



Muslim News

10 December 2010, 3 Muharram 1432

New Zealand Muslim Community Mourns The Loss of 29 Miners

The New Zealand Muslim community is devastated by the news of a second explosion at Pike River Mine on the afternoon of Wednesday 24th November 2010.

Like most other New Zealanders, the community has closely followed developments at Greymouth and held some glimmer of hope for these 29 brothers until that explosion that extinguished that remaining positive expectation.

This is a national tragedy for a country that is known for its unique Kiwi kinship and brotherhood, a country that gives and accepts everyone and cares for everyone. It is this spirit that makes every New Zealander part of the grief enveloping this country today.

While the Muslim community grieves for these men it wants to extend its heartfelt sympathies and condolences to the families of the 29 men, to the community of Greymouth and to New Zealanders in general in this moment of sorrow.

OIC chief warns about rising Islamophobia

The leader of the world's largest Islamic organization has likened the rise of Islamophobia in Europe and the U.S. as "the rise of anti-Semitism in the 1930s."

Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, secretary general of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), on Friday said xenophobia directed at Muslim immigrants was starting to have a definite effect, especially in Europe.

"I'm afraid that we are going through a process like the beginning of the '30s of the last century, when an anti-Semitic agenda became politically a big issue (together with) the rise of fascism and Nazism.... I think now we are in the first stages of such a thing," he said in an interview with AFP.

The Turkish head of the OIC further added that instead of combating this trend politicians are exploiting the issue to gain more popular support.

"What worries me is that political authorities or political parties, instead of stopping this, or fighting this, some of them are using this for their political ends, to gain

more popular support in elections," he said.

Ihsanoglu went on to say that Europe must open its eyes to the reality of Islam.

"Europe has to understand the reality of Islam today, and the reality that Islam is not an alien religion of Europe. Islam is a European religion, and Europe has to come to terms with Islam," he added.

The OIC head pointed to the protests in the U.S. against the "Ground Zero" Islamic center in New York City, to the anti-burqa movement in Europe, and to physical attacks on Muslims on both sides of the Atlantic.

In September, Amnesty International warned that "fear, discrimination and persecution against Muslims" is on the rise in the United States.

The report said U.S. officials should take strong action against attacks targeting the country's Muslim community.

THE VIRTUES OF THE FIRST TEN DAYS OF DHU'L-HIJJAH IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, MOST GRACIOUS MOST MERCIFUL

Praise be to Allah Who has created Time and has made some times better than others; some months, days and nights better than others; when rewards are multiplied many times, as a mercy towards His slaves; Allah says: "Thy Lord does create and choose as He pleases: no choice have they (in the matter): Glory to God! and far is He above the partners they ascribe (to Him)!" (28:68)

This in order to encourage them to do more righteous deeds and makes them more eager to worship Him, so that the Muslim renews his efforts to gain a greater share of reward, prepare himself for death and supply himself for the Day of Judgment.

Dear Muslims, among the special seasons of worship are the first ten days of Dhu'l-Hijjah, which Allah has preferred over all the other days of the year. Allah swore by these days in Quran: "By the dawn; And by the ten nights," (89:1-2) Prophet Mohammed (saws) also testified that these are the best days of this world. Ibn Abbaas (may Allah be pleased with him and his father) reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "There is no deed more precious in the sight of Allah or greater in reward, than a good deed done during the ten days of Sacrifice". He was asked, "Not even jihad for the sake of Allah?" He said, "Not even jihad for the sake of Allah, except in the case of a man who went out to fight giving himself and his wealth up for the cause, and came back with nothing." (Al-Bukhari) So, Performing worships and act of obedience in these days is also preferred over doing it in other days of the year, even the last ten days of Ramadan. However, it is strange that you find that Muslims are heedless about the value of these days, and that they have no spirit to do worships especially in comparison to Ramadan. It is common to see people increase their worships and be encouraged to do righteous deeds in Ramadan, while they don't do the same in the first ten days of Dhu'l-Hijjah.

