



A Ramadan message from the President

## RAMADAN A TIME TO REFLECT

*In the tradition of our blessed prophet I begin in the name of God, the Compassionate and Merciful, and praise Him. God is the sole Creator of our world and of all worlds large and small. May God's blessings and peace be upon His Messenger, Muhammad, and upon the great Messengers before him.*



Assalamu alaikum – Greetings of peace.

Strange as it may sound for what is essentially a simple religion, I meet Muslims quite often who tell me they are confused about living their Islamic faith. Sometimes they spell this confusion out for me themselves, and sometimes the confusion comes through when we begin to talk.

We have been watching our most beloved, Muhammad the Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace, being made the subject of ridicule, and worse. How someone as important as the Pope – whatever the motive – vilified him and how caricatures smeared him. These were false charges and lies that hurt us deeply.

It is difficult to take it all in sometimes. We can let our emotions get the better of us, and some of us do, much to the media's delight it seems. The world has been seeing a range of images, of an Islam where followers display a consistent pattern of behaviour: boiling rage and vengeful hate, screaming slogans and burning symbols.

In my honest judgment, displaying such anger is the easiest of responses. It is the costliest of responses too, if we but understand properly the role, the crucial role, that we as a faith society must play in our part of the world, today. Fostering a perception of Islam that is a false Islam is simply too high a price.

The welcome news is that the month of Ramadan has arrived. A period in time that brings us much needed respite from our emotions and anger. Teaching us restraint, discipline and self control. Recharging our spiritual batteries as we strengthen our personal relationship with Allah. A collection of personal moments and thoughts all of which I pray bring a sense of order to any confusion in our minds. Let us make Ramadan a time to reflect.

Let us see any false charges as a test of our faith. Our country needs men and women to stand firm on God's Final Revelation and the Sunnah of His Messenger. And what was this Sunnah the world saw? Boiling rage and screaming slogans?? They saw love and kindness in the face of mockery and contempt; they saw love and kindness in a cruelly unfair world. Even after the immense physical and verbal assaults in Mecca and Taif, in the depths of despair, Muhammad would always respond with love, concern and hope. Muhammad, may God bless him and grant him peace. "If you love me, follow me," he said.

Yes it's a simple religion, but there is some small print too: the way forward has no shortcuts. There is much work to be done, but I believe that done together and with the right intentions, we can also achieve much. We must be genuine in our service to humanity, caring for, sharing with and helping all of our neighbours. This month, remember every person around you in your prayers. That is the Sunnah of the Messenger. That is living your Islamic faith.

I wish everyone a beautiful Ramadan.

Yours in prayer,

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