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[SIRENS WAILING]

[CARS PASSING]
[SIRENS WAILING]

[CAR ALARM SOUNDING]
[HAMMER POUNDING]

(MALE NARRATOR)
ON A BRISK SUNDAY MORNING, MEMBERS OF THE DIVERSE MUSLIM COMMUNITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA GATHER TO TAKE PART IN AN UNPRECEDENTED EVENT DURING THEIR HOLY MONTH OF RAMADAN.

[CROWD CHATTERING]

(MALE)
EVERYBODY MUST SIGN IN, INCLUDING KIDS!

STAY WITH YOUR TEAM LEADERS, FOUR TEAMS, IN 5 MINUTES IN THE MIDDLE OF THE STREET!

THAT'S ALL FOR NOW!

LET'S SAY TEN WALK-INS COME IN. WE CAN PUT THEM IN [INAUDIBLE].
YEAH, WE HAVE PRIORITY, BUT THAT'S WHY YOU NEED TO LET US KNOW.

(MALE)
HOW MANY PEOPLE HAVE SHOWED UP?
YEAH, THAT WAY WE KNOW THAT--

(NARRATOR)
THEY CLOSE AND TAKE OVER A MAJOR STREET, UNLOADING HUNDREDS OF BOXES IN PREPARATION FOR THE TASK AT HAND.

(MALE)
THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS TO HAVE A STRONG PRESENCE.

(NARRATOR)
THEIR MISSION: A FULFILLMENT OF ONE OF THE PILLARS OF ISLAM.

(MALE)
SALAM ALAIKUM! SALAM ALAIKUM! SALAM ALAIKUM! RAMADAN MUBARAK!
OKAY, I NEED EVERYBODY'S ATTENTION! NO TALKING; NO TALKING! LISTENING!
I NEED EVERYBODY'S ATTENTION! OKAY, WHAT WE WANT TO BE ABLE TO DO IS MAKE SURE THAT WE RUN THIS OPERATION VERY SMOOTHLY. SECURITY WILL BE ASSIGNED TO EACH BOOTH. BROTHER AHMED MOHAMMED WILL BE WORKING WITH THE VOLUNTEERS TO ASSIGN THE SECURITY. INSHALLAH, WE WILL HAVE A SUCCESSFUL DAY. WE ALL WILL WORK TOGETHER. ALLAH HAS ALREADY PROMISED US THE VICTORY.

ROVERS?
CANVASSERS?
OKAY, YOU GOT YOUR TEAM?
WHO'LL TALK WITH YOU?

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(NARRATOR)

THESE MUSLIMS HAVE TRAVELED WITH SUPPLIES, FOOD AND MEDICINE, FROM SAN DIEGO, ORANGE COUNTY, BURBANK, AND EVEN THE BAY AREA, TO HELP THE HOMELESS COMMUNITY IN DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES.

I WOULD NOT STACK ONLY IN FRONT. I WOULD STACK MORE BACK HERE.

(IMAM SADULLAH KHAN)

WE KNOW IN ISLAM THAT THERE ARE FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM, AND ONE OF THE PILLARS OF ISLAM IS ZAKA. AND THIS DEALS WITH THE PURSUANCE OF THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC WELFARE OF THOSE WHO ARE IN NEED IN OUR SOCIETY. IT'S NOT ONLY A PART OF ISLAM, BUT AN INTEGRAL PART TO THE EXTENT THAT IT'S A PILLAR, A FUNDAMENTAL FOUNDATION OF ISLAM. AND IF THIS IS REMOVED, THE ESSENCE OF ISLAM, OR THE FOUNDATION OF ISLAM, IS DEAD.

[CROWD CHATTERING]

(IMAM SADIQ SAFIR)

THIS IS THE MONTH OF RAMADAN, AND THIS MONTH, IT IS A MONTH ALSO OF PHILANTHROPY. AND I THINK THAT WHEN YOU UNDERSTAND THIS RELIGION, THE RELIGION OF ISLAM, ONE OF THE MAIN THINGS IS LOVE. YOU SHOULD LOVE FOR OTHERS WHAT YOU WANT FOR YOURSELF.

(FEMALE)

OKAY, YOU GUYS READY FOR SOME MORE?

I WANT MORE OF THOSE T-SHIRT BOXES DOWN OVER HERE, PLEASE, AND THE SOCKS. AND I'M NOT KIDDING.

(IMAM SAYED MOUSTAFA AL-QAZWINI)

IN ISLAM WE HAVE TWO DIFFERENT TYPES OF CHARITIES. ONE IS CALLED "THE ALMSGIVING," WHICH IS MANDATORY, REPRESENTED IN THE ZAKA'T AND THE KHOMES, MEANING THAT WHEN YOU HAVE AN INCOME, YOU HAVE TO PAY A PORTION OF IT. IT HAS TO GO BACK TO THE COMMUNITY, TO THE NEEDY, TO SECURE THEM FINANCIALLY, FOR THEIR WELFARE. AND THE OTHER TYPE IS THE VOLUNTARY CHARITY, WHICH IS REPRESENTED IN WHAT WE CALL "SADAQA," OR, "THE CHARITY." AND THE KORAN, THE HOLY PROPHET, THEY STRESS THE SIGNIFICANCE AND THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SECOND ONE: THE CHARITY, THE SADAQA.

(FEMALE)

SO IT SAYS, "CODE OF BEHAVIOR FOR THE DAY: HAVE PURE INTENTIONS, SMILE, SMILE, SMILE. TREAT ALL RECIPIENTS WITH RESPECT AND DIGNITY."

(IMAM SADULLAH KHAN)

THE IDEA IS, FIRST OF ALL, TO GIVE WHAT IS NEEDED, TO GIVE AT THE TIME OF NEED, AND THEN TO GIVE WHAT YOU, YOURSELF, WOULD RECEIVE. DON'T GIVE WHAT YOU, YOURSELF, WOULD NOT EAT OR WOULD NOT WEAR. MANY PEOPLE HAVE THIS NOTION, "WHATEVER I CANNOT WEAR THAT'S TORN AND BROKEN, NOBODY WILL WEAR IT, SO I'LL GIVE IT TO THE POOR." THAT'S NOT GIVING AT ALL. THE FOURTH POINT IS NOT TO BELITTLE THE ONE WHOM YOU'RE GIVING BY REMINDING THEM OF YOUR GENEROSITY. DON'T Demean THEM BY REMINDING THEM OF WHAT YOU HAVE DONE FOR THEM. AND ALSO THE CONTEXT IN WHICH WE GIVE. SOMETIMES WE SHOULD GIVE IN A MANNER THAT MAYBE PRIVATE IS BETTER. SOMETIMES PUBLIC COULD BE GOOD EVEN IN HANDS OF THE PEOPLE TO DO SO. SOMETIMES THE IDEA OF ANONYMITY IS A GOOD THING AS WELL, BECAUSE FIRST OF ALL, THE RECIPIENT DOES NOT KNOW WHO GAVE, AND THE ONE WHO GAVE DOES NOT NECESSARILY KNOW WHO IT WENT TO IN PARTICULAR. SO YOU DID YOUR DUTY, IT GOES TO THE NEEDY, AND THE PERSON IS THANKFUL TO THE CREATOR

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THAT SOMEONE HAS PROVIDED FOR THEM.

(IMAM SADULLAH KHAN)

THE PROPHET ALAIHI AL SALAT WA SALAM PRAYED FOR SOMETHING, AND HE SAID,
[SPEAKING IN ARABIC]

TO ALLAH, "LET ME LIVE AMONG THE POOR AND THE DOWNTRODDEN, LET ME DIE
AMONG THEM. ON THE DAY OF JUDGMENT WHEN YOU RAISE ME UP, DON'T RAISE ME
UP AMONG THE PROPHETS OR THE SCHOLARS OR THE RICH, RAISE ME UP AMONG
THE POOR." TODAY WE ARE SERVING THAT COMMUNITY OF THE PROPHET. SO KEEP
THAT IN MIND AND SHARE OUR LOVE, AND LET THE CHARITY FLOW FROM OUR
HEARTS. AND REMEMBER, IT'S NOT WHAT WE GIVE, WHEN WE GIVE OF OURSELVES
AS THE RASUL SAID, WHEN YOU TRULY GIVE.