These ten days of Dhu'l-Hijjah are a good chance for us to repent from

our sins, perform righteous deeds and bring ourselves close to Allah and His guidance. We all have to do our best to get the maximum benefits of these special days. This can be achieved by leaving sins and perform our religious duties.

Moreover, since the rewards are increased in these days, doing act of obedience such as charity and sadaqaha, performing prayers, promotion of virtues and prevention of vices, reciting Quran, remembrance of Allah, visiting our relatives and preserve the ties of kinship, and doing good to our parents is highly recommended during these days. Of special importance in these ten days of Dhu'l-Hijjah is the remembrance of Allah, especially Takbeer. It is Sunnah to say Takbeer ("Allahu akbar"), Tahmeed ("Al-hamdu

Lillaah"), Tahleel ("Lailaha ill-Allah") and Tasbeeh ("Subhaan Allah") during the first ten days of Dhul-Hijjah, and to say it loudly in the mosque, the home, the street and every place where it is permitted to remember Allah and mention His name out loud, as an act of worship and as a proclamation of the greatness of Allah, may He be exalted. Men should recite these phrases out loud, and women should recite them quietly. Allah says: "And proclaim the Pilgrimage among men: they will come to thee on foot and (mounted) on every kind of camel, lean on account of journeys through deep and distant mountain highways * That they may witness things that are of benefit to them, and mention the Name of Allah on appointed days, over the beast of cattle that He has provided for them. Then eat thereof and feed therewith the poor having a hard time." (22:27-28). The majority of scholars agree that the "appointed days" are the first ten days of Dhu'l-Hijjah. Takbeer in these days is an aspect of the Sunnah that has been forgotten, especially during the early part of this period, so much so that one hardly ever hears Takbeer, except from a few people. This

Takbeer should be pronounced loudly, in order to revive the Sunnah and as a reminder to the negligent.

There is sound evidence that Ibn 'Umar and Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with them) used to go out in the marketplace during the first ten days of Dhu'l-Hijjah, reciting Takbeer, and the people would recite Takbeer when they heard them. Reviving aspects of the Sunnah that have been virtually forgotten is a deed that will bring an immense reward, as is indicated by the words of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him): "Whoever revives an aspect of my Sunnah that is forgotten after my death, he will have a reward equivalent to that of the people who follow him, without it detracting in the least from their reward." (Al-Tirmidhi).

Another special deed which has great value during these ten days is offering a sacrificial animal. By choosing a high-quality animal and fattening it, Muslims will be spending money for the sake of Allah. Allah ordered His prophet to do it in Quran saying: "to thy Lord urn in Prayer and Sacrifice" (108:2); and hence we should also do it following our prophet as Allah says: "Say: 'If ye do love God, Follow me: God will love you and forgive you your sins: For God is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.'" (3:31). And "So take what the Apostle assigns to you, and deny yourselves that which he withholds from you.

And fear God; for God is strict in Punishment" (59:7). Dear Muslims, I urge you to use this great season to revise your deeds and bring your self closer to your Lord. Fasting is one of the deeds that preferred during the ninth days of Dhu'l-Hijjah; and that can give us huge rewards. It is also recommended to increase our Dua'a (supplication) in these great days, as prophet Muhammed (saw) said: "The best supplication is the supplication on the day of Arafat". (Al-Tirmidhi and Malik) May Allah guide us All to use these days of Dhu'l-Hijjah to reform ourselves, and follow the right path.

HAPPINESS through SACRIFICE!

By Farid Ahmed

Eid ul Adha is also called "Eid of Qurbani". Eid is happiness and Qurbani is sacrifice [of animal]. In other words it is an occasion where Muslims practice to be happy through sacrifice.

Sacrificing animal is a symbol of sacrificing ourselves to Allah's authority. So a Muslim must not take the animal sacrifice as a mere ritual but should think about its wider implications in our daily life. Islam is not just a ritual it is a way of life and every act of worship is a mental, emotional and physical training for Muslims to attain perfection in total surrender to the will of Allah.

