, and now I break the fast with food that cometh from Thee.'

اللَّهُمَّ لَكَ صُمْتُ وَعَلَى رِزْقِكَ أَفْطَرْتُ

DUAH FOR LAYLATUL QADR

'Say: O Allah! Thou art the one who grants pardon for sins, Thou lovest to pardon, so pardon me.'

اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّكَ عَفُورٌ كَرِيمٌ تُحِبُّ الْعَفْوَ فَاعْفُ عَنِّي

INTRODUCTION

'O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that ye may learn self restraint.'
[Qur'an 2:183]

'Whoever did not give up lying and practising falsehood, Allah is in no need of his giving up food and water.'

[Hadith]

There is no profession, craft, art, trade or occupation which cannot be perfected with understanding and practice. Just as a person cannot be a surgeon without studying, understanding and practising surgery, so a person cannot be a Muslim without studying, understanding and practising Islam. For after all, Islam is a way of life, of living and of dying. We note that the ayah in this introduction refers specifically to "O ye who believe!" - that is, to those that have attained a certain level of consciousness. Fasting, therefore, is not just for anybody. Fasting is also by implication - a means, a method, a technique for EVOLVING a higher level of awareness, of alertness, of attentiveness and of receptiveness.

This selectivity about who are the actual persons who benefit from Fasting is clarified in the following two Ahadith:

- 1) 'Whoever did not give up lying or the practising of falsehood,

Allah is in no need of his giving up food and water.'

ll) 'Many are the tasters whose fasting does not bring them anything except hunger and thirst, and many are those who keep standing in the night but their standing does not bring them anything except being awake in the night.'

The first Hadith reminds us of two very familiar ayaat from the Qur'an:

'And cover not truth with falsehood, nor conceal the truth when ye know what it is.'

[Qur'an 2:42]

AND

'He who brings the Truth and he who confirms (and supports) it - such are the men who do right.'

[Qur'an 39:33]

In other words, the month of Ramadhan was the month in which this powerful Truth - the Qur'an - was manifested. Thus in a certain way we are celebrating the anniversary of this most momentous event in the history of mankind.

We must at all times remember that the Qur'an is a Book of Instruction and this definitely means it is our duty to obey these instructions; for it is after all we, the Muslims, who say the Kalimah and understand the Kalimah.

Ramadhan, historically speaking, was the month of truth-manifestation, truth-dissemination, truth-absorption, truth-elaboration, truth-confirmation and truth-implementation.

Fasting is for those who want to improve themselves - improve their bodies, their emotions, their mentality, their morality and their spirituality.

Westoxicated individuals think that if they improve their circumstances; increase their comforts, conveniences and leisure and ensure their safety and security, that that will be enough.

It is not enough to change our circumstances, we have to purify and develop ourselves.

Fasting is therefore an extraordinary educational experience which covers social, hygienic, economic and spiritual dimensions.

For example, fasting is an effective treatment for certain psychological and emotional disorders. It assists people to be more resolute; strengthen their convictions and curbs rashness and frivolousness.

During the month of Ramadhan especially we should try to comprehend the verses of the Qur'an and teach them to others. But mere understanding without practical application is futile.

WE CHANGE OURSELVES IN ORDER TO CHANGE THE WORLD

'Verily Allah does not change the condition of a people until they change their own condition.'

[Qur'an 13:11]

It is impossible to change our mode of action unless and until we change our mode of thinking. The common factor in all learning situations is the human mind; the quality of these minds is therefore of the utmost importance.

The most important function of consciousness is intentionality, that is, the willing and conscious formulation of an intention.

By making it obligatory (Fard) upon us to state an intention (Niyyah), Islam makes it obligatory upon us to **think** before we act. And it makes it obligatory upon us to act **consciously and purposefully**.

Fasting is a process for developing our power of intention, for acting consciously and purposefully. This is definitely an effective and an efficient way of cultivating self-discipline.

POSITIVE THINKING PRODUCES POSITIVE ACTION

Fasting triggers off a dynamic and continuous process of self-education. Not only are we in full control of this process, but we are also the only ones who can evaluate our progress.

All of us are aware that we can only evaluate our progress if we have a standard or criterion against which to measure it.

The following is a useful guide for students and teachers:-

Fasting - Level One:

Abstaining from food, drink, sex, smoking, etc.

Fasting - Level Two

Keeping ones ears, eyes, tongue, hands and feet - and all organs - free from blameworthy actions.

Fasting - Level Three

Keeping the heart and mind free from all unworthy concerns.

This is very aptly explained in the following Hadith:

'Five things break a man's fast: lying, backbiting, scandalmongering, perjury and a lustful gaze.'

It is quite evident that a fasting person is in a state of alertness, a heightened state of consciousness. One should therefore guard one's tongue from talking nonsense, lying, backbiting, scandalmongering, obscenities, rudeness, vulgarity, wrangling and controversy.

Everything which is unlawful to utter is unlawful to listen to. That is why the Hadith emphasizes it in the following manner:

'The backbiter and his listener are co-partners in sin'

It is meaningless and senseless to abstain from lawful food only to break one's fast on what is unlawful.

The ultimate purpose of fasting is to acquire Taqwa. The Qur'an states:

'O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you that you may become God-fearing.'

[Qur'an 2:183]

This must therefore be our objective, because if a goal has not been attained, then an action has not been executed correctly.

A person who fasts must therefore undergo a qualitative change in his thinking and in his behaviour.

'How many of those who fast get nothing from it but hunger and thirst.'

[Hadith]

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

The question of personal responsibility is fundamental to Islam. This activates and cultivates self-discipline. Every Muslim thereby becomes a unit of order and a unit for order. And every Muslim becomes a unit of social change and a unit for social change.

During Ramadhan especially, Muslims become more conscious of their duty towards themselves, towards their communities and towards mankind in general.

'Be one of two: either one who educates himself or one who concerns himself with the education of others. Never, however, concern yourself with reforming others before you have first reformed yourself.'

[Imam Ghazzali]

Fasting is not intended to be of benefit only to oneself because it is meant to have profound effects on the social order

A community which fasts collectively enjoys all the individual and collective benefits and joys of fasting. This community consolidates itself and directs its members to constructive efforts.

We feel a sense of responsibility towards each other based on mutual cooperation, unselfishness and complete trust. Such a community is free of crime, hatred, and general corruption. Such a community is a pleasing sight for mankind. Such a community is of benefit to mankind.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF FASTING?

a) To Demonstrate our Obedience

The most important purpose of fasting is to demonstrate our obedience to the Commands of Allah. We submit willingly and enthusiastically to the principles of Islam. Once we have made clear our obedience to Allah then a definite pattern of growth and development emerges. And the Qur'an states very clearly:

'He that obeys Allah and His Rasul has already attained the highest achievement.'

[Qur'an 33:71]

During Ramadhan Muslims are prohibited from partaking in that which is Halaal. This lasts from dawn to sunset for a period of 29 to 30 days. This prohibition on what is Halaal makes it easier for us to obey the prohibition on what is Haraam.

b) To Develop the Consciousness (Awareness) of Muslims

All our actions are preceded by a niyyah (a statement of intention). Intention is the most important criterion for judging actions. We also know that intention is a function of consciousness because an unconscious person cannot state an intention.

The more we use our power to state intentions (that is, to make decisions), the more we demonstrate our freedom to choose. And the more we use our minds the sharper they become. All other instruments become blunt with use but the mind is the only instrument that becomes sharper the more we use it.

This awareness (consciousness) we are talking about is not just self-awareness but also social awareness and spiritual awareness.

c) To Cultivate and Develop Self-Discipline

'O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was to those before you, that ye may (learn) self-restraint.'

[Qur'an 2:183]

'Leave those alone who take their Deen to be mere play and amusement, and are deceived by the life of this world. But proclaim (to them) this (Truth): that EVERY SOUL DELIVERS ITSELF TO RUIN BY ITS OWN ACTS.'

[Qur'an 6:70]

The Qur'an is in fact establishing the law for personal and collective success - for anything to succeed the human being must strive to make it succeed. Success as we know requires intelligence. By intelligence we understand the ability to **apply knowledge**.

It is an indisputable fact that self-discipline and the development of intelligence are inextricably linked. The less self-discipline we have the more unintelligent our actions become. A necessary factor, therefore, for the development and blossoming of intelligence is self-discipline. Need we stress the fact that in Islam we have enormous opportunities to cultivate self-discipline? Ramadhan is but one of these opportunities.

It is remarkably clear to Muslims that we change ourselves in order to change the world. The first instrument of change is, therefore, self-awareness. And during Ramadhan we are acutely aware of ourselves, our hunger pangs, our thirst, our behaviour, our tongues and our very thoughts. In brief, we have assumed control over them. We always use the mind to serve the body, now the body must serve the mind.

'Whether ye show what is in your minds or conceal it, Allah calleth you to account for it.'

[Qur'an 2:284]

'A Muslim is he whose tongue and hands are not annoying to other Muslims.'

[Hadith]

Let us be quite frank and demonstrate the difference between regimentation and self-discipline.

REGIMENTATION	SELF-DISCIPLINE
1) One obeys out of fear. There is the threat of punishment or there is actual punishment.	One obeys out of love -there is the desire to please and to find satisfaction in performing a task.
2) Regimentation is difficult because there has to be constant supervision and external control. Remove the supervisor or controller then discipline collapses.	Self-discipline is relatively easy because one is in constant control of oneself and is not in need of a supervisor or a controller.
3) Regimentation is temporary because once the need for regimentation is no longer required, the discipline disintegrates.	Self discipline is permanent because it is structured in the mind and therefore in the lifestyle of the individual.
4) Regimentation is imperfect - and is only satisfactory for limited purposes.	Self-discipline is perfect as well as perfectible. And it is desirable at all times and satisfactory under all conditions.
5) Regimentation implies being controlled and manipulated by an external source.	Self-discipline implies mind-control by the person himself. It is therefore an intellectual and conscious assessment of behaviour.
6) Regimentation does not require understanding but merely submissiveness and servile obedience.	Self-discipline requires understanding and a critical consciousness.

Islam is totally committed to self-discipline and personal responsibility. Self-discipline and personal responsibility are but two ways of looking at the same thing.

The Qur'an on personal responsibility:

- I) *'On no soul doth Allah place a burden greater than it can bear. It gets every good that it earns, and it suffers every ill that it earns.'*
[Qur'an 2:286]
- II) *'Leave those alone who take their Deen to be a mere play and amusement, and are deceived by the life of this world. But proclaim (to them) this (Truth): that every soul delivers itself to ruin by its own acts.'*
[Qur'an 6:70]
- III) *'Verily We have revealed the Book to thee in Truth, for (instructing) Mankind. He, then, that receives guidance benefits his own: but he that strays injures his own soul. Nor art thou set over them to dispose of their affairs.'*
[Qur'an 39:41]

These ayaat make it crystal clear that accountability for one's actions is the most important psycho-dynamic aspect of Islam. It is for this reason that intention (niyyah) in Islam is such an important aspect of Emaan. This really means that thought or consciousness is the essence of Emaan. And in order to convince us of the seriousness of our decisions the Qur'an states:

- IV) *'Whether ye show what is in your minds or conceal it, Allah calleth you to account for it.'*
[Qur'an 2:284]
- V) And the Hadith states:

'Actions will be judged according to intentions.'

A Muslim therefore, obeys an instruction or command in such a way that he is always held personally responsible, personally accountable, personally liable for his actions. We may not be called to account by any authority here in this life, but we shall definitely be held accountable on the Day of Judgement. And moreover our own minds shall bear witness because all our actions are recorded by our minds.

The Ummah is therefore, a global community of responsible people because they are a global community of self-disciplined and super-conscious people.

d) To Develop our Will Power and Endurance

A person who is fasting is unlike a person who is suffering from enforced starvation. We choose to fast, but we do not choose to starve or to suffer from enforced starvation. We choose to fast but we do not choose to starve or to suffer from malnutrition.

The decision, the niyyah, the willing participation in the collective 'Ibaadah requires resolution. This is a demonstration of will-power, and a decision of this nature ensures that we develop endurance to hardships. We become tempered like steel in fire.

This realisation that we have an inner strength, which if called upon, will always serve us well. The spirit of man always rises to the occasion. Note that this is one of the main reasons why Islam is still in force in Southern Africa, and in the world at large.

Muslims never abandon their obligations and commitments for Allah requires of us:

'O ye who believe! When ye meet a force be firm; and call Allah in remembrance much (and often); that ye may prosper, and obey Allah and His Rasul and fall into no disputes, lest ye lose heart and your power depart; AND BE PATIENT AND PERSEVERING: FOR ALLAH IS WITH THOSE WHO PATIENTLY PERSEVERE'

[Qur'an 8:45-46]

'O ye who believe! Fear Allah with His due fear and die not save as Muslims.'

[Qur'an 3:102]

e) We Fast in Order to Develop Noble Qualities

By fasting everyone in the global Ummah comes to understand the true nature of this unique brotherhood. At the same time those that have never known hunger come to understand the reality of hunger. Hunger then ceases to be a statistic or a report in a newspaper.

But this does not mean that Muslims **automatically** understand starvation and malnutrition. For at sunset we are assured of food and drink. But the person who is starving does not know when he'll have his next meal; and the person who suffers from malnutrition won't ever recover from the damages suffered.

Muslims, therefore, should not allow any human being to go without food for more than 12 hours. And we cannot allow nor tolerate that starvation and malnutrition occur over large areas of the world while a minority of the world's population is wallowing in vanities and luxury.

If Ramadhan be a month of truth, of refinement of character, of compassion, of kindness, of consideration and generosity then our compassion, kindness, consideration and generosity must be geared to eradicate hunger, starvation and malnutrition.

f) Fasting is a Gauge to Test our Emaan

By fasting, the integrity of the individual is established. In other words, he gauges his own sincerity and commitment. And this degree of sincerity must reach the stage where we can proudly be of those who execute the demands of the following ayah:

'O ye who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be (against) rich or poor; for Allah can best protect both.'

[Qur'an 4:135]

Emaan cannot remain a closed personal secret. Sooner or later it attracts attention, although it never advertises. The question is bound to be asked: What type of people are these who pray five times per day, don't drink, don't gamble, don't take or pay ribah, don't oppress and neither allow themselves to be oppressed? And on top of this they stay without food, water and pleasure for 29 to 30 days from dawn to sunset?

The answer is - these are Muslims and there are no other people like them for Allah describes them as:

'Ye are the best of peoples evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and believing in Allah.'

[Qur'an 3:110]

g) Fasting is an Efficient Method of Collective Training

In Islam we strive to achieve personal security by establishing collective security. This implies that Muslims are organised in such a way that they do collectively what they are trained for individually.

Concepts in Islam like Jama'a, Zakaah, Sadaqah and Hajj all emphasize the fact that humans are social beings. Therefore, the most important aspect of education in Islam is that it teaches human beings how to live with other human beings. This aspect of education is known as 'fard ain' i.e. knowledge, understanding and obligations which must be performed by **everybody in the ummah**.

In Western society they have failed in this respect and that is why

corruption, conceit, vulgarity and selfishness is the order of the day.

