

## LIVING THE NOBLE QUR'AN Ramadan Lessons 2008

We in central New Jersey have been honored with the annual arrival of our sage and scholar from India Shaykh Yusuf Islahi, may Allah preserve him, during the blessed month of Ramadan. Shaykh Islahi has a tradition of delivering nightly lectures during Ramadan that are highly beneficial and inspiring, full of profound insight and reflections gathered over a lifetime of scholarship and devotion. Though they are recorded every year, their reach has been limited due to their being in the Urdu language.

The need has long been felt to present his lessons to the English-speaking public in a serialized format. As a humble student of Islam, and someone who has known the Shaykh personally for a long period of time, I have resolved to undertake this difficult yet important task.

It should be noted that these are oral addresses, and transcribing such into a written format is no easy task. This is confounded by the difficulty of converting one language to another, which carries its own complexities. Finally, there is the difficulty, or rather, impossibility, of preserving the social interaction, the mannerisms, the humor, the aura of the moment, from these delightful sessions. I have thus been forced to take the liberty of modifying passages, rearranging sections, adding footnotes and references and placing section headings where appropriate. Therefore this is my personal rendering of Shaykh Islahi's talks into my own language. Any mistakes, of which there are sure to be many, would be solely mine and not ascribed to the Shaykh.

### DAY 1: ENGROSS YOURSELF IN THE QUR'AN

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Shaykh Yusuf Islahi  
MCMC Ramadan Lessons  
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One day, a man was fervently supplicating in the Prophet's Masjid, "O Allah, make me among those who are your select few." Umar ibn al-Khattab, who was the Khalifah at the time, happened to overhear him and reproached him for making a supplication from the Qur'an and Sunnah. The man, who happened to be a Companion also, replied to Umar, "You should read the Qur'an O Umar. Haven't you read the verse, *And few indeed are those who are thankful.*" I recalled this narration seeing the scattered few gathered before me in this masjid for the first address, and felt it to be a sufficient starting point.

Let me remind you that this is the month of the Noble Qur'an. Ramadan is the month in which the Qur'an was revealed. We should read it, but remember that any book is not considered to be read unless we understand it. We should read the Qur'an in the same spirit we would read a very special and personal letter from a very special person. Indeed it is a very special message from a very special Being.

Remember that the Noble Qur'an has four rights upon us: reciting it, understanding it, implementing it and propagating it. Anything less than that would not be giving the Qur'an what it deserves.

There is a beautiful Hadith Qudsi, where the Prophet informed us that Allah the Exalted says, "Whoever from my servants is engrossed in my Book, to the point that he does not find time to supplicate to me for his needs, I will give him more than I would give a person that calls upon me with his needs." So realize that engrossing yourself with the Qur'an (which means to study and ponder over it) will fulfill your needs without your asking for them.

The fasting of Ramadan is essentially training to make us into people of the Qur'an, those connected with it and those who live the Qur'an. There are two basic ways that fasting trains us:

1. It develops our belief in Allah with a certainty that no other type of worship can nurture, for one abstains from food and drink for an entire day with the realization that he/she is doing it for Allah and that Allah is watching.
2. No human being is complete in his humanity unless he has concern for his fellow man, and the hunger and thirst of fasting in a very concrete way connects us with our fellow human beings who are less fortunate than us.

The rights of human beings are so great, that Allah will become their spokesman on the Day of Judgement. He will call upon a person and demand, "I was hungry and you didn't feed me, thirsty and you didn't provide me water, naked and you didn't clothe me." The person will ask, "O Allah how can that be so?" Allah will reply, "Didn't such and such person come to you and you turned him away?"

Abu Hurayra narrates from the Prophet that Allah informs us that every deed of a human being will be rewarded 10 to 700 times over, "save fasting, for that is exclusively for me (Allah) and I will reward it as I please."<sup>1</sup> According to some commentators, Allah means that the reward for fasting is Himself, meaning that those who fast will get their Lord, and can there be any honor greater than that?

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<sup>1</sup> Bukhari, Muslim.