

The Blissful Eid of Fitr¹

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In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

I congratulate this blissful Eid (feast) of Fitr to all attending brothers and in general, all brothers in faith, and also all Muslims, particularly the Shiites; and may God, according to what is said in the (Eid of Fitr's) prayer "Oh God, for the sake of this day that You have designated a feast for the Muslims", make a feast for all of us Muslims' days. May the Eid be blissful for everyone, *Insha'Allah*.

God's days are all the same. Every day the sun rises from the east and sets in the west. That's the way it is. But, in this prayer that we do in the prayer of Eid of Fitr, we demand God to make a greater honor, bliss, blessing and dignity for Muhammad peace be upon him and his descendents and for Muslims as well; because of this day that He made it a feast for us. That's why Eid of Fitr is being gradually celebrated all over the world. This day is no different than the other days. But, we celebrate it; because God has said that this day is a feast and has established a number of customs and rites for this day. In the month of Ramadhan, our routine life is changed. We drop our habits that we had. Our religious worshipping acts have become habitual (*Iadat*) and as it is said, our worshipping acts (*Ibadat*) lacks a "b" - perhaps the same "b" about which Ali (AS) said that: "The whole Koran has been summarized in the character 'B' of 'Besm-e-Allah' (In the name of Allah) (which this "B" means: 'By asking the assistance of'). That is our *Ibadat* (worshipping acts) has been changed to *Iadat* (habit) (That is *Ibadat* without the character 'b'). Perhaps, God wants to change us, so that we understand that any religious rites and worshipping act we do occasionally are not habitual and God has commanded us to do so. Today, being a Sunday; it is no different than last Sunday, yesterday which was a Saturday, or tomorrow which is Monday. Who has established these differences? Of course, the God. One characteristic of the Eid is that one cannot fast on it. It is compulsory to fast on 29 or 30 days of Ramadhan, but it is *Haram* (prohibited) on Eid of Fitr, as well as on Eid of *Adha*. While today is no different than yesterday in the Nature's course. But this is to make us understand. As Abraham (AS) said: "Say, Indeed, my prayer, my rites of sacrifice, my living and my dying are for Allah, Lord of the worlds"², it depends on Divine will. God says one day: "Do not eat!" but today He says: "Eat!" He says: "Do not fast today but you must did fast yesterday". We need to understand that any act of worshipping we do is effectless per se. Bowing-down and getting-upright and reciting some phrases are affectless. The effect lays in the God's command and in our obedience to the command of God. If God wants, which He shall *-Insha'Allah-* to give us any reward, it would be for the degree to which we have obeyed His commands, not for how we fast and celebrate the Eid. Everything is according to His order. That's why we see each religion asserts for celebrating different days. We Muslims have been ordered for Friday; Jewish celebrates Saturday; Christians: Sunday; and Zoroastrians, I guess Monday is their Eid.

For us the Muslims, Friday differs from other days, but this is not the case for the followers of other religions. This indicates, and actually suggests to us the Muslims and the believers, that in doing everything, even in eating and sleeping, we should follow divine commands; and not to do them because of habit, rather according to the will. It is because habits are so rooted in

¹ His Honorable *Hajj Doctor Nour Ali Tabandeh*, Majzoub Ali Shah's address for the occasion of Eid of Fitr of 1422 Lunar Hijri, 16 December 2001, at Amir-Soleymani Hussainiyah, Tehran, Iran.

² Koran, Surah: Al-Anaam, Verse: 162. **قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ**

us that they have righteously told that everything is done out because of habit, either internal or external habits. We have been told to read Koran a lot in Ramadhan, and that it is the month of Divine Banquet. For us, who live on this Earth and take the words literally, banquet means the table of repast. God has spread a table and has invited everyone for that table who would obey His commands. In order for us to elevate and reach that table, it is incumbent to follow His orders everywhere. It is said that one might journey to skies by the “*Ism-e-A’zam*” (The Greatest Name of God). By “skies” one doesn’t mean this ordinary sky because the spiritual skies are not bounded. By going to skies one means to elevate (spiritually). Of course, this *Ism-e-A’zam* is not a name or word. In Holy Koran in the story of Harut and Marut that a woman named *Zohreh* (Venus) wanted to ascend to skies so she caught the *Ism-e-A’zam*. As it was Satan’s case, on whom God has said : “...**he was of the jinn...**”³, and who inserted himself among the angels through his worshipping, intending to come close in this way. But he had a bad attitude: “**then he departed from the command of his Lord.**” Returning to Harut and Marut, it is said that *Zohreh* was able to ascend using the *Ism-e-A’zam*, but the guards of the third sky spotted and stopped her, where God transformed her into a rock. That is, she became the planet we know as *Zohreh* (Venus). This is a symbolic tale referring to the *Ism-e-A’zam* and ascension, clinging to which we have to elevate ourselves and sit at Divine table. God has arranged a banquet during Ramadhan, which is not just for eating. Today, however, His reception is on, where we could attend by eating in the banquet.