In performing Salaah, in giving Zakaah, during Jumu'ah and especially during Ramadhan, we get the opportunity to set **the global training camp of the ummah** into top gear. And this global training camp must produce the type of people of who the Qur'an says:

'O ye who believe! Fight the Unbelievers who gird you about and let them find firmness in you: And know that Allah is with those who fear Him.

[Qur'an 9:123]

h) Ramadhan - The Month of High Intensity Training

In everything that man does he experiences fluctuations. There are times when he performs exceptionally well, and there are times when his performance is not up to scratch. This happens to athletes, to typists, to architects, to housewives and scientists.

Now if we can establish under what conditions we give our best performances then we can repeat these performances. Ramadhan - as we have already pointed out - is the month for such high intensity training during which we work in the best possible conditions for making us aware of our 'Ibaadah. And by 'Ibaadah we mean ceaseless and continuous super-conscious action in the Cause of Islam.

During Ramadhan we wake up earlier than usual; stay without food and water for longer than usual; spend more time in Salaah than usual; become more conscious of our obligations than usual; engage in less vain talk than usual and recite Qur'an more than usual. The most important lesson we learn from this is that we must at all times be prepared to 'travel another mile'. Which means that our best is never the best; there is always room for improvement. And this we can only do if we exert ourselves to the utmost.

A long distance runner who practices by running 20km will have no difficulty in running 10km. For these people everything that they do becomes easy because they go through periods of high intensity training.

The 60 year old man, therefore, who started fasting at the age of 10 will have had 1500 days (about 3 years) of high intensity training. He might not be aware of this, but the person who did not undergo such training cannot be his equal in terms of self-discipline, endurance, sacrifice, preparedness and general level of consciousness.

We have stressed time and again that no army can go into battle without discipline, training, co-ordination and high morale. If we are the Mujahideen that Islam requires and prepares, then we must take Ramadhan very seriously.

CONCLUSION

The time to train is **now**; the time to learn self-defence is **now**; the time to co-ordinate our action is **now**; and the time to mobilize the Ummah is **now**.

And we repeat for the sake of those who hear but do not listen; for those who listen but do not understand; and for those who know but do not enact:

'Leave those alone who take their deen to be mere play and amusement, and are deceived by the life of this world. But proclaim (to them) this (Truth); that every soul delivers itself to ruin by its own acts.'

[Qur'an 6:70]

'O ye who believe! When ye meet a force be firm, and call Allah in remembrance much (and often); that ye may prosper: and obey Allah and His Rasul; and fall into no disputes, lest ye lose heart and your power depart; and be patient and persevering for Allah is with those who patiently persevere.'

[Qur'an 8:45]

Insha'Allah! The clarion call of the Athaan will be sounded on the first day of Ramadhan and that is the call which leads every Muslim in the land to his Qibla - and **we all have one goal!**

Once on the advent of Ramadhan, Rasullullah (SAW) delivered the following Khutbah:-

'O People! the month (Ramadhan) of Allah has come with His mercies, blessings and forgiveness. Allah has decreed this month the best of all months. Its days are the best among the days, its nights are the best among the nights and its hours are the best among the hours. This is a month in which you have been invited by Him (to fast and to pray). Allah has honoured you in it. In it, every breath you take is (has the reward of) 'Tasbih' (the praise of Allah), your sleep is worship, your good deeds are accepted and your invocations answered.

'Therefore, you must invoke your Lord in right earnest with hearts that are free from sin and evil, and pray that Allah may help you to keep fasts, and to recite the Holy Qur'an. Indeed! miserable is the one who is deprived of Allah's forgiveness in this great month. While fasting, remember the hunger and thirst on the Day of Judgement. Give alms to the poor and the needy. Pay respect to your elders, have sympathy for your youngsters and be kind towards your relatives and kinsmen. Guard your tongue against unworthy words, and your eyes from scenes that are not worth seeing (forbidden) and your ears from sounds that should not be heard.

‘Be kind to orphans so that if your children become orphans, they will also be treated with kindness. Do repent to Allah for your sins and supplicate with raised hands at the times of prayer as these are the best times, during which Almighty Allah looks at His servants with mercy, (He) Answers if they supplicate, Responds if they call, Grants if they ask, and Accepts if they entreat.

‘O people! you have made your conscience the slave of your desires. Make it free, by invoking Him for forgiveness. Your back is breaking under the heavy load of your sins, so prostrate yourself before Him for long intervals and make it lighter.

‘Do understand fully well that Allah has promised in the name of His Majesty and Honour that He will not take to task such people who perform Salaah and Sajda (prostration), and that He will guard their bodies against the fire of hell on the Day of Judgement.

‘O people! if anybody amongst you arranges for the iftar (food for ending of fast at sunset) of any believers, then Allah will give him the reward as if he had set free a slave, and He will forgive his previous sins.’

Then the companions of the Prophet (SAW) asked:

‘But everybody amongst us does not have the means to do so.’

The Prophet replied:

‘Keep yourself away from the fire of hell, though it may consist of only half a date or even some water if you have nothing else.

‘O people! anybody who in this month cultivates good manners, will walk over the Sirat (bridge leading to Paradise) on the day when feet will tend to slip.

‘Anybody who in this month may take light work from his servants, Allah will make easy his accounting, and anybody who does not annoy others in it, Allah will keep him safe from His wrath on the Day of Judgement. Anybody who respects and treats an orphan with kindness in it, Allah shall look at him with kindness on that Day.

‘Anybody who treats well his kinsmen in it, Allah will bestow His Mercy on him on the Day of Judgement, while anybody who maltreats his kinsmen in it, Allah will keep him away from His Mercy.

‘Whoever offers recommended prayers in it, Allah will save him from hell, and whoever serves in it obligatories, his reward will be that of seven such obligatories that were observed in other months.

‘Whoever recites repeatedly blessings (Salawaat) on me in it, Allah will keep the scales of his good deeds heavy (on Judgement Day) whilst the scales of others will be tending to lightness. Whoever recites in this month, an Ayah (verse) of the Holy Qur’an, his reward will be that of reciting the whole Qur’an in other months.

‘O people! the gates of Paradise remain open in this month. Do pray to your Lord that they may not be closed for you. While the gates of Hell are closed, do pray to your Lord they may never be opened for you. Satans have been handcuffed, invoke your Lord not to let them dominate you.’

Amir Al-Mu’mineen Ali (a.s.) said:

‘I asked, “O Messenger of Allah, what is the best of deeds in this month?” He replied: “O Abu’l Hassan, the best of deeds in this month is to be far from what Allah has forbidden.”

[Sheikh Saduq-Uyun Akhbar ar-Rhida]

SELECTED DU’AHS

It is recommended to recite the following two supplications after every prayer during Ramadhan

يَا عَلِيُّ يَا عَظِيمُ يَا غَفُورُ يَا رَحِيمُ أَنْتَ الرَّبُّ الْعَظِيمُ الَّذِي لَيْسَ
كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ وَهَذَا شَهْرٌ شَرَّفْتَهُ وَعَظَّمْتَهُ وَكَرَّمْتَهُ
وَقَضَيْتَهُ عَلَيَّ الشُّهُورَ وَهُوَ الشُّهُرُ الَّذِي قَرَضْتَ صِيَامَهُ عَلَيَّ وَهُوَ شَهْرُ
رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلْتَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنَ هُدًى لِلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِنَ الْهُدَى
وَالْفُرْقَانِ وَجَعَلْتَهُ فِيهِ لَيْلَةَ الْقَدْرِ وَجَعَلْتَهَا خَيْرًا مِنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ قِيَادًا أَلَمِ
وَلَا يُمَنُّ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ عَلَيَّ بِفِكَالِكَ رَقَبَتِي مِنَ النَّارِ فَيَمُنُّ نَفْسُ عَمَلِي
وَأَدْخِلْنِي الْجَنَّةَ بِرَحْمَتِكَ يَا أَرْحَمَ الرَّاحِمِينَ

‘O High, O Great, O Forgiver, O Merciful, You are the Great Lord, Whom nothing can resemble, and is All-Hearing, All-Seeing. And this is the month which You have honoured, exalted, glorified and excelled over other months. And it is the month in which You prescribed fasting for me. And it is the month of Ramadhan, in which You sent down the Qur’an as a guidance to people, and clear signs of guidance and Furqan (distinction between right and wrong). And You have made in it the Night of Qadr, and made it better than a thousand months. O One Who favours all and is favoured by none, favour me from Hell as You have favoured others. Admit me into Paradise through Your Mercy. O Most Merciful of the Merciful.’