In a general sense, sacrifice is "Giving up something precious for the love of others." For us, some examples of precious things are like our ego, our desires, our children, our money, our time and energy and so on. So if we can give up or use those precious things for the love of Allah then that is also a form of SACRIFICE.

When we become possessive with our selfish desires, of our children and our wealth then we can't attain love for Allah whereas the real believer must love Allah most. Allah describes the quality of true believers in holy Quran: [2.165] "But those of Faith are overflowing in their love for Allah."

We know, Allah tested Ibraheem [a.s] with the order of sacrificing his own and only beloved son for the love of Him. The initial order was not to sacrifice an animal, rather sacrificing the real flesh and blood of human but once Ibraheem and Ishmael [a.s] proved their 100% willingness of sacrificing their beloved son and self then Allah [swt] mercifully replaced Ishmael [a.s] with an animal. Since then Muslims sacrifice animals as a substitute of own flesh and blood. So animal is a symbol but the real teaching of sacrifice is using our selves in the service of Allah because whatever we have is nothing but gift from Allah. He alone own us, He alone created us and He alone deserves our sacrifice.

We must understand that Allah doesn't want flesh,



blood of a sacrificed animal etc but Allah wants what is in the mind, the emotion and devotion behind it. Allah says in holy Quran 22.37 "It is neither their meat nor their blood that reaches Allah: It is your devotion [to Allah] that reaches Him."

The devotion is a) Acknowledging that we belong to Allah, b) Willingness of giving back to Allah whatever He wants as thanks giving and c) Fearing Allah's punishment if we become ungrateful to Him. If we can have that kind of mind, emotion and action then we have learn the real meaning

of sacrifice in our wider spectrum of life to be perfect Muslims. Allah wants our complete surrender, complete sacrifice as Allah says in holy Quran: 6.162 "Say, my Salat, my sacrifice, my life and my death all dedicated to Allah, the lord of the worlds."

“In a general sense, sacrifice is “Giving up something precious for the love of others.” For us, some examples of precious things are like our ego, our desires, our children, our money, our time and energy and so on. So if we can give up or use those precious things for the love of Allah then that is also a form of SACRIFICE.

Having explained this far, now my humble question to myself and other Muslims are; Do we feel happy to sacrifice our sinful thoughts for the love of Allah? Or do we feel happy to sacrifice our selfish desires, our misery, our extravagance, our disloyalty, our bad habits, our wrong actions for the love of Allah? Do we feel happy to sacrifice some time daily to pray 5 times for the love of Allah? Or do we fear Allah's punishment failing to sacrifice HARAM actions in our day to day lives? Do we feel happy through sacrificing our beloved things for Allah as Ibraheem and Ishmael [a.s] did?

Whoever fears to be ungrateful to Allah and really feel happy scarifying time, energy, money and so on for Allah's pleasure will eventually be rewarded by Allah. Allah announces His honorable promise for them in holy Quran: 79.40-41 "And for those who had felt the fear of standing before their [Almighty] Lord and had restrained [their] souls from lowly desires [Can sacrifice their lowly desires for fear of Allah], their home will be the Paradise."

News in Pictures: FIANZ Muslim Convention 27-28 November 2010, Papatoetoe High School







Is It Possible To Have Unity With Diversity?

Paper presented at the Muslim Convention by Sheikh Muhammad Amir, Chairman, New Zealand Ulaama Board

Disunity among Muslims is our greatest problem today. We are at present a very fragmented and divided people. We have disunity at every level: within our communities, at the local level, national level, and international level. We talk about unity and discuss the problem of disunity in our meetings and conferences, but we fail to be united. We fail to work together, although everything in our religion and in our condition demands that we come together and work together. Unity is our religious obligation.

In Islam unity and faith are interrelated. People of faith are united people. The more faith they will have, the more united they will be. Allah says in the Qur'an, (Indeed the Believers are brethren to each other)(Al-Hujurat 49: 10).

When we talk of unity, let us remember that unity does not mean uniformity. It does not mean that we should look alike, eat alike, dress alike. It does not mean that we should not have any differences in opinions. This is diversity, not disunity. Unity does not mean negation of diversity. Diversity is good; disunity is bad. Diversity is a mercy; disunity is a curse. Unity can be achieved with diversity.

Unity means the unity of purpose and goal. United people are diverse people, but their purpose and goal is one and the same. They must remain conscious of their purpose and goal, and all their efforts must be directed to that purpose. When people of diverse backgrounds and cultures become united for one purpose, they achieve progress and success. However, when the people of one and the same culture and race lose consciousness of their purpose, they become divided and they fail.

Our purpose as Muslims is moral and spiritual. Our purpose is to please Allah and to work for the advancement of His religion in this world. Our goal is to achieve ultimate success and salvation in the Hereafter. There is no better reason to be united than this. If we keep in our mind our purpose and goal, we can easily overcome our differences. We would not argue on minor issues or take petty quarrels. We would not be jealous or hateful to each other. We would not worry who takes the credit because our aim would be to please our Lord, not to please our ego or to promote our own interests.

We would see whether the religion of Allah is promoted or not, whether the ultimate objective would be achieved or not. This would make us more open minded, more accommodating, more merciful and kind to each other. Unity is not a slogan; it is a mission. Wherever we are we should try to see how we can achieve unity among ourselves. Each one of us should ask ourselves: Do I want to be united with my fellow Muslims? What am I doing to work with others to promote my purpose and achieve my goal? If I have a problem, what am I doing to solve the problem? Unity does not come down as rain from the sky. Unity is not a miracle that will happen among those who do not believe in unity. Unity will only come if we strive for it and work hard to achieve it. It is a reward of faith, sincere efforts, lot of patience, good will, tolerance, and sincere commitment to the objectives and aims. Unity requires continuous efforts.

Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas narrated: One day the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) was coming from `Aliyah (a location in Madinah) until he passed by the mosque of Banu Mu`awiyah. He entered the mosque and prayed two rak`ahs and we prayed with him. He prayed to his Lord for a long time, then he turned to us and he said, "I asked my Lord for three things. He granted me two but He declined one. I asked my Lord not to let my Ummah be destroyed by famine. He granted me that. I asked Him not to let my Ummah be destroyed by flood. He granted me that. I asked Him not to let my people fight each other. He declined this request" (Reported by Muslim).

The commentators of this Hadith say that this means that Allah will protect the Ummah on the whole from natural disasters and He will not punish them as He punished previous communities, but as far as internal strife is concerned, they have to guard themselves from it.

In order to promote unity in diversity we need to achieve the followings:

1. Other cultures and religions should not be misrepresented. Educational institutions and media outlets should be held responsible not to propagate or perpetuate hate against any group of people and their recognized faiths and values.

2. Tolerance must be practiced on all levels: individual, groups and

states. It should be a political and legal requirement. Tolerance is the responsibility that upholds human rights, pluralism (including cultural pluralism), democracy and the rule of law.

3. There are several levels of tolerance. But I want to emphasize two levels here in:

i. Tolerance between the members of the same community and same religion. As we are aware people of the same religion have differences of interpretation and understanding. Although they have common sources, common principles but they do vary in their interpretation due to various reasons. Here we need inter-community dialogues and building of relations to minimize contradictions and inconsistencies in our thinking or behavior.

ii. Tolerance between the people of different faiths and cultures. Here we need interfaith relations and dialogues. Of course we have core differences in our religions but we must try to understand each other. As we learn about our own faith traditions and communities, we should also learn about others. Someone rightly said, "Understanding others changes us." By understanding we learn the areas of commonalities as well as differences. We can learn the nature of differences and the extent of differences. We must look what kind of dialogues could be of value, and what issues are most in need of respectful dialogue in these times. What concerns for the well-being of others should drive our efforts to reach common ground for action. Each group must encourage and facilitate shared responsibility to create a more sensitive and welcoming environment for our diverse groups.