In order to know what the *Ism-e-A’zam* is, we have to consider a few things. First is the word “*Ism*” (name). A name implies something which leads us to whom possess the name (the named). That is, something exists out there: when we name it, say a name for example, “plate”, this word implies the entity that exists in the outside world. *A’zam*, on the other hand, means the greatest. Every being may have various names. For instance, one may call a plate by the name of a saucer or dish. *Ism-e-A’zam* is one that implies “The Named” and “the meaning” most of all the other names. On the other hand, *Ism-e-A’zam* is among the *Asma-ul Husna* (Good Names). The “good names” would imply “The Named” very clearly and without difficulty. If one has an enlightened heart, he will see that it leads to “The Named”. That’s why the Holy Imams (AS) say: “We are the *Asma-ul Husna*.” That is, when we consider the lives of the Imams, or if we visit them or those who have had the luck to see them, we would automatically realize the presence of God. But if the issue of *Ism-e-A’zam* was a lexical one, it would be the lexicologists’ work to establish which words imply God and which one is the greatest. Of course, God has many different Names and Attributes which are usually counted as 99 of Names and Attributes. Moreover, Koran contains thousands of attributes of God, but it is said that they are 99 Names and Attributes; and that only the word of “Allah” implies those 99 Names plus one, lexicologically; that leads to one hundred subjects. That’s why it has been said that “Allah” is the Greatest Name in lexical terms. But the “Allah” that we articulate, being merely a movement of tongue, is useless, and is like a tape recorder that is saying it, and leaving no prints in our hearts.

Why do we need the *Ism-e-A’zam*? We want to call The God by it. We are not the obedient of words. The words follow us, and are our products. We want to call God. Do we call Him using these ordinary languages and words? If this was the case, everyone would call Him truly; but our calls would be answered only if we made sure to make our voice reach His ears, and draws His attention. That’s why we say in a prayer: “Listen to my calls and respond to my prayers, then realize my hope and wish through your grace”. We implore Him to “listen”, to “respond” to our prayers. God hears. As He has said: “**Indeed, He is the Hearing, He is**

³ Koran, Surah: Kahf, Verse: 50. **إِبْلِيسَ كَانَ مِنَ الْجِنَّ**

the Seeing".⁴ He hears everything but we implore him to listen (listening is different from hearing), to pay attention, and then, accept our requests.

Whenever we request this from our hearts, the same Heart will respond to us that *labbeyk* (Hello there). But it is no useful if we just articulate it by our tongues' movements. So the pronunciation of the word *Ism-e-A'zam* is useless per se. If it were based only in the word, any pagan or idolater would say it. If it was that easy, everyone would reach Him by saying it and it would work for them. But it's not as easy. We have to say it from our hearts.

Just the same way the *Laylat al-Qadr*⁵ is faded among other nights, the *Ism-e-A'zam* is faded among other Names of God. In a sense, all the Names of God are the *Ism-e-A'zam*. As it has been told: every night is the *Laylat al-Qadr*, if you appreciate it!

All names are the Greatest provided that we call the Named, indeed. The name by itself is useless. It is possible that your tongue be silent, but your heart is calling The Named; calling the named of that *Ism-e-A'zam*. In that case, God would answer. God has created an opening window toward Himself for every individual. He has created the ways that He says: "**And those who strive for Us - We will surely guide them to Our Ways**".⁶ For us the dervishes, the *Zikr* (mantra) that we have is the *Ism-e-A'zam*. Of course, that *Zikr* wouldn't work if uttered only by tongue. However, we have been told that we need to say it repeatedly until the heart is to be informed. But, if uttered with attention, it would be the same **Way** as God has told us to travel through that way to Me.

But, most importantly, is the obedience to God's command, otherwise God doesn't benefit from neither our prayers nor our fasting. God has said: "Come to Me so I will give you My clemency. I will grant you from My blessings and from My magnanimity". That's why we should strive toward obeying God's commands. Reciting our prayers is one of these commands. One cannot say that obeying the commands is more important than reciting the prayers. Prayers are of these commands as well. One of these commands is reciting the prayers by the way it has been instructed. Another command is to fast in Ramadhan month. That is, not to eat and drink; and to abstain. Another command which applies to this day - the Eid of Fitr - is to eat. Obedience to God's commands -whether it is to eat or not to eat- is the same. Someone who doesn't fast in Ramadhan commits the same sin as someone who fasts on the Eid day. Both are the same in God's sight. Then let's move toward obedience to God's commands.

May God give us the success to strive in obeying His commands; *Insha-Allah*, which is a merit by itself. I congratulate the Eid of Fitr again. May God turns into feasts all of our days, *Insha-Allah*. "For the sake of this day that You has made it a feast for the Muslims," we implore Him to make all our days as feasts due to this prayer.

⁴ Koran, Surah: Isra, Verse: 1. Surah: Qafir, Verses: 20 and 56. Surah: Shora, Verse: 11. هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ

⁵ Literally, Night of Appreciation, Value, or Measures. Muslims believe that Laylat al-Qadr was the night when the Koran was revealed to Muhammad (PBUH). (Translator's note).

⁶ The Holy Koran, Al-Ankabut, Verse: 69. وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا