

**The Eid message by imam Sifet Omerovic,
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Muslims around the world, and indeed here in Australia today celebrate Eid al-Fitr, the end of Ramadan fast. It is a festival of spiritual accomplishment and victory of spirit, piety, kindness, compassion and humility over bodily desires, temptations, ignorance and apathy. Ramadan fast in the name of Almighty Allah demonstrated patience and self-control.

It also gave us opportunity for purification of our body and soul, cleansing of thoughts by remembrance of Allah through Qur'an recitation and prayers. It is fair to say that Muslims should have come out of Ramadan replenished both physically and spiritually.

One of the most important qualities that Ramadan fast put to test was our patience. Therefore Ramadan was instrumental in assisting us to endure all kinds of trials and tribulations we face in this world with fortitude. Ramadan also helped us build a strong character.

In addition, when it comes to our social life, financial component of Ramadan we fulfilled by way of offering zakat, sadaqat al-fitr and other forms of charity towards those in dire need. We thus demonstrated our willingness to share our wealth and comfort with those who are less fortunate and in need of our assistance either in food, shelter or other necessities.

Ramadan also helped us to be more forgiving and gracious towards our fellow humans and to adhere to noble conduct in our relations with each other. In other words, Ramadan was a unique chance for our moral and spiritual reform. Ramadan taught us to engage only in good behavior according to what Qur'an teaches us:

"Do good deed in return for bad deed; then you will see that one who was once your enemy has become your dearest friend." (Qur'an 41:34).

On this noble day of Eid we are saddened by the fact what is occurring around the world in terms of conflict, misery, destruction, forced migration and other calamities, mainly caused by human behavior, either by greedy corporations, state aggression and rivalry, intra-Muslim conflict, and indeed by terrorism which has become a common occurrence in western Europe and the Middle east in particular. As Muslims we ought to make a clear stand in relation to these events.

Numerous terrorist attacks both in Europe and the Middle East that kill large number of innocent people also affect our Islamic community. We cannot do anything to stop it, but we can raise our voice in condemnation of this corrupted and criminal behavior of people who hide behind the façade of Islam. These attacks also poison and damage relations between Muslims and non-Muslims and put many obstacles on our joint road and our common destiny. Unless this kind of behavior is clearly understood and its causes fully grasped, in order to be stopped, or at least mitigated, it will be hard for our contemporary human civilization to function and even survive.

We unequivocally condemn acts of terrorism no matter who commit them and where they come from. We particularly condemn terrorism committed, allegedly, in the name of Islam. Our condemnation alone, however, will not solve the problem of “terrorism in the name of Islam”. These heinous crimes have already tainted peaceful nature of our religion and somewhat provided justification to extremists engaged in islamophobic behavior. We could see this in recent attacks on Muslims in Great Britain. We can see how this affects Muslim communities across Europe.

Instead of harnessing our common life in harmony and cohesion, mutual trust and understanding, the trend of increased suspicions and mistrust and even inter-religious and intra religious hatred is on the increase across the globe.

Rational thinking and compassion, which should be used to shape our societies, is being replaced with our negative perceptions of each other. Terror attacks, no matter whether they occurred in London, Paris, Istanbul, Baghdad, Melbourne or Sydney, come from same ideological mindset. They are committed by hopeless, disillusioned, indoctrinated and misguided people who are led astray by ideologues who manipulate Islam for political agendas, for power, wealth and control.

It is our duty, especially as scholars of Islam but also as community leaders to regain the ownership of interpretation of Islam from the minority of extremists who hijacked Islam for their own evil aims and destructive purposes of spreading hatred and fear and for fomenting distrust among people of different creeds and lifestyles

so they can exploit them for their own agendas. This requires concerted effort of all strata of society working together for the common good.

It is also important for our brothers and sisters, the citizens of western countries, particularly those powerful western countries and former colonial powers, to understand that their intrusion and aggression of Muslim countries causes millions to lose their homes and livelihoods in forced migration due to destructive wars, so they then flee their homes and seek asylum in the more stable and orderly western world.

It is very clearly stated in the Holy Qur'an "one who kills innocent human being equals killing the entire world and one that saves a human life is on the same pedestal as if he saved the entire mankind".

I hope and pray that this Eid will bring more peace and tranquility and better mutual understanding and trust among people of different religions and creeds, colors and lifestyles. Let us therefore celebrate it together Muslims and Christians, Jews and Hindus, Buddhists and those who belong to different value systems. We are all citizens of this country, Australia, which I see as a prosperous island of peace and tranquility in the volatile and raptured world. May God help us preserve our peace, social cohesion and our common destiny.

I wish you all a Happy and Peaceful Eid.