[URBAN MUSIC PLAYING]

(NARRATOR)

AS THE LINE OF HOMELESS CONTINUES TO GROW, THE MUSLIMS PREPARE FOR THE
GATES TO OPEN.

(MALE)

A COUPLE OF THOUSAND PEOPLE COMING THROUGH...

YOU DON'T SEE THEIR RECEIPTS NOW, BELIEVE ME.

THEY HAVE STRONG SECURITY, THERE'S A LOT OF PEOPLE, JUST DON'T BE
SCARED BECAUSE SOMETIMES THEY CAN RUSH THROUGH.

WE TRY TO KEEP IT IN A SINGLE FILE, IN CASE--IT DIDN'T HAPPEN BEFORE--
IN CASE SOMETHING HAPPENS WHERE THEY JUST COME THROUGH AND THERE'S NO
CONTROL, JUST STEP BACK, OKAY? JUST STEP BACK. JUST LEAVE THE STUFF AND
GO ON, OKAY? IT WON'T HAPPEN, DON'T WORRY, DON'T GET SCARED, BUT JUST
IN CASE.

(IMAM SADIQ SAFIR)

WE STARTED THIS HERE ABOUT 3 YEARS AGO. OUR CONCERN WAS FOR A FORGOTTEN
HUMANITY. THESE PEOPLE ARE OUR FORGOTTEN HUMANITY. OUR CONCERN AT THAT
TIME, IT WAS RIGHT AFTER 9/11, THAT MUSLIMS WERE PERCEIVED TO BE
TERRORISTS. SO THE QUESTION IS: WHAT CAN WE SAY? MY CONCERN WAS WE
CAN'T SAY ANYTHING. WE HAVE TO DO SOMETHING. SO DURING THE MONTH OF
RAMADAN WE FIGURED IT WAS THE BEST TIME FOR US TO DO THIS IN A MASSIVE
WAY, SO PEOPLE CAN PERCEIVE US AS PEOPLE WHO REALLY CARE ABOUT PEOPLE,
RATHER THAN TERRORISTS. AND SO IT IS REALLY SOMETHING THAT WE'RE REALLY
PROUD OF, BECAUSE WE UNITED THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY IN CONJUNCTION WITH
CHRISTIANS AND JEWS. AND THE THING, WHAT HAPPENED IS, WE SEE THE YOUNG
ADULTS WHO'VE COME TO THE FOREFRONT, AND THEY'VE REALLY PARTICIPATED IN
THE WAY OF VOLUNTEERING, THAT HAS REALLY MADE IT EASIER FOR US TO DO.

SO WE CAN'T BE HUMAN BEINGS AND FORGET ABOUT HUMAN BEINGS WHO NEED US.
BECAUSE IF YOU EVER HAD TO SLEEP ON THE STREET AND IT GETS COLD, NO
BLANKETS, NOTHING OVER YOUR HEAD, AND IT STARTS RAINING; THAT'S THE
WORST THING IN THE WORLD.

THAT'S WHAT HURTS US, IS TO SEE PEOPLE LIVE-- THESE PEOPLE LIVE LIKE
THIS.

TEAM LEADERS, WE CAN OPEN UP THE LINE!

(NARRATOR)

HOWEVER, THE CHARITABLE EFFORTS OF THE AMERICAN MUSLIM COMMUNITY FACED
MANY CHALLENGES AFTER 9/11, INCLUDING INVESTIGATION AND SCRUTINY OF

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THEIR ORGANIZATIONS. THIS LEFT MANY QUESTIONING THE FUTURE OF CHARITY WITHIN THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY.

(IMAM SAYED MOUSTAFA AL-QAZWINI)

THE TRAGIC EVENT OF SEPTEMBER 11TH, 2001, AFFECTED, DEEPLY AFFECTED THE MUSLIM COMMUNITIES IN NORTH AMERICA, AND WE WITNESSED SIGNIFICANT DECLINE IN ALMSGIVING AND CHARITY GIVING BY THE MUSLIMS, BECAUSE OF THE FEAR OF BEING PUNISHED AND PROSECUTED BY THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT.

(IMAM SADULLAH KHAN)

THERE WAS MORE APPREHENSION, PEOPLE WERE MORE CONCERNED. THEY WERE ASKING MORE QUESTIONS. YOU KNOW, ARE WE GIVING MONEY, WHERE IS IT GOING TO? AND VERY OFTEN, LIKE MANY MOSQUES ARE INVOLVED IN RAISING FUNDS FOR THEIR OWN MOSQUE AND THEIR OWN ACTIVITIES. BUT THEY MAY GIVE WHEN THERE'S A TSUNAMI, AND SO THE MONEY GOES THERE. AND THEN LATER ON YOU FIND THAT SOMETHING HAPPENED IN INDONESIA OR SOMETHING, THAT SUDDENLY YOU ARE LINKED TO THAT. SO PEOPLE BECOME VERY APPREHENSIVE ABOUT WHO THEY SHOULD GIVE TO, BECAUSE YOU COULD BECOME AN INNOCENT VICTIM. YOU COULD BECOME AN INNOCENT VICTIM. SO THERE HAS BEEN A TREMENDOUS AMOUNT OF CAUTION, RATHER.

(RABBI ARNOLD RACHLIS)

I THINK THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO GENUINELY GIVE TO CAUSES, NOT KNOWING WHERE THE ULTIMATE SOURCE OF THAT MONEY GOES. THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO GIVE TO CAUSES THAT TURN OUT TO BE RADICAL, AND I DO THINK THAT CHARITIES THAT LEAD TO HUMAN DESTRUCTION SHOULD BE SHUT DOWN. I MEAN I REALLY THINK THAT IN THE WORLD, IF ALL OF US GAVE TO TERRORISM, IF WE THOUGHT THAT WAS THE WAY TO SOLVE PROBLEMS, WE WOULD HAVE A MUCH MORE VIOLENT WORLD, AND THE WORLD IS VIOLENT ENOUGH.

(IMAM SADULLAH KHAN)

THE IDEA WAS TO GO AFTER THOSE PEOPLE WHO MAY BE POSSIBLY LINKED IN ANY WAY TO ANY FORMS OF TERROR. UNFORTUNATELY, I THINK MANY OF THE EFFORTS HAVE NOT BORN FRUITS, BECAUSE THEY WERE MOTIVATED BY AN URGENCY, SENSE OF URGENCY, BUT NOT DIRECTED WITH GOOD INFORMATION. AND WE FIND WAR IN IRAQ, WE FIND PRESENCE IN GUANTANAMO; HOW MANY OF THESE HAVE REALLY BEEN THAT LINKED WITH US? HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE STILL SCOT-FREE WHO MAY HAVE BEEN INVOLVED? IF YOU'VE GOT SO MANY PEOPLE WHO ARE BEING HELD, NONE OF THEM REALLY HAVE BEEN PROVEN TO BE DIRECTLY INVOLVED, THEN WE HAVE A SERIOUS PROBLEM THAT WE ARE USING OUR RESOURCES AND HOLDING THE WRONG PEOPLE, MAYBE, PERHAPS.

(MUSLIM MALE PARTICIPANT)

THE PEOPLE ACROSS THE WORLD ARE VERY FRUSTRATED WITH THE FOREIGN POLITICS OF OUR COUNTRY. AND THAT'S SOMETHING THAT NEEDS TO BE MORE BALANCED. BUT MUSLIMS DON'T HATE PEOPLE, IT'S OUR JOB TO CARE FOR PEOPLE.

(MALE)(OFF SCREEN)

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF YOUR COUNTRY, AMERICA?

(HOMELESS LADY WITH CHILD)

IT SUCKS.

(MALE)(OFF SCREEN)

WHY?

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(HOMELESS MALE)

LET ME TELL YOU SOMETHING, MAN. I SPENT 7 YEARS IN THE MARINE CORPS AND THREE TOURS IN VIETNAM. I DON'T EVEN WANT TO HEAR ABOUT OUR COUNTRY, OKAY?

(HOMELESS LADY WITH CHILD)

IT SUCKS. THEY'D RATHER TRY TO TAKE FROM US THAN HELP PROVIDE FOR US. SHE'S OPENING IT, YOU GOTTA WAIT...

(NARRATOR)

GATES OPEN, AND THE EVENT OFFICIALLY BEGINS. FOR MOST OF THE HOMELESS RECIPIENTS, THIS WILL BE THEIR FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH MUSLIMS, AND LIKE MANY AMERICANS, THEY HAVE VERY LITTLE KNOWLEDGE OF THEIR BELIEFS, COMMUNITY AND CULTURE, AND ARE LEFT WITH THE MEMORY OF 9/11 AS THEIR ONLY POINT OF REFERENCE.

(NAIM SHAH)

OUR GOAL WAS TO SEE THIS EVENT NATIONWIDE. AND WE FEEL, AS MUSLIMS, WITH OUR DEPICTION IN THE MEDIA BEING AS TERRORISTS, THAT IF THEY SEE MUSLIMS IN UNITY; SERVING THOSE IN NEED. WHERE OTHERS ARE TURNING AWAY, MUSLIMS ARE TURNING TO THEM, AND AT THE SAME TIME, DOING IT IN UNITY.

(HOMELESS MALE)

ANYBODY WHO TAKES A LITTLE BIT OF THEIR TIME OUT OF THEIR TIME TO COME DOWN HERE AND HELP THESE PEOPLE, I THINK THEY CAN'T BE THAT BAD, YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN?

(NAIM SHAH)

WE'RE ONLY DISTRIBUTING NEW ITEMS, SO I'M NOT SURE IF YOU HAVE SOME USED ITEMS IN YOUR TRUNKS OR WHATEVER, BUT WE'RE ONLY DISTRIBUTING, FOR THIS PARTICULAR EVENT, NEW ITEMS.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH; THANK YOU.

(NARRATOR)

AS RECIPIENTS MOVE THROUGH THE LINE OF GOODS, THEY ARE EAGER TO FIND OUT WHAT THE EVENT HAS TO OFFER.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH; THANK YOU.

WHAT COLOR WOULD YOU LIKE?

I DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY ARE; SPONGES?

NO, THEY'RE PONCHOS.

OH, OH, PONCHOS.

(MUSLIM LADY)

WE'RE PASSING OUT TOWELS, PERSONAL NEEDS, FOOD, TOILETRIES, TO THE NEEDY, FOR THE HOLIDAYS. WHAT WE'RE TRYING TO SERVE THEM IS, AGAIN, THOSE BASIC ITEMS THAT THEY NEED EVERY DAY THAT WE TAKE FOR GRANTED: SOCKS, NEW CLOTHING ITEMS, BLANKETS, FOOD, WATER, HYGIENE KITS, AND HEALTH SCREENING SERVICES SUCH AS HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE TESTS, AND ALSO TESTS FOR HEPATITIS C, AND OTHER AREAS THAT MAY BE IMPORTANT FOR THE HOMELESS.

(FEMALE)

THANKS FOR COMING.

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(MUSLIM LADY)

WE'RE GIVING OUT BLANKETS AND CLOTHING. THAT SEEMS TO BE THE BIG STAPLE ITEM THAT THEY'RE REALLY EXCITED ABOUT, BECAUSE IF YOU LIVE ON THE STREET, IT'S NOT LIKE YOU CAN GO-- YOU HAVE MONEY TO GO TO A DEPARTMENT STORE AND BUY CLOTHING OR BUY BLANKETS. SO THAT IS A REALLY HOT ITEM OUT HERE TODAY. AND THEY DO GET A LITTLE BIT EXCITED, AND WE HAD A COUPLE OF INCIDENTS WHERE PEOPLE WERE COMING A LITTLE TOO CLOSE TO TRY AND GET THINGS, BUT THAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN BECAUSE THEY'VE NOT HAD PEOPLE SHOW THEM LOVE IN THE WAY THAT WE'RE DOING TODAY.

(MALE)

SIR, SIR, SIR, SIR?
DID YOU GET YOUR HAND STAMPED?

(FEMALE)

NO, YOU'RE LYING!
NO, I AM GOING TO GO RIGHT THERE.
WHY YOU THINK YOU GONNA COME RIGHT HERE?
[CROWD GRUMBLING]
[MAN YELLING INDISTINCTLY]

(MALE)

SECURITY IS A PROBLEM DOWNTOWN, BECAUSE WHEN YOU HAVE SUCH AN INFLUX OF PEOPLE FROM VARIOUS PARTS OF THE CITY, FROM TRANSPORT, FROM NEW YORK AND FROM OTHER MAJOR CITIES, AND DEPOSIT THEMSELVES RIGHT DOWNTOWN. FORTUNATELY, WHEN WE FEED THE HOMELESS, WE DON'T HAVE A PROBLEM, BECAUSE WE HAVE ENOUGH MANPOWER FOR THEM TO SEE THAT WE'RE SERIOUS ABOUT PROVIDING THIS SERVICE, BUT WE'RE ALSO SERIOUS ABOUT ORDER.

THE PEOPLE TOLD US LAST WEEK--OR PARDON ME, LAST MONTH--THAT THEY APPRECIATE US BEING HERE, BECAUSE IT GIVES THEM AN OPPORTUNITY TO BE EXPOSED TO SOMETHING DIFFERENT AND GIVE THEM SOME HOPE, BECAUSE WE REFERRED THEM TO SOME OTHER COMMUNITY SERVICES.

GET YOUR BLANKETS, WE'VE GOT YOUR BLANKETS FOR YOU RIGHT HERE.
WE'VE GOT YOUR FOOD AND EVERYTHING.
WE'VE GOT YOU SQUARED AWAY RIGHT HERE.
YOU'RE IN GOOD SHAPE.

(NARRATOR)

AFTER SOME MINOR SECURITY DISTRACTIONS, PEOPLE RESUME THE OBJECTIVE OF THE DAY.

(MALE)

HERE YOU GO.
THANK YOU, HAVE A GOOD DAY.
HEALTH SERVICES IS AT THE VERY END.

(NARRATOR)

DURING THIS TIME THE MUSLIMS HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO ENGAGE AND BE ENGAGED BY THIS COMMUNITY, FOSTERING A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF ONE ANOTHER.

QUE TENGAS UN BUEN DIA, ADIOS, HASTA LUEGO. GRACIAS.

(MUSLIM MALE PARTICIPANT)

I WOULD NEVER HAVE BELIEVED IF SOMEONE TOLD ME THAT THERE WERE THIS

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MANY HOMELESS PEOPLE, PEOPLE LIVING IN TENTS ON THE STREETS LIKE THIS.
IT JUST TOTALLY BLEW MY MIND.

I MEAN I DON'T THINK THAT-- IT WAS A SHOCK, YOU KNOW? SOME OF US COME
FROM QUOTE-UNQUOTE THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES, AND I DON'T KNOW, YOU DON'T
EXPECT IT HERE IN AMERICA. YOU DON'T EXPECT IT AT HOME.

[CANS CLANKING]

GOOD MORNING.

(IMAM SADIQ SAFIR)

WHEN YOU THINK OF MUSLIM NOW, MUSLIM HAS BECOME SYNONYMOUS WITH
TERRORIST, AND ESPECIALLY FROM THE STANDPOINT OF HOW THE MEDIA HAS
REALLY INTELLECTUALLY TERRORIZED MUSLIMS. AND I THINK THE PERCEPTION OF
MOST AMERICANS, THEY HAVE SORT OF A INHERENT FEAR OF MUSLIMS, EVEN
THOUGH THEY KNOW MUSLIMS ARE SOME OF THE MOST OUTSTANDING HUMAN BEINGS,
IN THE SENSE THEY WORK WITH AND THEY LIVE NEXT TO. BUT I THINK THE MAIN
THING HERE IS TO ALSO DEMONSTRATE THAT MUSLIMS ARE REALLY NOT A THREAT
TO AMERICA, THEY ARE REALLY AN ASSET.

(MUSLIM FEMALE)

WELL, I THINK IT REINFORCES THAT WE'RE PEOPLE LIKE EVERYBODY ELSE, AND
THAT YOU CANNOT CONDEMN ONE PERSON OR THE ACTIONS OF A GROUP JUST
BECAUSE THEY MAY BE MUSLIM. ALL PEOPLE DO THINGS GOOD, SOME PEOPLE DO
THINGS THAT ARE BAD, BUT THIS WILL REINFORCE BECAUSE WE'RE NOT GOING TO
STOP WITH JUST TODAY.

(HOMELESS MALE)

YOU SHOULD JUDGE EVERYBODY BY THE CONTENT OF THEIR CHARACTER. YOU DON'T
JUDGE ANYBODY BY RELIGION OR ANYTHING. THAT'S HOW I SEE IT.

(RABBI ARNOLD RACHLIS)

I DON'T EXPECT PEOPLE IN ANY ETHNIC GROUP TO CONSTANTLY HAVE TO DENY
THAT THEY'RE A TERRORIST. I THINK IT'S UNFAIR THAT A MUSLIM-- THE
PRESUMPTION IS YOU'RE A TERRORIST UNLESS YOU SAY YOU'RE NOT A
TERRORIST. SO I UNDERSTAND THIS SENSE OF BEING IDENTIFIED BY THE WORST
ELEMENTS IN ONE'S GROUP RATHER THAN THE NORM IN ONE'S GROUP.

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(FATHER WILL CRIST)

BACK AFTER 9/11, ONE OF THE THINGS THAT WAS VERY REAL IN THIS
PARTICULAR CONGREGATION IS THAT WE DIDN'T KNOW ANY MUSLIMS FOR THE MOST
PART. AND SO PEOPLE HELPED, CALLED AROUND, WE FOUND THE MOSQUE. THEN I
WAS TOLD THAT THE IMAM IS EXPECTING ME AT 1 O'CLOCK ON FRIDAY. AND WHEN
I WENT, I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW THAT THIS WAS THE JUMMAH PRAYERS, WHICH I
NOW KNOW HAPPEN EVERY FRIDAY. AND FROM THAT POINT ON, AFTER JOINING
WITH THE GROUP THERE TO PRAY, I SPENT THE NEXT 6 MONTHS PRAYING ON
FRIDAY WITH THE GROUP. WE WERE ABLE TO ASK EACH OTHER WHAT WAS THE MOST
IMPORTANT PART OF THE FAITH, IF WE HAD TO SUMMARIZE IT. AND SOMEONE
FROM ST. MARY'S ASKED THE QUESTION: "WOULD YOU AGREE WITH US THAT THE
MOST IMPORTANT THING IS "TO LOVE GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART "AND MIND AND
SOUL AND STRENGTH, AND TO LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF?" AND ONE OF
THE PEOPLE FROM THE MOSQUE SAID, "ABSOLUTELY, THAT IS AS GOOD SUMMARY
OF THE KORAN AS ANY WE COULD PUT TOGETHER."

(RABBI ARNOLD RACHLIS)

WE INVITED A GROUP OF FIVE MUSLIMS IN-- VERY DIFFERENT MUSLIMS,

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DIFFERENT AGES, DIFFERENT LEVELS OF RELIGIOSITY--INVITED THEM IN TO TALK ABOUT WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A MUSLIM IN AMERICA AFTER 9/11. AND IT WAS VERY REVEALING, THE COMBINATION OF, "WE DON'T WANT TO BE THE OBJECT OF PREJUDICE. WE'RE AMERICANS. WE CARE ABOUT MUSLIMS ALL OVER THE WORLD, BUT DON'T MISTAKE THAT FOR AN ATTITUDE THAT WE SHARE THINGS WITH THOSE PEOPLE WHO ARE MURDERERS AND EXTREMISTS." THAT RESONATED VERY DEEPLY WITH PEOPLE IN OUR SYNAGOGUE, BECAUSE JEWS HAVE BEEN THE OBJECT OF PREJUDICE THROUGHOUT HISTORY, EVEN IN AMERICA.

(FEMALE)

ME BEING MUSLIM, I'M HAPPY THAT WE'RE OUT HERE, BECAUSE I REALLY DON'T SEE US, YOU KNOW, INTERACTING WITH EVERYONE. WE'RE LIKE TO--WE'RE JUST TO OURSELVES. AND I FEEL LIKE WE SHOULD, YOU KNOW, COME OUT AND SHOW OUR FAITH, YOU KNOW, AS MUSLIMS, ESPECIALLY AT THIS TIME.

WHAT CAN WE, AS PEOPLE, DO TO HELP YOU?

WHAT DO YOU FEEL HELP CAN-- CAN HELP MAKE THINGS CHANGE?

(MALE)

WELL, WE'RE JUST FINDING OUT THE GENDER OF THE RECIPIENT AND THEN THEIR AGE, AND WHAT SERVICES BENEFITED THEM THE MOST TODAY, AND WHAT THEY WOULD LIKE MORE FOR THE FUTURE, YOU KNOW, SINCE SOME OF THE STUFF'S NOT OFFERED TODAY. LIKE SOME OF THE STUFF NEEDED IS LIKE MORE HYGIENE, TOOTHPASTE, RAZORS, LOTIONS AND STUFF LIKE THAT. AND WE ASKED THEM LIKE WHAT-- IS THERE AN AREA OF DIFFICULTY FOR THIS PLACE?

TAKE IT TO THE LORD IN PRAYER.

PRAY FOR US.

SATAN IS BUSY DOWN HERE WITH DRUGS, ALCOHOL, EVERYTHING. SATAN IS BUSY. HE DONE TOOK OVER SKID ROW.

(MUSLIM MALE)

AS MUSLIMS WE BELIEVE IT'S PART OF OUR DUTY, NOT JUST IN RAMADAN, WHICH IS WHEN WE FAST, BUT JUST IN GENERAL, TO FEED PEOPLE WHO HAVE LESS THAN US. AND SO IT'S BASICALLY IRRELEVANT WHETHER WE'RE EATING OR NOT, AS LONG AS WE--THE IDEA IS THAT WE SHARE WHAT WE HAVE.

(NARRATOR)

FOR MUSLIMS, FASTING DURING THE MONTH OF RAMADAN, ANOTHER PILLAR OF ISLAM, PLAYS AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN FULLY UNDERSTANDING THE CONCEPT OF SADAQA.

(FEMALE)

I THINK IT'S REALLY SPECIAL THAT THIS EVENT IS HAPPENING DURING RAMADAN. IT'S THE MOST BLESSED MONTH, AND I THINK THAT THE MUSLIMS LEARN VERY MUCH FROM IT WHEN THEY'RE GIVING OUT FOOD, WHEN THEY'RE FASTING THEMSELVES. AND I THINK THAT IT'S VERY SINCERE, WHAT THEY'RE DOING. AND I'M REALLY HAPPY TO BE A PART OF IT.

(IMAM SAYED MOUSTAFA AL-QAZWINI)

THERE ARE CERTAIN SEASONS WHERE CHARITY GIVING REACHES ITS PEAK. ONE OF THESE SEASONS IS THE MONTH OF RAMADAN, THE WHOLE 29 OR 30 DAYS. THE DAY OF EID, IN FACT, WE HAVE TO PAY EXTRA ZAKA'T, ZAKAT-UL FITR, DURING THE DAY OF EID, AS A GESTURE OF KINDNESS; GOODWILL GESTURE TO THOSE NEEDY AND POOR.

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[CROWD MURMURING]

HA, HA, HA,
HA, HA, HA!

(IMAM SADIQ SAFIR)

THIS IS A MONTH OF PHILANTHROPY, A MONTH OF MAGNANIMITY. A MONTH WHERE YOU REALLY TRY TO CONCERN YOURSELF FOR THE REAL NEEDS OF THE HOMELESS, THE NEEDS OF THOSE WHO ARE DEPRIVED, WHO ARE DESTITUTE. THIS IS INHERENT IN FASTING. THE WEALTHY GET A CHANCE TO EXPERIENCE HARDSHIPS THEY GET A CHANCE TO EXPERIENCE OF BEING DEPRIVED OF CERTAIN THINGS WHEN THEY NORMALLY ARE NOT. AND THOSE WHO ARE POOR, THEY GET A CHANCE TO ABSTAIN DURING THE DAY, BUT IN THE EVENING THEY GET A CHANCE TO EAT ON A CONSISTENT BASIS. THEY GET A CHANCE TO UNDERSTAND SOME OF THE CONSISTENCE OF PROSPERITY.

(FEMALE)

ONE YOUNG GIRL, YOUNGER THAN ANY OF YOU, WHO WENT TO SEE HER GRANDMOTHER-- AND HER GRANDMOTHER DIED AND SHE WAS STUCK HERE. AND SHE DIDN'T EVEN HAVE BUS FARE, SO ALL OF THE SUDDEN SHE WAS OUT ON THE STREET. SO YOU LEARN ALL KINDS OF THINGS, AND THAT'S WHAT WE WANT BECAUSE WE WANT TO SEE IF WE CAN FIND A WAY TO ACTUALLY MAKE SOME CHANGE.

(MUSLIM LADY WITH KIDS)

I MAINLY CAME OUT HERE TODAY TO BRING MY KIDS, BECAUSE I ALWAYS TALK TO THEM ABOUT REALLY HAVING A GOOD LIFE HERE IN AMERICA, AND EVEN THOUGH THAT WE HAVE IT GOOD, THERE'S A LOT OF PEOPLE WHO ARE LESS FORTUNATE THAN US AND WHO LIVE ON THE STREETS AND DON'T HAVE FOOD AND THINGS LIKE THAT. AND I THINK IT'S REAL SPECIAL, ESPECIALLY DURING RAMADAN. THAT THEY SEE THIS AND THEY COME OUT AND THEY GIVE TO CHARITY. AND, YOU KNOW, JUST SEE THAT THERE'S A LOT OF PEOPLE WHO ARE A LOT LESS FORTUNATE THAN WE ARE, AND TRY TO GIVE BACK.

WE'RE BLESSED, PERIOD, THAT'S IT. EVERYTHING THAT WE HAVE IS A BLESSING AND WE CAN'T FORGET THAT. AND WE NEED TO REMEMBER THOSE WHO ARE LESS FORTUNATE. AND EVEN WHEN TIMES ARE HARD, THERE ARE LOTS OF PEOPLE WHO ARE MUCH WORSE OFF THAN WE ARE.

MAKE SURE TO GET YOUR HAND STAMPED.

TAKE YOUR TIME.
YEAH, SHE WASHED MY CAR.
YEAH, THANK YOU.

(MUSLIM MALE)

WE'RE VERY FORTUNATE. WE'RE ACTUALLY THE ONES WHO ARE BEING HONORED BY BEING OUT HERE, AND JUST SMILES ON PEOPLE'S FACES ARE QUITE--THEY'RE UNFORGETTABLE AND THEY'RE VERY MEMORABLE, AND INSHALLAH WE PRAY FOR ALL OF THEM.

(FEMALE) (OFF SCREEN)

DO YOU THINK THAT IT'S IMPORTANT FOR KIDS TO HAVE TOYS?

(FEMALE)

IT IS, BECAUSE I MEAN, BLANKETS, THEY'RE IMPORTANT AS WELL, BUT IT'S GOING TO BRING JOY TO THEM, YOU KNOW?

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THEY'LL HAVE SOMETHING TO LOOK FORWARD TO, LIKE THEY CAN PLAY WITH SOMETHING, YOU KNOW? YOU DON'T REALLY REALIZE, OKAY, FOOD, YEAH, IT'S THERE, BUT WHEN YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO PLAY WITH, YOU KNOW, THERE'S SOMETHING THAT, IT'S IN THEIR LIFE.

(FEMALE)

FOOD, LIKE FOOD AND CLOTHING AND THINGS LIKE THAT, THOSE ARE NECESSITIES, BUT TOYS ARE A PART OF A CHILD'S INNOCENCE. YOU KNOW, YOU TAKE THAT AWAY FROM THEM AND IT'S LIKE YOU'RE TAKING AWAY PART OF THEIR INNOCENCE. BUT WHEN YOU GIVE IT BACK TO THEM, IT'S LIKE YOU CAN SEE THE JOY THAT COMES TO THEM.

(IMAM SADIQ SAFIR)

ISLAM IS A RELIGION THAT IS FOR HUMANITY. AND PEOPLE PERCEIVE THAT THE MUSLIMS ARE ONLY CONCERNED ABOUT MUSLIM, AND I THINK IT'S JUST THE OPPOSITE. MUSLIMS ARE CONCERNED ABOUT OTHERS MORE THAN THEMSELVES, EVEN THEIR NEIGHBORS. SO MUSLIMS ARE OBLIGATED TO RESPECT ALL LIFE; ALL LIFE IS SACRED.

(MALE)

BLANKETS! CLOTHES, FOOD! EVERYTHING'S FREE AT 4TH AND TOWN!

(NAIM SHAH)

WE'RE NOT ISSUING OUT ANY RELIGIOUS MATERIAL. WE'RE NOT DOING ANY PROSELYTIZATION. WE'RE EXEMPLIFYING TODAY. SO IF ANYONE HAD ANY OF THAT MATERIAL, THIS IS THE LIMITATION OF MATERIAL YOU CAN PASS OUT AS FAR AS TO THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN COMING BY AND RECEIVING INFORMATION FROM US.

(MALE)

WE'VE GOT CLOTHES AND BLANKETS! MEDICATION!

(IMAM SADULLAH KHAN)

THERE'S NO EVIDENCE IN THE PROPHETIC TRADITION OR HISTORY THAT ENCOURAGES US TO HELP WITH THE AIM, THAT IF WE HELP PEOPLE, THE PRIMARY FOCUS IS THAT THEY SHOULD BECOME MUSLIM. PEOPLE MAY BECOME MUSLIM, AND OF COURSE, EVERYBODY OF EVERY FAITH FEEL THAT PEOPLE WISH THEY CAN BE OF MY FAITH. BUT IN HELPING THE POOR, IN HELPING THE NEEDY, THE FOCUS SHOULD BE ON HELPING THE NEEDY-- NOT ON AN ULTERIOR MOTIVE OF HOPING THAT THEY COME TO MY FAITH, THEN I'LL REALLY BE HAPPY. BE HAPPY THAT YOU FED THEM AND THE CHOICE IS THEIRS.

[CARS PASSING]

(FEMALE)

I'M HELPING BECAUSE I LIKE TO HELP PEOPLE AND I WANT TO-- I WANT THE LESS FORTUNATE TO FEEL THAT THEY'RE IMPORTANT IN THE WORLD AND IN THE COMMUNITY.

YOU KNOW THAT YOU'RE DOING RIGHT FOR YOURSELF INSIDE AND FOR GOD. BUT YOU'RE NOT REALLY DOING IT TO SHOW ANYONE ELSE.

(FEMALE)

I REALLY LIKE IT BECAUSE THEY MADE ME FEEL REALLY GOOD, AND THEY UPPED MY SPIRITS. AND I LIKE THE ISLAMIC LADIES. THEY'RE REALLY BEAUTIFUL AND IT REALLY SAYS SOMETHING TO MY HEART.

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(MUSLIM FEMALE)

EVERY TIME WE GO TO AN ORIENTATION, EVERY GROUP LEADER WAS SAYING THE SAME THING, WHICH WAS, "MAKE SURE TO SMILE, JUST AS LONG AS YOU SMILE "JUST KEEP SMILING THE WHOLE TIME, JUST KEEP SMILING, "WHETHER OR NOT YOU'RE GIVING THEM SOMETHING, "WHETHER OR NOT YOU'RE JUST STANDING THERE SAYING HELLO OR GOODBYE." I MEAN THAT IN ITSELF JUST GIVES SUCH A POSITIVE IMAGE OF ANY INDIVIDUAL.

(IMAM SADULLA KHAN)

SOMETIMES TO CONSOLE SOMEONE IS A FORM OF CHARITY. EVEN THE PROPHET SAID, "TO BRING US A SMILE ON THE FACE OF A BROTHER, IT'S A CHARITY." SO IT'S ANYTHING THAT YOU CAN DO GOOD, ANYTHING THAT YOU CAN AFFORD, WHETHER MONETARY, PHYSICAL, TIME; THAT CAN BE AFFORDED FOR THE BENEFIT OF OTHERS, FOR THE ALLEVIATION OF SUFFERING OR THE HARDSHIP OF ANYONE ELSE, TO MAKE SOMEONE'S DAY A BIT BETTER, TO MAKE SOMEONE'S LIFE A BIT MORE COMFORTABLE, TO BRING SOME SUNSHINE ON A DARK DAY; ALL OF THESE ARE CHARITIES. AND IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE MONEY, OTHERWISE THE POOR WON'T BE ABLE TO GIVE CHARITY. THE PROPHET MOHAMMED WAS CHARITABLE AND HE WAS POOR.

(HOMELESS MALE)

WELL, IT WAS GREAT, IT WAS GREAT. AND YOU KNOW WHAT? I SAID A PRAYER THIS MORNING THAT-- I'M IN THE POSITION RIGHT NOW THAT I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING. AND I WAS--I MEAN IT'S COLD, I GOT A BLANKET, YOU KNOW? AND I'M THINKING, "WELL, THESE ARE ALL THE CLOTHES I HAVE ON," AND HERE THEY GIVE ME A T-SHIRT AND SOCKS. I MEAN IT'S A GOOD START.

(IMAM SAYED MOUSTAFA AL-QAZWINI)

CHARITY PERTAINS TO EVERY BEING IN THIS UNIVERSE, NOT NECESSARILY TO BE HUMAN BEING, BUT TO EVEN PLANTS, EVEN ANIMALS. IN FACT, IT HAS BEEN REPORTED THAT THE PROPHET HIMSELF-- PEACE BE UPON HIM-- WAS SO KIND TO THE ANIMALS AND HE USED TO ADVISE HIS COMPANIONS TO FOLLOW HIS TRADITION, BE KIND AND BE NICE TO THEM, NOT TO ABUSE THEM, TO TEACH THEIR KIDS NOT TO BE ABUSIVE TO THE ANIMALS.

(IMAM SADULLAH KHAN)

PROPHET MOHAMMED REMINDED US OF A LADY WHO HELPED A THIRSTY ANIMAL BY TAKING A SHOE, AND TAKING WATER FROM THE WELL AND GIVING IT TO THE ANIMAL. AND ON THE ACCOUNT OF THAT, THAT ACT OF CHARITY AND COMPASSION, GOD WILL ENTER INTO PARADISE AND SHE WAS A SINFUL WOMAN. SO THIS IDEA OF CARING FOR EVEN THE ANIMALS, CARING FOR THOSE WHO MAY REQUIRE OUR ASSISTANCE; FOR EVERY LIVING THING THAT YOU PROVIDE A MEANS OF SUSTENANCE, GOD WILL REWARD YOU FOR THAT.

(NARRATOR)

WHILE SADAQA, OR CHARITY, TAKES ON MANY FORMS, MUSLIMS IN THE WEST ARE FACED WITH ADDITIONAL OBLIGATIONS RARELY ENCOUNTERED BY THOSE LIVING IN MUSLIM COUNTRIES.

(IMAM SADULLA KHAN)

YOU FIND THAT IN MANY OF THE MIDDLE EASTERN COUNTRIES THERE IS THIS IDEA OF WAQF, WHERE THERE IS AN ENDOWMENT FROM THE GOVERNMENT, YOU KNOW, THE MONEY IS RECEIVED, AND MOSQUES ARE BUILT FROM THAT. IN AMERICA, FOR EXAMPLE, YOU DON'T HAVE THAT. THE COMMUNITIES HAVE TO RAISE THE FUNDS THEMSELVES, SO THERE'S AN ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITY. NOT ONLY ARE THEY PAYING FOR THE BUILDING OF THE MOSQUE, THE LAND OF THE MOSQUE, FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF THE MOSQUE, AND ALSO FOR THOSE WHO

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ARE IN CHARGE OF THE AFFAIRS OF THE MOSQUE. AND BESIDES THAT THERE ARE SCHOOLS, THERE ARE ISLAMIC SCHOOLS, THERE ARE COLLEGES THAT ARE TAKING PLACE. THERE ARE ISLAMIC CLASSES OR KORANI CLASSES IN THE AFTERNOONS OR WEEKENDS. THESE ARE ALL ADDITIONAL RESOURCES, ADDITIONAL TEACHERS.

(IMAM SAYED MOUSTAFA AL-QAZWINI)

MANY MUSLIM SCHOLARS THEY GAVE PERMISSION TO THE MUSLIMS LIVING IN THE WEST TO PAY PART OF THEIR DUES AND ALMSGIVING TO ADVOCACY GROUPS, NOT NECESSARILY TO BE AN ISLAMIC CENTER OR A MOSQUE OR A HOUSE OF WORSHIP; BUT TO AN ADVOCACY GROUP, WHICH IS PROMOTING ISLAM IN THIS COUNTRY, OR DEFENDING ISLAM AND DEFENDING CIVIL LIBERTIES, AND DEFENDING THE RIGHTS OF THE MUSLIMS IN THIS COUNTRY. SINCE THOSE PEOPLE ARE DOING A NOBLE DEED, THEN THEY DESERVE ALSO TO RECEIVE THE ALMSGIVING, THE ZAKA'T AND EVEN THE CHARITY.

(NARRATOR)

SINCE ISLAM TAKES ROOT IN THE ABRAHAMIC TRADITIONS, IT SHARES MANY SIMILARITIES WITH JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY IN THE PRACTICE OF SADAQA.

(RABBI ARNOLD RACHLIS)

WELL, YOU KNOW, IN JUDAISM WE HAVE TITHING, WHICH OF COURSE IS ALSO A CONCEPT IN ISLAM AND IN OTHER RELIGIONS, THE IDEA OF GIVING 10%. THE HEBREW WORD "TZEDAKAH" IS JUST LIKE THE ARABIC WORD "SADAQA," THE SAME IDEA ABOUT GIVING CHARITY. AND SO OFTEN IN RELIGION WE'RE COMPARING AND CONTRASTING AND WE'RE TALKING TRIUMPHANTLY ABOUT HOW THIS IDEA IS BETTER THAN THAT IDEA. IF WE WOULD FOCUS ON WHAT WE SHARE IN COMMON RATHER THAN HOW WE'RE DIFFERENT; IF WE COULD LOOK AT THE ESSENTIAL RATHER THAN THE SUPERFICIAL, WE'D BE MUCH BETTER OFF IN THIS WORLD.

(IMAM SAYED MOUSTAFA AL-QAZWINI)

CHARITY IS CONSIDERED ONE OF THE LANDMARKS OF EVERY FAITH AND RELIGION. WE HAVE ALMSGIVING AND CHARITY IN CHRISTIANITY AND JUDAISM, IN ISLAM, IN BUDDHISM AND ALL OTHER RELIGIONS. AND I THINK SINCE WE SHARE THIS COMMONALITY, IT WOULD BE VERY BEAUTIFUL IF WE HAD AN INTERFAITH PROJECT, OF LET'S SAY HELPING THE HOMELESS, OR LET'S SAY BUILDING A FREE CLINIC. AND THIS WOULD ALSO ENHANCE THE SPIRIT OF HARMONY AND UNITY AMONG THE PEOPLE OF FAITH.

(YASSER)

THERE'S ONLY A FEW CLINICS THAT ARE OUT SERVING THE SKID ROW COMMUNITY. AND SOMETIMES THEY HAVE TO WAIT, OR SOMETIMES THEIR LIFE CAN'T WAIT FOR A WAITING ROOM FULL OF PATIENTS. AND SO INSTANT ACCESS, WHERE WE CAN ACTUALLY GIVE 'EM A QUICK HIV TEST, TELL 'EM THAT THEIR GLUCOSE LEVELS ARE VERY HIGH; ANY INDICATION THAT THEY EITHER HAVE TO REALLY TEND TO THEIR IMMEDIATE NEEDS OR LET THEM KNOW THAT THEY'RE POSSIBLY DIABETIC.

ARE YOU PUTTING ON THE GLOVES, TOO?

(HOMELESS LADY WITH CHILD)

YES. YEAH?

SAY, I'M BEING A JUNIOR DOCTOR.

(MALE NURSE)

YOU WANT TO BE A JUNIOR DOCTOR?

THERE WE GO.

ARE THEY FITTING THERE?

DO YOUR FINGERS FIT?

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THAT'S TOO LITTLE.

(DOCTOR)

PROBABLY THE NUMBER ONE MAIN PROBLEM FOR BABIES AND CHILDREN THAT ARE HOMELESS IS LACK OF ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE, AND AS A RESULT OF THAT, THEY PROBABLY ARE BEHIND ON CHILDHOOD IMMUNIZATIONS. ALSO, NUTRITION IS PROBABLY AN ISSUE.

ALL RIGHT, WE'RE GOING TO TAKE A LOOK AT YOU.

IS THAT ALL RIGHT?

IT'S OKAY.

THEY MAKE YOU BETTER.

[CRYING LOUDLY]

SHE'S SCARED.

(HOMELESS LADY WITH CHILD)

RIGHT NOW I'M A SINGLE MOTHER. CURRENTLY I STAY DOWN HERE ON THE STREETS WITH MY BABY. AND IT'S BEEN HARD. SHELTERS ARE NOT REALLY HELPING ME, BUT THE PEOPLE THAT COME OUT HAVE BEEN KIND OF HELPFUL.

[CRYING LOUDLY]

LET'S SEE THE OTHER SIDE, OKAY. LET'S TURN HER HEAD GENTLY.

I THINK THIS IS JUST A VIRUS. SHE DOESN'T HAVE A FEVER. HER TEMPERATURE IS 97.0.

SO THAT'S THE NORMAL TEMPERATURE?

THAT'S THE NORMAL BODY TEMPERATURE.

IT'S NOT A SLIGHT FEVER?

IT'S NOT A FEVER, NO.

OKAY.

SO I THINK SHE HAS A VIRUS OR A COLD.

YEAH, THAT'S FROM BEING DOWN HERE. IT'S CAUSING NASAL CONGESTION.

A LOT OF TIMES WHEN KIDS GET A VIRUS--

FROM BEING DOWN HERE--

MOMMY HUG, MOMMY SORRY, BUT YOU GOTTA GET WELL, OKAY?

(YASSER)

THIS EVEN ADDS EVEN MORE TO MY EXPERIENCE OF REALLY JUST BEING A SERVANT FOR THOSE WHO HAVE NO VOICE POLITICALLY OR SOCIALLY. AND WHAT BETTER WAY TO REPRESENT IT BY PEOPLE WHO BELIEVE IN ONE GOD, AND TO ESTABLISH THE SOCIAL JUSTICE THROUGH WORK AND NOT TALK? ONE THING TO REFLECT ON IS THAT I HAVE A HOME TO GO TO, AND EVERYBODY ELSE HERE POSSIBLY DOESN'T OR PROBABLY HAS ONE NIGHT TO STAY.

(HOMELESS LADY WITH CHILD)

LIFE'S HARD, BUT LIFE'S ONLY WHAT YOU MAKE IT. I STRUGGLE EVERY DAY. LONG AS I'M ALIVE AND MY CLOTHES IS CLEAN, THAT'S ALL THAT MATTERS. LIFE'S HARD, BUT NO ONE SAID LIFE WOULD BE EASY. SAY, "THANK YOU." THANK YOU.

(NARRATOR)

THE DAY IS WINDING DOWN, AND THE EVENT COMES TO AN END. FOR ALL THOSE INVOLVED, WHAT LESSONS HAVE BEEN LEARNED, AND WHAT CHANGES WILL BE MADE?

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(SADIQ SAFIR)

THIS, FOR US, IS A NEW EXPERIENCE. BUT THIS IS ONLY THE BEGINNING OF WHAT WE MUST DO AS MUSLIMS TO CONTINUE TO GROW AND EVOLVE. WE WANT TO MAKE A STATEMENT THAT THIS IS WHAT MUSLIMS DO. THIS IS OUR MONTH OF RAMADAN.

NO MATTER HOW PEOPLE SEE US, WE HAVE TO SHOW PEOPLE HOW WE REALLY ARE.

(MUSLIM LADY)

WE CAN'T BE SEGREGATED FROM EACH OTHER AND JUST STAY INSIDE THE MASJID. WE'VE GOT TO COME OUTSIDE OUR DOORS AND GO IN THE COMMUNITY AND GIVE, AND LET PEOPLE KNOW THAT WE LOVE THEM AND THAT WE LOVE GOD'S CREATION AND WE'LL DO WHATEVER WE CAN IN WHATEVER CAPACITY THAT WE CAN.

(RABBI ARNOLD RACHLIS)

THEY'RE SAYING TO THE WIDER WORLD, "TO BE A MUSLIM, "TO BE A PRACTITIONER OF ISLAM DOESN'T MEAN "WE ONLY TAKE CARE OF OUR OWN. IT MEANS OUR MEDIUM OF EXPRESSION IS ISLAM, BUT OUR CANVAS IS THE WORLD." AND SOMETHING HAPPENS TO BOTH THE LARGER SOCIETY WHEN THEY SEE THAT; AND ALSO I THINK TO INDIVIDUAL MUSLIMS JUST LIKE IT HAPPENS TO INDIVIDUAL JEWS. THERE IS A PRIDE IN USING YOUR RELIGIOUS MESSAGE ON A WIDER CANVAS.

(MUSLIM LADY)

I WOULD ENCOURAGE MUSLIMS NOT TO BE AFRAID, NOT TO BE FEARFUL THAT THEY'RE GONNA BE JUDGED IN A BAD WAY, TO COME OUT, START BY SHOWING THAT EVEN A SMILE IS CHARITY.

(FEMALE)

DO YOU REALLY FEEL THAT SMILING AND GREETING PEOPLE IS A CHARITY? YEAH, A LOT OF PEOPLE HAVE SAID, "GOD BLESS YOU," AND IT MAKES YOU FEEL AS IF LIKE YOU'RE THE MOST BLESSED PERSON IN THE WORLD."

HELLO, THANK YOU; THANK YOU.

IT JUST, IT FEELS GOOD. IT'S THE GREATEST FEELING IN THE WORLD, JUST TO HAVE-- JUST TO MAKE SOMEONE SMILE.

(IMAM SADULLAH KHAN)

ONE OF THE IMPORTANT THINGS OF CHARITY IS IT COMES FROM THE HEART. IT MUST BE GENEROSITY OF SPIRIT. AND THOUGH WE SHOULD FEEL GOOD ABOUT DOING GOOD; BUT WE MUST BE VERY CAREFUL NOT TO DO IT PRIMARILY BECAUSE WE WANT TO FEEL GOOD. SOME PEOPLE MAY GO AND FEED THE POOR ONCE IN A YEAR AND THEY SAY--AND THE WHOLE YEAR THEY SPEAK ABOUT IT, AND THE REST OF THE YEAR THEY DON'T DO ANYTHING FOR THE POOR. THAT'S PURELY A FEEL-GOOD THING. THOSE WHO DO GOOD, MAYBE ON HELPING THE HOMELESS OR GIVING CHARITY IN RAMADAN OR WHENEVER IT IS, THEY SAY, "WELL, I WANT TO-- I'M GONNA DO THIS EVERY MONTH," OR, "I'M GONNA KEEP THIS UP." AND REALLY THEY'RE FEELING GOOD AND DOING GOOD.

(MALE)

I THINK A LOT OF THESE PEOPLE ARE GOING TO BE IN THIS SITUATION FOR A WHILE STILL. MAYBE WE'VE MADE ONE DAY BETTER FOR THEM. MAYBE THE BLANKETS WILL MAKE A COUPLE OF MORE DAYS BETTER FOR THEM, BUT THESE ARE PROBLEMS THAT HAVE TO BE ADDRESSED IN A VERY LARGE MANNER.

(FEMALE)

AND WE NEED TO ALL COME TOGETHER AND HAVE ENCOURAGEMENT FOR EVERYONE.

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WE NEED TO GIVE DIFFERENT ENCOURAGEMENT FOR PEOPLE ALL OVER THE WORLD, OF ALL COLORS, ALL NATIONALITIES. BECAUSE THIS IS SOMETHING THAT'S NEEDED ALL OVER THE WORLD, NOT JUST HERE IN LOS ANGELES, BUT YOU HAVE HOMELESS ALL OVER THE WORLD THAT NEEDS TO BE FED. AND WE NEED TO GET TOGETHER AND FORM SOME TYPE OF COMMUNITY SERVICE SO THESE PEOPLE CAN EAT, BECAUSE YOU HAVE SOME PEOPLE THAT ARE NOT ABLE, AND WE HAVE TO PICK UP THE PIECES WHERE THEY LEFT OFF.

(IMAM SAYED MOUSTAFA AL-QAZWINI)

BECAUSE WE HAVE MUCH COMMONALITY AMONG OUR FAITHS, THEN I THINK WE HAVE TO HELP EACH OTHER, UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER, STAND BY EACH OTHER AND WORK TOGETHER AND HAVE MUCH HARMONY AND UNDERSTANDING, RATHER THAN HAVING TENSIONS AND CONFLICT AND FIGHTINGS.

(RABBI ARNOLD RACHLIS)

WHAT'S WONDERFUL IS THAT YOU FIND, IN ARABIC, A COGNATE WORD, JUST LIKE "TZEDAKAH," YOU FIND, "SADAQA," YOU FIND THAT SAME CONCEPT. WHAT DOES THAT TELL US? IT TELLS US THAT THESE MONOTHEISTIC RELIGIONS THAT CLEARLY HAVE DIFFERENCES, AND IN OUR OWN DAY SOMETIMES EVEN HAVE TENSIONS AMONG THEM, AT ROOT SHARE SOME VERY IMPORTANT, COMMON, ETHICAL STRIVINGS. AND IF WE COULD WORK VERY HARD AS DIFFERENT RELIGIOUS GROUPS AT FOCUSING ON WHAT WE SHARE AND HOW WE AGREE, AND NOT SO OFTEN HOW WE DISAGREE, AND HOW WE'RE DIFFERENT, WE'D BE MUCH BETTER OFF IN THIS WORLD.

(FATHER WILL CRIST)

THERE ARE PEOPLE IN THE WORLD WHO CARE. IF THEY KNOW THAT WE CARE BECAUSE OF OUR COMMITMENT TO OUR FAITH TRADITIONS AND TO GOD, AND TO LOVING OR NEIGHBOR, THAT'S GOOD. I THINK IT'S MORE IMPORTANT THAT WE CHRISTIANS, JEWS AND MUSLIMS RECOGNIZE THAT WE ARE SEEKING TO NOT LET OUR DIFFERENCES SEPARATE US, AND TO LIVE OUT OUR COMMON COMMITMENTS TO SERVE HUMANITY.

(IMAM SADIQ SAFIR)

WE HAVE TO SEE OURSELVES AS ONE HUMANITY, AND WE HAVE TO UNDERSTAND THAT WE ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR EACH OTHER. I THINK WHEN WE BEGIN TO DEMONIZE RELIGION AND DEMONIZE RACES, I THINK THAT WE WILL ALWAYS HAVE CONFLICT; CONFLICT SHALL CONTINUE. ALL LIFE IS SACRED, IT'S IN ALL OF OUR SCRIPTURE. IT REALLY IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE HUMAN, NOW THIS GLOBAL FAMILY, TO WORK TOGETHER FOR PREVAILING JUSTICE, AND TO WORK TOGETHER TO PROVIDE AND TO REALLY ATTEND TO THE NEEDS OF ALL HUMANITY.

§§

§§

§ SOON AS THE BEAT DROP
NOW COME ON, GATHER 'ROUND. §
§ THROW YOUR FIST UP §
§ BROTHER,
PUT YOUR DRINK DOWN. §
§ WATCH THE SIDELINE, §
§ CATS THEY
GETTING CURIOUS. §
§ AND LATER
FOR THE SWEET TALK, §
§ WE'RE GETTING
SERIOUS AND FURIOUS, §

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§ WE'RE LOOKING AT THE
STATE OF THE COMMUNITY. §
§ WE START RIGHT NOW
TO BUILD UNITY. §
§ SO WE'RE
THE SOLDIERS §
§ STOOP AND SEND
THE YOUNG GUNS. §
§ NO MATTER WHERE YOU COME
FROM, WE RALLY EVERYONE. §
§ IT'S TIME TO MAKE MOVES,
WE GOT NO CHOICE. §
§ WE ON THE MIC,
TALKING LOUD WITH NO VOICE. §
§ WE KNOW THE PROBLEMS,
SO LET IT BEGIN. §
§ TELL THE B-BOYS,
TIME TO BE MEN. §
§ WE SEEN THE PRISONS
AND THE COPS PROLIFERATE, §
§ WE SEEN THE GUNS AND
THE DRUGS DEBILITATE, §
§ WE ALSO SEEN THE CASH
FLOW THAT IT GENERATE. §
§ THAT'S WHY WE SEEN THE
INNER-CITY JUST DETONATE. §
§ FOOTNOTES TO
THE ECONOMIC POLICY, §
§ IT'S COOL TO LET US LIVE
A LIFE OF LOW QUALITY. §
§ NO JOBS IN THE HOOD,
WE ROB MURDER FOR VICE, §
§ AND WE'RE BUYING
UP THE BUILDINGS §
§ AND THE LAND
AT A CHEAP PRICE. §
§ WE GOTTS TO COME TO THE
TABLE, ORGANIZE, READY, §
§ WILLING AND ABLE
TO STRATEGIZE. §
§ OTHERWISE IT'S TRUE
AS CRIME, §
§ GRIND, GRIND,
WE WAKE UP. §
§ THIS IS OUR TIME. §§

END TRANSCRIPT

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