

Glad Tidings and Warnings

(An extract from a sermon delivered on the occasion of Eid ul Fitr by His Late Eminence Maulana Muhammad Abdul Aleem Siddiqi (R.A.) at the Jama Masjid, Port of Spain, Trinidad, in 1950)

Maulana Abdul Aleem Siddiqui visit to Trinidad in 1950 accompanied by his student and secretary, Dr. Muhammad Fazlur Rahman Ansari al-Qadiri, lasted for six months as part of his world tour. The presence of His Eminence for such a sustained and intensive period had a profound impact on Islam in the West Indies and indeed it created a generation of highly skilled Muslim Theologians, Imams, leaders and intellectuals most of whom became the spiritual disciples (*murideen*) of His Eminence.

The work of World Islamic Mission (WIM) in Trinidad began with the arrival of His Eminence Maulana Shah Abdul Aleem Siddiqui al-Qadiri at the opening of the *Intercolonial Muslim Conference*, held at the Jama Masjid Hall, Queens Street, Port of Spain in 1950.

His Eminence visited neighboring countries in the region including Guyana (then British Guiana), Suriname, Barbados, etc. The idea of the conference came from His Eminence himself and it gave birth to the Inter-colonial Muslim Organization

The welcome function for His Eminence was held at Queen's Park Savannah on Sun. March 12th 1950. Many thousands attended – Muslims and non-Muslims. In the audience there were government representatives and members of the diplomatic corp. At this event a soul stirring recitation of al-Qur'an was rendered by Br. Ali Bin Khamis of Zanzibar who then became a regular at His Eminence's gatherings. Another regular was Br. Jameel Bin Ahmed of Malay (now Malaysia). Both were students at the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture at St. Augustine (now part of the University of West Indies). After graduating they returned to their respective countries and both became highly acclaimed leaders.

Throughout his stay in Trinidad, and through tireless effort and dedication, Islamic propagation was always at the foremost priority and to the Muslim masses His Eminence expounded on the principles of the Ahl Sunna wal Jamaah. In particular, His Eminence Maulana Shah Abdul Aleem Siddiqui RA made a significant contribution to Islam in the following areas:

1. Hundreds of non-Muslims embraced Islam. Prominent amongst them were Haji Yusuf Mitchell, Ahmed Rifae Scope, Abu Bakr (a humble shoemaker of Santa Cruz) and Sr. Muriel Donawa Mc Davidson.
2. His Eminence's lectures captivated Muslims, Christians, and Hindus who paid glowing tributes to him as the "Roving Ambassador of Peace".
3. His regular dars (Islamic classes) at Jama Masjid Hall, Port of Spain, produced some of the leading thinkers in the Muslim community.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Subhan Allahi Wal Hamdul Lil-Ilahi Wa La Ilaha Illallah Wa Allahu Akbar

All thanks belong to Allah and all praise belong to Allah and there is no deity except Allah and Allah is greater; than all that we ascribe to Him.

My Friends, here let me give you an important warning. Beware! You have earned a spiritual treasure during Ramadhan. Take care! Just as thieves of material riches are always planning to rob people, similarly the baser self and the devil are the thieves who are always on the look-out for stealing the spiritual assets. Today is the day of Eid. You are amid well-earned rejoicing moments after this spiritual month. The doors of Allah's unbounded Mercy are wide open. The breeze of divine forgiveness is blowing. But beware of Satan's mischief!

The wineshops and gambling houses are also open. The immoral attractions of the cinema are also there. The half-naked physical attractions are out on the roads with their immoral enhancements. Be on your guard! Save the delicate glass of faith and piety from the deceptive attacks of evil! Protect the labour you have made during the days and nights of Ramadan. Do not forget the lesson of your spiritual struggle, during which you abstained from the indulgence of lawful animal appetites out of respect for fasting, during the day and sacrificed your sleep and comfort, for prayer, during the nights and that with one definite aim, namely, to earn Divine Pleasure.

Do not forget the lesson that you must abstain, now more than ever before, from unlawful things, in fact, from everything which has the slightest touch of evil in it. You offered more than the daily obligatory prayers during Ramadan. Let you not forget Allah now. By means of Zakaat and Sadaqat ul Fitr you have been taught the lesson that others too have a share in your material possessions and that your wealth is not meant only for your self-seeking, as the Holy Quran says

"And in their wealth and possessions is the prescribed right of him who asks and him who (for some reason) is prevented (from asking)". (Al Quran, 51:19)

The wealth which Allah has given you is not to be spent on pleasure – seeking and luxuries. Rather, it is a trust from Allah, and you are its trustee. If you are a true Believer, and if you have sold your life and wealth to Allah, then remember, you are not entitled to consider yourself the actual owner of your wealth. You can spend on yourself and your dependents only to the extent and in the way of that Allah has permitted. The rest you must spend in the way of Allah on Allah's creatures

O you who live in palatial buildings and luxurious homes, who rest on soft beds and fashionable couches, who move in costly motor cars. Think for a while of those unfortunate brothers and sisters also, who are unable to get either a simple meal or a full coverage for the body.

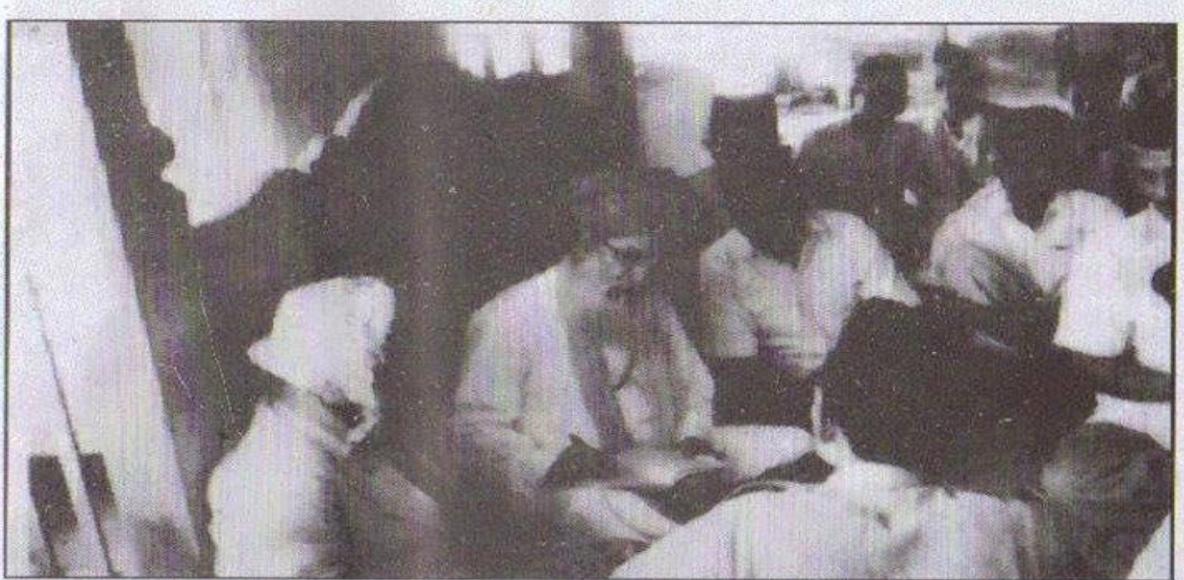
O you who dress in fashionable clothes and who decorate the dead earth of your houses with all sorts of vanities! Remember? Your dress and your luxuries will not bring you honour while the rising generations of your community are totally deprived of that education which alone can make them

honourable in this world as well as in the Hereafter. You will be regarded truly honourable only when your community as a whole will be honourable, and it will be honourable only when it possesses Faith, Knowledge, and Religious action.

I have delivered my message and given the danger signals. There are some unwise and unthinking people who are entangling Muslims in petty issues and want to take full advantage of the situation for thrusting their unwarranted innovations which transform Halaal into Haraam and Haraam into Halaal. They are out to establish a new church in the name of Islam. They seem to feel that they can mislead the ignorant and simple-minded Muslims. A division among Muslims has already been created.

I wish those who take pride in dividing the ranks of Islam based on petty issues, could stop to think that such an act means practically greater enmity to Islam than all the external attacks put together. They never consider that the flood of irreligion and atheism is advancing in the world with all its fury. The wind of immorality is blowing with its full force and burning the moral life of humanity. Instances of apostasy from Islam are no more unknown to us. Moral vices are increasing at rapid paces. Ignorance of the beauties of Islam is becoming more and more widespread every day. The very foundations of religious outlook are under fire over the world.

Where are you, my dear friends! And what are you thinking? When will you wake up? For God's sake realize the gravity of the situation! Take care of your religion, because on this alone depends your honour, prestige and progress as a community. May Allah give you all eyes to see and wisdom to think. Hold fast to the cable of Faith. Stick firmly to the creed of the Ahle Sunnah wal Jammah which has been followed by the overwhelming majority of Muslims from the time of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) down to the present day. Stand by this creed, live it and die upon it. I pray for you. May Allah accept my prayer. Ameen.



Maulana Muhammad Aleem Siddiqui with his disciples at GIANA (S.A.) in 1951