اللَّهُمَّ ادْخِلْ عَلَى أَهْلِ الْقُبُورِ السُّرُورَ اللَّهُمَّ اغْنِ كُلَّ فَقِيرٍ اللَّهُمَّ
 اشْبِعْ كُلَّ جَائِعٍ اللَّهُمَّ اكْسُ كُلَّ غَرْتَانِ اللَّهُمَّ أَقْضِ ذَيْنَ كُلِّ مَدِينٍ
 اللَّهُمَّ فَرِّجْ عَنْ كُلِّ مَكْرُوبٍ اللَّهُمَّ زِدْ كُلَّ غَرِيبٍ اللَّهُمَّ فَكِّ كُلَّ أُسِيرٍ
 اللَّهُمَّ اضْلِعْ كُلَّ فَاسِدٍ مِنَ الْأُمُورِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ اللَّهُمَّ أَشْفِ كُلَّ مَرِيضٍ
 اللَّهُمَّ سُدِّ فُقْرَنَا بِعِنَاكَ اللَّهُمَّ غَيِّرْ سَوْءَ حَالِنَا بِحُسْنِ حَالِكَ اللَّهُمَّ أَقْضِ
 عَنَّا الدَّيْنَ وَأَغْنِنَا مِنَ الْفَقْرِ إِنَّكَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

'O Allah, let happiness enter (the hearts of) those who dwell in the graves:
 O Allah, grant affluence to all the poor;
 O Allah, satisfy the hunger of all the hungry ones;
 O Allah, clothe all the naked ones;
 O Allah, help all debtors to pay their debts;
 O Allah, relieve the sufferings of all those in distress;
 O Allah, straighten out all the defects (that have developed) in the affairs of
 Muslims;
 O Allah, restore to health all those who are sick;
 O Allah, ease our poverty by Your (unlimited) wealth;
 O Allah, change our difficult state by the excellence of Your state;
 O Allah, help us to pay our debts and free us from poverty.
 Surely, You are able over everything.'

It is also recommended to recite the following supplications which for the benefit of our readers have been classified according to each day of Ramadhan.

FIRST DAY

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْ صِيَامِي فِيهِ صِيَامَ الصَّائِمِينَ وَهَبْ لِي جُزْمِي فِيهِ يَا إِلَهَ
 الْعَالَمِينَ وَاعْفُ عَنِّي يَا عَافِيًا عَنِ الْمُجْرِمِينَ

'O Allah, accept my fast in it (Ramadhan) as the fast of those whose fast (is acceptable to You.) Forgive my sins in it, O the Lord of the Universe. Pardon me, O the Pardoner of sinners.'

SECOND DAY

اللَّهُمَّ قَرِّبْنِي فِيهِ إِلَى مَرْضَاتِكَ وَجَتِّنِي فِيهِ سَخَطَكَ وَنَقِمَاتِكَ
وَوَفِّقْنِي فِيهِ لِقِرَاءَةِ آيَاتِكَ بِرَحْمَتِكَ يَا أَرْحَمَ الرَّاحِمِينَ

‘O Allah, in it bring me near Your good pleasure and keep me away from Your anger and displeasure. Guide me to recite Your revelation (the Qur’an) through Your Mercy, O, the Most Merciful One.’

THIRD DAY

اللَّهُمَّ ارْزُقْنِي فِيهِ الذَّهْنَ وَالتَّنْبِيَةَ وَأَبْعِدْنِي فِيهِ مِنَ السَّفَاهَةِ
وَالتَّمَوِهِ وَاجْعَلْ لِي نَصِيبًا فِي كُلِّ خَيْرٍ أَنْزَلْتَهُ فِيهِ يَا أَجْوَدَ الْأَجْوَدِينَ

‘O Allah, in it grant me wisdom and awareness. Keep me away from ignorance and pretension. Award me a share from all the blessings that You bestowed in it (Ramadhan); O the Most benevolent of all benevolents.’

FOURTH DAY

اللَّهُمَّ قَوِّنِي فِيهِ عَلَى أَمْرِكَ وَأَوْزِعْنِي لِأَدَاءِ شُكْرِكَ بِكَرَمِكَ
وَاحْفَظْنِي بِحِفْظِكَ وَسِتْرِكَ يَا أَبْصَرَ النَّاطِرِينَ

‘O Allah, give me strength to observe Your orders. Encourage me through Your kindness to thank You. Keep me under Your protection: O One Who seeks everything.’

FIFTH DAY

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْنِي فِيهِ مِنَ الْمُسْتَغْفِرِينَ وَاجْعَلْنِي فِيهِ مِنْ عِبَادِكَ
الصَّالِحِينَ وَاجْعَلْنِي فِيهِ مِنْ أَوْلِيَائِكَ الْمُتَّقِينَ بِرَأْفَتِكَ
يَا أَكْرَمَ الْأَكْرَمِينَ

‘O Allah, place me in it among the ranks of the repenters, and make me among Your good servants. Make me one of Your pious devotees through Your Mercy; O Most Generous of the Generous.’

SIXTH DAY

اللَّهُمَّ لَا تَخَذُلْنِي لِتَعَرُّضِ مَعَاصِبِكَ وَأَعِزَّنِي مِنْ سِيَاطِ نِقْمَتِكَ
وَمَهَاوِيكَ وَأَجِرْنِي مِنْ مُوجِبَاتِ سَخَطِكَ بِمَتَكَ وَأَيَادِكَ يَا مُنْتَهَى
رَغْبَةِ الرَّاعِبِينَ

‘O Allah, do not abandon me to be overcome by sins. Grant me refuge from Your wrath and anger. I appeal to Your kindness and bounty; O the last refuge for those who crave for help.’

SEVENTH DAY

اللَّهُمَّ أَعِنِّي عَلَى صِيَامِهِ وَفِيَامِهِ وَجَنِّبِي فِيهِ مِنْ هَفَوَاتِهِ وَأَثَامِهِ
وَازْرُقْنِي ذِكْرَكَ وَشُكْرَكَ بِدَوَامِ هِدَايَتِكَ يَا هَادِيَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

‘O Allah, help me to keep fasts and to offer prayers in this (month). Protect me in it from errors and sins. Bestow on me Your remembrance and thanks through Your continuous guidance. O Guide of the Believers.’

EIGHT DAY

اللَّهُمَّ ازْرُقْنِي فِيهِ رَحْمَةَ الْأَيْتَامِ وَإِطْعَامَ الطَّلَامِ وَإِفْشَاءَ السَّلَامِ
وَازْرُقْنِي فِيهِ صُحْبَةَ الْكِرَامِ وَمُجَانَبَةَ اللَّسَامِ بِظَوْلِكَ يَا أَمَلَ الْأَمِلِينَ

‘O Allah, make me kind towards orphans and to feed the hungry and say greetings. And grant me the company of the righteous and to shun the evil-doers through Your benevolence. O Hope of the hopeful.’