Prophet (Peace be upon him) Said: "No one of you is a believer until he desires for others what he desires for himself". Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "You shall not enter Paradise until you have faith, and you shall not attain faith until you love each other. Should I tell you something that if you do, you shall love each other? Spread salam among you" (Reported by Muslim).

Let us all work together to achieve unity among us and let us pray to Allah to bless us in this effort. Ameen.

The Federation of Islamic Associations
of New Zealand (Inc.)



اتحاد الجمعيات الإسلامية النيوزيلندية

To : Secretary, Local Associations, Local Islamic Trusts
From : FIANZ Hilal Committee
Subject : **Start of Muharram 1432H**
Date : 08 December 2010 / 01 Muharram 1432H

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Islam,

Assalaam Alaikum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa Barakatoh.

The Hilal Committee would like to inform you that the month of Muharram 1432H started today.

Another year has passed by us. We should be critical of our achievements and praise Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala for the good outcomes and supplicate to Him for forgiveness for all the shortcoming in our live.

Let us pray to Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala that the coming year will bring us towards performing more righteous deeds, bless us with good health, peace, happiness and prosperity for all of us.

Jazakallaho Khair and Wassalam.

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New Zealand competes in International Qur'an Competition for Southeast Asia



New Zealand sent its inaugural team to participate in the International Qur'an Competition for Southeast Asia held in Jakarta, 2-4 October 2010. The event was organised by the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs with the support of the Embassy of Saudi Arabia.

Young kiwi Qur'an reciters Ibrahim Sameer El-Matari from Wellington and Hamid Azimi from Auckland represented New Zealand and were accompanied by Sheikh Mohammad Amir, Imam at the Wellington Mosque and the chairman of the Religious Advisory Board of The Federation of Islamic Associations of New Zealand. These two participants were



selected based on their high achievement in the annual national Quran competition held by the Federation.

Qur'an competition involves recitation from memory of the Holy Qur'an, with competitors judged for the accuracy, technical proficiency, beauty and eloquence of their narration.

"New Zealand has a diverse and vibrant Muslim community. It's fantastic to see our country represented in regional Qur'an competition, which also provides an excellent way for young New Zealanders to meet their peers from across the region," New Zealand Ambassador to Indonesia David Taylor said.

OIC welcomes idea of recognition of independent Palestine

OIC Secretary General Ekmeleddin Ehsanoglu in a media statement on Tuesday, said this is an important development, in support of the national rights of the Palestinians.

He expressed hope that other countries will also join Brazil and Argentina and recognize a free and independent state of Palestine.

Argentine Foreign Minister Hector Timerman said earlier, reading a letter sent by President Cristina Kirchner to Mahmoud Abbas, that the move reflected a general consensus among members of Mercosur, the South American trading bloc. Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay are the members of Mercosur.

Elsewhere, Uruguayan deputy Foreign Minister Roberto Conde said "Uruguay will surely follow the same path as Argentina in 2011." "We are working toward opening a diplomatic representation in Palestine, most likely in Ramallah."

OIC seeks reconciliation between Muslims and West

JEDDAH: The Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) has emphasized the importance of cultural and interfaith dialogue to promote world peace and stability, and said it was seeking a historic reconciliation between the Muslim world and the West.

"The OIC reflects the true and real image of Islam, based on tolerance, peace, pluralism and acknowledgement of diversity. It advocates dialogue with other faiths and civilizations," said Abdul Rauf Bin Rajab, spokesman for the 57-member organization. He said Islamophobia has evoked global concern because of its negative impact on world peace and security. He also disclosed the OIC's plan to hold a seminar in Warsaw on Dec. 8-10 to discuss the situation of Muslim communities in Central and Eastern Europe.

Bin Rajab refuted press comments attributed to the OIC secretary-general in Fars News Agency that the West has hatched plots to spread Islamophobia in a bid to block growing conversions to Islam. "The agency's report is inaccurate and misleading."

He said the issue required joint international efforts. The increasing manifestations of Islamophobia in the West shows inadequate knowledge about nations and cultures, he said, while emphasizing the need for forging a new relationship and understanding through respect for cultural diversity.