

## Looting and Arson

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*As-salámu ‘alaikum wa rahmatul láhi wa barakátuh!”*

*“A-úthu billáhi minash shaytánir rajeem. Bismilláhir rahmánir raheem.*

*Al hamdu lillahi nahmaduhu wanasta’eenahu, wanastagh-firuhu, wanatoobu ilayhi, wana’oothu Billaahi min shuroori an-fusinaa, wamin sayyi aati a’maalinaa.*

*May- Yahdillahu fa huwal muhtad, wa may- yudlill falan tajidaa lahu waliyan murshida. Wa ash-hadu an Laa ilaaha ill-Alláh, wahdahoo laa shareeka lah, wa ash-hadu anna Muhammadan ‘abduhoo warasooluh”*

**In the Name of Allah, Most Merciful, Most Compassionate.**

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Following the atrocious incidents and horrific scenes of looting, arson and chaos we have witnessed in our neighbourhoods over the past weeks, examples of courage, unity and generosity have surfaced and despite the unnecessary wreckage inflicted upon many, these terrible events have been able to bring about feelings of inspiration, tolerance and wisdom.

Allah (SWT) in the Quran says;

***“Be sure We shall test you with something of fear and hunger, some loss in goods or lives or the fruits of your hard work, but give glad tidings to those who patiently persevere”.***

From this we understand that we need to remain calm and collective at times of tragedy, calamities can strike at any given moment and we must not fall weak to our lower nafs and retaliate with anger, hatred and rage. During the frightful events that hit our communities that spread viciously across the UK, we have seen some inspirational Muslims who were able to follow the teachings of the Qur’an and respond to the unjust attacks with composed strength. These people have been able to represent Islam in the light that our Prophet Muhammad (SAW) would have wanted.

You may have all heard about the admirable pleading of a grieving father Tariq Jahan who lost his son during the spread of criminal activity in Birmingham. He stood up in front of the crowd and the press and defused a very serious racial conflict which was emerging in response to the killing of his son and two other Muslims as a car (which is rumoured to be driven by black youth), was deliberately driven over them. Tariq Jahan said;

**“Blacks, Asians, whites — we all live in the same community. Why do we have to kill one another? Why are we doing this? I’ve just lost my son. Step forward if you want to lose your sons. Otherwise, calm down and go home — please!”**

Rage and revenge between black and Asian communities were at an all time high however the noble and commendable words of this brave man extinguished the looming heat which would have lead way for more unjust and unacceptable behaviour.

Not only were the actions of Tariq Jahan following the prophetic sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (SAW), but his heartfelt plea was also able to soften the hearts of many people who previously held feelings of animosity and hatred toward Muslims. Whilst thousands of people sent emails and wrote letters in response to Tariq Jahan's inspirational actions, one of the most surprising responses reported in the UK Sunday Times Newspaper (14th August 2011) was that the racist English Defence League (EDL)'s leader was so moved by what he had seen that he asked all members of the EDL to hold a minutes silence as a gesture of respect. SubhanAllah! This is a group of people who cannot tolerate Muslims and core purpose is to demolish Islam. This is the power of Allah, the Most Great, and the Most Just. It is only He who has the power to get between man and heart. Your enemy today can become your beloved brother or sister in faith tomorrow and we should never give up faith in people and most certainly not in Allah (SWT). At such times we remind ourselves of this verse given in Sura Al 'Imran 3:103:

**“Wa'tasimu bi hablil laahi jamee-aah...”**

***“And hold fast, And hold fast, all together, by the rope which Allah (stretches out for you), and be not divided among yourselves; and remember with gratitude Allah's favour on you; for ye were enemies and He joined your hearts in love, so that by His Grace, ye became brethren; and ye were on the brink of the pit of Fire, and He saved you from it. Thus doth Allah make His Signs clear to you: That ye may be guided.”***

Let's pray that the pain, heartbreak, loss of property and unnecessary violence that has been inflicted upon us, our neighbours and our brothers and sisters if not in religion in humanity, will be the key to unlock the hearts of intolerant and bitter people. That it will provide a beacon of light for a more tolerant and unified society and a gateway for peaceful coexistence.