NINTH DAY

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْ لِي فِيهِ نَصِيباً مِنْ رَحْمَتِكَ الْوَاسِعَةِ وَاهْدِنِي فِيهِ
بِرَاهِبِكَ الْقَاطِعَةِ وَخُذْ بِنَاصِيَتِي إِلَى مَرْضَاتِكَ الْجَامِعَةِ بِمَعْنِكَ
يَا أَقْلَ الْمُتَأَقِبِينَ

‘O Allah, bestow on me a share out of Your ample Mercy. Guide me to understand Your clear proofs and lead me towards Your good pleasure through Your love. O Hope of the seekers.’

TENTH DAY

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْنِي فِيهِ مِنَ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ عَلَيْكَ الْفَائِزِينَ لَدَيْكَ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ
إِلَيْكَ يَا غَايَةَ الْقَالِبِينَ

‘O Allah, make me among those who trust You, successful in Your estimation, near to You. O Besought of the beseechers.’

ELEVENTH DAY

اللَّهُمَّ حَبِّبْ إِلَيَّ فِيهِ الْإِحْسَانَ وَكَرِهْ إِلَيَّ فِيهِ الْفُسُوقَ وَالْعِضْيَانَ
وَحَرِّمْ عَلَيَّ فِيهِ السَّخَطَ وَالتَّبْرَانَ بِقُوَّتِكَ يَا غَوْثَ الْمُسْتَفِئِينَ

‘O Allah, incline me towards good deeds and make me to dislike transgression and disobedience. Protect me from Your wrath and the fire through Your power. O the Support of those who seek help.’

TWELFTH DAY

اللَّهُمَّ ارْزُقْنِي فِيهِ السَّرَّ وَالْعَفَافَ وَالْبِسْنِي فِيهِ لِبَاسَ الْقُنُوعِ
وَالْكَفَافِ وَنَجِّنِي فِيهِ مِمَّا أَخَذَرُوا وَأَخَافُ بِعِصْمَتِكَ يَا عِصْمَةَ الْخَائِفِينَ

‘O Allah, grant me refuge and chastity in it, and make me contented, and save me from what I fear through Your protection. O Shelter of the scared.’

THIRTEENTH DAY

اللَّهُمَّ ظَهِّرْني فِيهِ مِنَ الدَّنَسِ وَالْأَفْدَارِ وَصَبِّرْني عَلَى كَائِنَاتِ
الْأَفْدَارِ وَوَفِّقْني لِلتَّقَى وَصُحْبَةِ الْأَبْرَارِ بِعَوْنِكَ يَا قَرَّةَ عَيْنِ الْمَسَاكِينِ

‘O Allah, cleanse me of all impurities and foul practices, give me the strength to bear all the events ordained by You. Guide me towards piety and the company of the good-doers through Your sustenance. O the Comforter of the eyes of the destitute.’

FOURTEENTH DAY

اللَّهُمَّ لَا تُؤَاخِذْني فِيهِ بِالْعَثَرَاتِ وَأَقِلْني فِيهِ مِنَ الْخَطِيئَاتِ
وَالهَقَوَاتِ وَلَا تَجْعَلْني غَرَضاً لِلْبَلَايَا وَالْآفَاتِ بِعِزِّكَ يَا عِزَّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

‘O Allah, do not take me to task for my errors. Pardon my sins and unspeakable deeds. Let me not be the target of evil and vicissitudes through Your honour. O One Who honours Muslims.’

FIFTEENTH DAY

اللَّهُمَّ ارْزُقْني فِيهِ طَاعَةَ الْعَابِدِينَ وَأَسْرَحْ فِيهِ صَدْرِي بِإِنَابَةِ الْمُخْتَبِينَ
يَا أَمَانَ الْخَائِفِينَ

‘O Allah, bestow on me the sincerity of the worshippers. Expand my breast for sincere repentance. O Shelter of the scared.’

SIXTEENTH DAY

اللَّهُمَّ اهْدِنِي فِيهِ لِعَمَلِ الْأَبْرَارِ وَجَنِّبْنِي فِيهِ مُرَافَقَةَ الْأَشْرَارِ وَأَدْخِلْنِي فِيهِ بِرَحْمَتِكَ دَارَ الْقَرَارِ يَا إِلَهَ الْعَالَمِينَ

‘O Allah, guide me towards the deed of the righteous people and keep me away from the company of the wicked. Admit me by Your mercy to the permanent abode, through Your Divinity. O Lord of the Universe.’

SEVENTEENTH DAY

اللَّهُمَّ اهْدِنِي فِيهِ لِصَالِحِ الْأَعْمَالِ وَأَفْضِلْ لِي فِيهِ الْحَوَائِجَ وَالْآمَالَ يَا مَنْ لَا يَخْتِاجُ إِلَى السُّؤَالِ يَا عَلَمًا يَا فِي صُدُورِ الْعَالَمِينَ

‘O Allah, guide me towards good deeds. Grant my needs and wants. O One Who needs no reminders. O One Who is aware of what passes in the hearts of the beings.’

EIGHTEENTH DAY

اللَّهُمَّ تَبَهِّئْ فِيهِ لِبَرَكَاتِ أَشْحَارِهِ وَنَوِّرْ قَلْبِي بِضِيَاءِ أَنْوَارِهِ وَخُذْ بِكُلِّ أَعْضَائِي إِلَى اتِّبَاعِ آثَارِهِ يَا مُنَوِّرَ قُلُوبِ الْعَارِفِينَ

‘O Allah, awake me up to get the blessings of its Suhour (before the formal start of a fast) and fill my heart with its lights. Make all my organs to follow its obligatories. O One Who enlightens the hearts of the knowing people.’

NINETEENTH DAY

اللَّهُمَّ وَفِّرْ حَظِّي بِبَرَكَاتِهِ وَسَهِّلْ سَبِيلِي إِلَىٰ خَيْرَاتِهِ وَلَا تَحْرِمْني
قَبُولَ حَسَنَاتِهِ يَا هَادِيًا إِلَىٰ الْحَقِّ الْمُبِينِ

‘O Allah, Let me have an ample share of (this month’s) blessings, and make easy for me the path of righteousness and deprive me not of its bounties. O One Who guides to the right path.

TWENTIETH DAY

اللَّهُمَّ افْتَحْ لِي فِيهِ أَبْوَابَ الْجَنَانِ وَأَغْلِقْ عَنِّي التَّيْرَانَ وَوَقِّفْنِي فِيهِ
لِتِلَاوَةِ الْقُرْآنِ يَا مُنَزِّلَ السَّكِينَةِ فِي قُلُوبِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

‘O Allah, open for me in (this month) the gates of paradise and close the gates of hell. Give me strength to recite the Qur’an. O One Who brings satisfaction to the hearts of the believers..’

TWENTY FIRST DAY

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْ لِي فِيهِ إِلَىٰ مَرْضَاتِكَ دَلِيلًا وَلَا تَجْعَلْ عَلَيَّ فِيهِ
لِلشَّيْطَانِ سَبِيلًا يَا قَاضِيَ حَوَائِجِ السَّائِلِينَ

‘O Allah, lead me in (this month) to win Your good pleasure and not let the devil have access to me in it. O One Who fulfils the needs of the needy.’

TWENTY SECOND DAY

اللَّهُمَّ افْتَحْ لِي فِيهِ أَبْوَابَ فَضْلِكَ وَأَنْزِلْ عَلَيَّ فِيهِ بَرَكَاتِكَ وَوَقِّفْنِي
فِيهِ لِمَوْجِبَاتِ مَرْضَاتِكَ وَأَسْكِنِي فِيهِ بُحْبُوحَةَ جَنَّاتِكَ يَا مُجِيبَ دَعْوَةِ
الْمُضْطَرِّينَ

‘O Allah, open for me in (this month) the Gates of your bounty and bestow on me Your blessings. Encourage me to gain Your pleasure and admit me to enter Your paradise. O One Who answers the supplication of the oppressed.’

TWENTY THIRD DAY

اللَّهُمَّ اغْسِلْنِي فِيهِ مِنَ الذُّنُوبِ وَطَهِّرْنِي فِيهِ مِنَ الْعُيُوبِ وَامْتَحِنْ فِيهِ قَلْبِي بِتَقْوَى الْقُلُوبِ يَا مُقِيلَ عَثْرَاتِ الْمُذْنِبِينَ

‘O Allah, cleanse me in (this month) of all sins and purify me from all defects. Test my heart and see if I abstain from what is forbidden. O One Who overlooks the shortcomings of the sinners.’

TWENTY FOURTH DAY

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ فِيهِ مَا يُرْضِيكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ فِيهِ مِمَّا يُؤْذِيكَ بِأَنْ أُطِيعَكَ وَلَا أُعْصِيكَ يَا عَالِمًا يَا فِي صُدُورِ الْعَالَمِينَ

O Allah (this month) I beg for that which pleases You and for protection against that which displeases You. Teach me to obey Your commands and refrain from disobedience. O One Who is aware of what passes in the hearts of the beings.’

TWENTY FIFTH DAY

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْنِي مُحِبًّا لِأَوْلِيَايَكَ وَمُعَادِيًّا لِأَعْدَائِكَ وَمُتِمِّتًا بِسُنَّةِ خَاتِمِ أَنْبِيَائِكَ يَا عَظِيمًا فِي قُلُوبِ النَّبِيِّينَ

‘O Allah, make me love those close to You and an enemy of those who are Your enemies. Make me follow in the footsteps of the last Prophet (SAW). O the Exalted in the hearts of all the prophets.’

TWENTY SIXTH DAY

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْ سَعْيِي فِيهِ مَشْكُورًا وَذَنْبِي فِيهِ مَغْفُورًا وَعَمَلِي فِيهِ مَقْبُولًا
وَعَنِّي فِيهِ مَسْتُورًا يَا أَسْمَعَ السَّامِعِينَ

‘O Allah, let my good efforts in this month be fruitful and my sins pardoned and my actions accepted and my defects concealed. O the Most Hearing.’

TWENTY SEVENTH DAY

اللَّهُمَّ وَقِّرْ حَظِّي فِيهِ مِنَ النَّوَافِلِ وَأَكْرِمْني فِيهِ بِإِخْضَارِ الْأَخْرَازِ مِنَ
الْمَسَائِلَةِ وَقَرِّبْ وَسَبِّلِي إِلَيْكَ مِنْ بَيْنِ الْوَسَائِلِ يَا مَنْ لَا يَسْغَلُهُ الْحَاجُّ
الْمُلِحِّينَ

‘O Allah, let me make a greater effort to Nawafils (recommended prayers) in this month. Grant me through Your kindness to do good deeds which save me on the Judgement Day. Guide me to the best means which lead me towards You. O One Who doesn’t get bored from the insistence of the supplicants.’

TWENTY EIGHTH DAY

اللَّهُمَّ غَشِي فِيهِ بِالرَّحْمَةِ وَالتَّوْفِيقِ وَالْعِصْمَةِ وَطَهَّرْ قَلْبِي مِنْ عَائِبَاتِ
الشُّهْمَةِ يَا رَؤُوفًا بِعِبَادِهِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

‘O Allah in (this month) shower Your mercy upon me. Bestow on me Your Blessings and keep me away from sins. Cleanse my heart of all impurities. O One Who is Merciful on His believing servants.’

TWENTY NINTH DAY

اللَّهُمَّ ارْزُقْني فِيهِ لَيْلَةَ الْقَدْرِ وَصَبِّرْني كُلَّ عُسْرٍ إِلَى يُسْرٍ وَأَقْبِلْ
مَعَادِيرِي وَحُظَّ عَنِّي الْوِزْرَ يَا رَحِيمًا بِعِبَادِهِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

'O Allah, bestow on me the blessings of the Night of Qadr. Let my difficulties and problems be overcome. Accept my repentance, free me from my sins and evil acts. O One Who is Merciful towards the virtuous.'

THIRTIETH DAY

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْ صِيَامِي فِيهِ بِالشُّكْرِ وَالْقَبُولِ عَلَى مَا تَرْضَاهُ وَبِرِضَاكَ
الرَّسُولِ مُحْكَمَةً فَرُوعَهُ بِالْأَصُولِ بِحَقِّ مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ الطَّيِّبِينَ الطَّاهِرِينَ

'O Allah, perfect my faults to the stage which is acceptable to You and to Your beloved Messenger, in a way that the results of my fasts may lead me to a life of purity and righteousness, for the sake of Muhammad (SAW) and his progeny.'

IMPORTANT EVENTS DURING RAMADHAN

EVENTS	DATES
1. The Ramadhan Fast prescribed. It was during this very first Ramadhan fast that the Holy Prophet and his companions fought their first major military battle; the Battle of Badr .	2 A.H. (623A.D.) 17 Ramadhan 2A.H. (623A.D.)
2. The death of Sayyidatunnisa Fatima	Ramadhan 11 A.A.H.. (632A.D.)
3. Conquest of Makkah	20 Ramadhan 8A.H. (629A.D.)
4. Martyrdom of Sayyidena Ali (R.A.)	21 Ramadhan 40A.H.(660A.D.)
5. Laylatul Qadr - 'seek for the Night of Power in the odd-numbered nights of the last 10 nights of Ramadhan.' (Hadith)	21/23/25/27/29 Ramadhan

EID MESSAGE:

THE INTELLECTUAL ROOTS OF THE OPPRESSED AND ISLAM'S TRIUMPH OVER APARTHEID

By Achmad Cassiem

*Dedicated to all the slaves, freed slaves and
the present generation of the oppressed who
keep the flame of liberation burning so that
we may establish a just social order.*

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious Most Merciful

INTELLECTUAL ROOTS OF THE OPPRESSED

INTRODUCTION

An in-depth analysis of the intellectual roots of the oppressed peoples in Southern Africa reveals the influence of three streams of thought - that is of three cultural patterns:

- I) The indigenous African culture, whether it be of the San, Khoi-Khoi, Xhosa, Zulu, etc.;
- II) The Western, colonial, capitalist, Christian influences that arrived with the conquerors and settlers;
- III) The influence of Islam that arrived with the political exiles and slaves.

In the majority of historical texts, the first two influences are not only acknowledged but even lauded. But the third influence seems to be totally ignored.

This third influence, when passing reference is made to it, is seen as Eastern or Malay but never as Islamic.

The emphasis then falls on food, dress, etc., all the superficial by-products of culture. The dynamics of ideas, values and ideals are never analysed in detail. And yet, we shall discover, these are by far the most important contributions of Islam to the oppressed people in this part of the African continent.

This revolutionary intellectual heritage of Islam can mean the difference between genuine revolutionary change and foreign power hegemony under various labels.

If this struggle of the oppressed people has a history then the Muslims are at the focal point of that history. They were enslaved and in exile whilst they were on board the ships of the conquerors. They arrived in chains whilst the indigenous Africans were still to be chained.

It is obvious that much of the history of the oppressed has been distorted by the oppressors; much has been ignored and a great deal has been reconstructed from the viewpoint of the conquerors. The slaves and the political exiles were already a cultural force in the world.

They had resisted European colonialism with armed force. And when they arrived at the Cape they were prepared to do so again. The revolutionary historical momentum in Azania can be accelerated by

cognisance of this fact - and by a real appreciation of the social dynamics of the ideology of the slaves.

Any sincere historian would therefore want to know the precise nature of this revolutionary ideology. Amongst all the oppressed people in Southern Africa, these slaves had the most dynamic revolutionary ideology, tested and enriched over many centuries and in various communities of oppressed peoples.

All the other ideologies of a liberatory nature still had to be articulated, formulated and propagated. But even at this early stage, the adherents of the revolutionary ideology of Islam faced a number of obstacles:

- I) **they were considered infidels**; that is, they were not Christians;
- II) **they were slaves**; that is, they had no rights;
- III) **they were not indigenous slaves**; they were political exiles;
- IV) **they were black**; that is, they were not Europeans.

DEATH SENTENCE

Now these oppressed people, as handicapped as they were, were so feared that the death sentence was imposed for propagating the ideology of Islam in public.

The colonialist conquerors feared these slaves because:

- I) **they had ideological clarity**, that is, they understood the dynamism of the ideology of Islam;
- II) **they were fearless**; this moral obligation to be fearless was and still is one of the most important obligations on its adherents;
- III) **they were experienced in liberatory warfare** against the colonialist conquerors in other parts of the world.

These three qualities in a landless, property-less, oppressed and exploited people were a formidable combination. And it is this same formidable combination that the present generation of oppressed people so sorely need.

At this moment we are governed as a conquered people because the conquerors control the government, the economy, the police and the army. No amount of eye-wash or euphemism can disguise this fact.

We are a nation of oppressed people and not a nation of oppressed and oppressor. The most important factor in the history of a conquered people is the ways and means that must be employed to liberate themselves. All other questions are of secondary importance.

Under no circumstances whatsoever have the conquerors by some magic formula become the liberators of the conquered. The perpetuation and the

tenacity of apartheid must dispel any illusions of a compromise with the conquerors.

If there are sections of the oppressed people who are willing to be misled by euphemisms - i.e. calling the conquerors settlers - then that is their problem.

The majority of the landless peasants, the dispossessed, the exploited and the oppressed are under no such illusions.

Racist inspired solutions are originated by racists for the benefit of racists. The only thing worse than white racism is white paternalism.

When we consider the ways and means of liberating ourselves we must not be drawn into controversies about the technical preparation for revolution, for there can be no technical preparation unless we are prepared psychologically, ideologically and politically for revolution.

Our duty as revolutionaries is **not** to assert our standpoint, but to **demonstrate** it. Broad general principles must be defined in terms of **daily political application** in the oppressive society. Islam as a revolutionary ideology, we said, does this in very precise and uncompromising terms. And this daily political application is daily **practical application**.

The so-called authority of the oppressors and exploiters must be negated. This can be done by theoretical analysis or by practical defiance, without an explicit ideological framework. Islam negates the 'authority' of all oppressors and exploiters by making the first part of the Kalimah one of negation.

This is immediately followed by affirmation of the authority of man's Creator only.

It is therefore correct to say that apartheid as a systematised form of oppression was negated even before it came into existence. But it was the practical negation which had to be demonstrated and still needs to be demonstrated.

The historical records of the Muslims show that the greatest resistance to colonialism was encountered in those countries inhabited by Muslims. And in the contemporary situation it is again the Muslims in Iran, Afghanistan, Palestine and Lebanon who are rising successfully against the super-powers.

What we are emphasising is that ideology, and especially the ideology of Islam, encourages and creates social consciousness, identity, solidarity and inspires positive action on a scale which no other ideology has done or can do.

Historians are fond of repeating the statement that we must look at the objective factors which in most cases simply means that when you do not agree with them then you are not being objective. Two important questions deserve our attention:

a) Why did Islam become the dominant revolutionary force in the 7th century?

b) Why has Islam become the dominant revolutionary force at the end of the 20th century?

ISLAM: LOST PROPERTY OF AZANIANS

What those who profess to be Muslim have lost is a **correct understanding** of Islam. Many know the letter of Islam but the spirit of Islam has been lost.

This has given rise to a host of 'Muslim academics.' We dare not call them 'academic Muslims' because the word Muslim does not require any adjective. It is the academics who have changed the word and concept Muslim from a noun-agent to an adjective. 'Muslim academic' therefore stresses the fact that they are first and foremost academics.

Muslims talk Islam and 'Muslim academics' talk **about** Islam. This is also the difference between those who merely read and write biographies of great revolutionaries but they themselves are not inspired by these revolutionaries.

Our aim is to show how the broad general principles of Islam are defined and implemented in daily political application in the oppressive society.

The thinking patterns of Muslims are unlike the thinking patterns of any other ideological unit. It follows that the behaviour pattern is also unlike the behaviour patterns of any other ideological unit. Let us look at two important examples.

ANTI-RACISM IN ACTION

Whereas all other ideological units take great pains to stress the fact that they are non-racial or multi-racial, Muslims do not even have to articulate this fact because the social realities in which they engage is sufficient evidence that they are anti-racist.

Since the arrival of the first Muslims as chained and shackled slaves in the holds of the conquerors' ships they have never once tried to combat racism with anything except anti-racism. True to their ideological commitment since then they have retained this anti-racist ideology in thought and in action. This means that any human being who responds positively to the ideology is welcome.

This is seen in admission to madressas and all other educational institutions; this is seen in the five times daily Salaah in the more than 200 Masajid in Azania; this is also seen in the defiance of the so-called Mixed Marriages Act. The state does not recognise Muslim marriages and Muslims see no necessity for having their marriages solemnized (desecrated?) by the oppressors.

In a very positive sense, Islam triumphs over apartheid, racism and racialism. Islam does not tolerate racism, nor does it advocate peaceful co-existence with racism. Neither does it ignore racism. Islam declares war against racism and racialism. This is more than a mere battle of words. As proof we offer Muslims as the only truly consolidated anti-racist force in the country. This has been historically maintained for 300 years because it is an **ideological unit** and not a nationality, tribe, race or class.

An important factor here is the sincerity of the people who embrace Islam. Many, after embracing Islam, have had to abandon their original residences (even though more privileged than the oppressed) and migrated in order to become part of the Ummah, the most dynamic ideologically oriented unit of the oppressed people.

Muslims have been doing this for three centuries in Azania and are still doing it. Now surely this has produced an ideological community that does not think with racist blinkers. Even multi-racism (many racists, racism multiplied) is a swear word amongst Muslims. If racism is absurd, then multi-racism is absurdity multiplied.

Because Muslims have **one** ideological textbook, **one** method, one Qibla and **one** destiny, they are of a necessity a united Ummah. Whoever disturbs this unity deliberately and maliciously, must find himself another ideological home outside the Ummah.

There are of course very prominent people in the community - usually university products - who are fussing and fuming because certain organisations and the leadership in such organisations are stressing the importance of Islam in combating racism, oppression and exploitation. These critics accuse these dedicated people of knowing nothing about the spiritual aspects of Islam. Let us categorically state that Muslims perform acts of justice **in order to develop spiritually**. They do not develop spiritually in order to perform acts of justice.

Now Islam's concept of anti-racism is revolutionary (especially in the Azanian situation) because:

- I) **It makes it a moral obligation on its adherents not to obey racist authorities and laws and it encourages all oppressed people to do the same;**
- II) **It goes to the assistance of any victim of racist oppression;**
- III) **It attacks and sets out to destroy and eradicate racism.**

We therefore submit that each and every attempt to bring together races as races is reactionary and is a betrayal of the revolutionary heritage of Azania.

ALCOHOLISM: UNDERMINING MORALE

Frustration is a great destroyer of revolutionary potential. Especially when a struggle for liberation not merely spreads over decades but centuries, there must be a cohesive cultural force which sustains that struggle.

Obviously, the more distinctive the cultural force is from that of the conquerors, oppressors and exploiters, the easier it is to prevent co-option and distortion of revolutionary values.

When one speaks about morale, many think that it only refers to a highly motivated fighting spirit. But morale also refers to discipline and confidence.

The greatest underminer and saboteur of discipline and confidence is alcoholism as well as so-called social drinking. No person can have intellectual independence if he is alcohol-dependent. No matter what the intellectual status or achievements of certain people are - the moment they become alcohol-dependent, they simply become drunks.

No amount of rationalisation is going to change the fact that alcohol is the curse of the oppressed people and a boon for the oppressors.

Not only is the oppressor making enormous profits from liquor but it also totally immobilizes and paralyses the critical faculties of the oppressed.

Ironically, even socialist countries are on the list of countries with alcoholism as a national problem.

If we are going to argue that the oppressed people drink because they are oppressed, then we can argue that they will remain oppressed if they continue drinking.

The slaves who arrived in the hold of the conquerors' ships were teetotalers **by ideological conviction**.

Their plight was such that if we justify drinking under our present conditions, then surely they had more reason to drink.

We submit, therefore, that it isn't only an obligation on Muslims to be teetotalers, it is **the revolutionary duty of all the oppressed people to refrain from:**

- I) Producing liquor ;
- II) Distributing liquor;
- III) Consuming liquor.

A drunk person is useless as a revolutionary; he becomes part of the problem instead of being part of the solution.

The wisdom of slaves is still the revolutionary heritage of Azania. And it is far more applicable now than it was then. Let us not then squander our revolutionary heritage because of sectarian and egoistic occupations.

An ideology must define the line between oppressor and oppressed; it must not only help identify the system of oppression, but it must also define the ideals for which the oppressed people are striving and provide the people with the methods of struggle in order to achieve these ideals.

The serious students of history and ideology will definitely ask the following questions:

- I) **Does Islam identify and critically analyse the problems facing the oppressed people in Azania?**
- II) **Does Islam portray and propagate an alternative social order to the ones popularised at the moment?**
- III) **Does Islam furnish the oppressed people with the method(s) of struggle in order to eradicate the present minority racist regime and to establish a just social order?**

Yes, Islam definitely provides this in very precise and practical terms.

The extra-parliamentary opposition of Islam is always revolutionary and never reformist. This cannot be otherwise because the ideological premises of all other ideologies are in direct contradiction to the Kalimah.

The Ummah is therefore in constant, persistent and perpetual conflict with all unjust social orders and ruling classes and the ideological perspective of Islam is such that it is of **immediate relevance** to the problems of the oppressed. It is, therefore, literally the Deen of the oppressed.

And it was as the Deen of the oppressed that Islam first made its impact on the soil of Southern Africa.

The mere existence of haves and have-nots has never and will never bring about a revolution. Ideology, as the most important weapon of the oppressed, conscientises them. That is, it makes the oppressed people aware of the conflicts and contradictions between truth and falsehood and incites them to social action in the cause of truth.

Only those who suffer from enforced intellectual paralysis or choose to be intellectually paralyzed are incapable of distinguishing truth from falsehood.

TUAN GURU AND THE SUNNAH

When Tuan Guru² wrote the Qur'an from memory, whilst imprisoned on Robben Island for 11 years, he was following the same revolutionary tradition (Sunnah) that started with the founder of the Ummah.

All things begin with knowledge, for nothing can start or be achieved with ignorance. Hence Iqraa! Islam begins with knowledge.

And on the release of Tuan Guru from Robben Island he immediately organised a Madressa (that is, an ideological school) for slaves and 'freed' slaves in Dorp Street, Cape Town.

Yet, today many of our ideological schools (madressas) have become institutions not for producing revolutionaries, but for reproducing the knowledge of the teacher. The first people therefore who are squandering the revolutionary heritage of Islam are the Muslims themselves.

The same Qur'an that produced the giants in world history like Hazrat Ali (RA), Imam Husain (RA), and more recently, Syed Qutb, Ali Shariati and Imam Khomeini (to name but a few), must produce our giants. Where then are the flowers of our ideological schools?

² **Imam 'Abdullah ibn Kadi [Qadri] Abdus Salaam**, known as Tuan Guru, was a political captive held on Robben Island. He was born in 1712, a Prince from Tidore in the Ternate Islands [of Indonesia]. His geneology is traced to the Sultan of Morocco and his ancestry to that of the holy Prophet Muhammad [salla Allahu' alayhi wa sallam]. He was brought to the Cape on April 06, 1780 as a "state prisoner" along with several others by the Dutch colonial powers. Tuan Guru was a pioneer among the Cape 'ulema being the first qadi to settle at the Cape of Good Hope, as well as founding the Awal Masjid i.e. the first mosque in the area.

None of the great men mentioned above ignored the social, political and economic conditions of their times. It was because they were so concerned with those conditions and became involved with the issues confronting the oppressed people that they became great leaders and outstanding Muslims, even martyred in the cause.

The present Imams and Sheikhs must realise that Islam has a revolutionary tradition, a magnificent heritage which cannot be allowed to be squandered, wasted and ignored. If they do have ideological proficiency then it is their duty to supervise and monitor the proper and correct implementation of the ideology of Islam.

Ideological clarity and proficiency therefore means clarity and proficiency in our methods of struggle. In Islam, to know means to know **how to do!**

HERITAGE OF THE SLAVES

The intellectual roots of the oppressed in Azania do not stem from the 18th and 19th century ideologies of Europe but from the intellectual heritage of the slaves. And the heritage of the slaves is Islam.

Islam, the Deen of the oppressed, is the ideology of liberation against which any other 'isms' pales into insignificance. These 'isms' are no threat to Muslims at all - they are only of nuisance value.

Islam, the revolutionary heritage of Azania is the heritage of all the oppressed people in Azania - the dead, the living, and the unborn.

A community whose members are sober from birth to death, seekers of knowledge from birth to death, who prefer truth to falsehood at all times, and who invite to martyrdom rather than survivalism, is already a liberated community.

We humbly submit that this Ummah, the global community of truth, action and justice is the vanguard of the oppressed. This ideological unit has been sharpened, tested and steeled over centuries - uncompromising against the enemy and compassionate amongst the oppressed.

The new social order is already being developed in embryo but unless we remove the pious frauds from the mimbars and mihrabs, our heritage - the heritage of the oppressed - is being defiled and misappropriated.

The dawn of the Islamic Revolution in Azania is on the agenda of the oppressed and there are many forces - racists, Zionists and imperialists - who dread the rise of Islam in Azania.

As for the members of this unique ideological unit, they welcome the opportunity to serve the Cause of Allah and the Cause of the oppressed for struggle in Islam is the practical means for purifying the ranks of the Ummah.

“Jihad is an effort, an exertion to the utmost, a striving for truth and justice. The purpose of Jihad is to stop, remove, destroy and eradicate injustice and not to replace one unjust system with another, or to replace one dominant group with another dominant group. **Jihad is therefore a ceaseless, continuous, super conscious and effective struggle for justice.**”

Achmad Cassiem

Leader of the anti-apartheid movement Qibla, senior member of the Pan African Congress, founder and Chair of the Islamic Unity Convention and veteran anti-apartheid activist, Achmad Cassiem has written, taught and acted upon Islamic concepts since his teenage years as one of the youngest detainees on Robben Island.

This publication brings him to a new audience based outside his home of South Africa. His works reproduced herein, though referring to an era where South Africa faced enormous transformative change, remain relevant to Muslims and those of other faiths and none in their struggles to achieve justice.

An Imam and scholar, Achmad Cassiem brings concepts like jihad and tauheed to both practical and radical application. His words on the Islamic injunctions to unite in brotherly love and support not just each other but to battle injustice wherever it is found, are more pertinent now, in an age of sectarian violence than when he first preached them.

This is a must read for anyone wanting to locate their yearning for justice for all peoples in the context of a spiritual and practical journey of emancipation.

ISBN 978-190751700-6



9 781907 517006



www.ihrc.org.uk