

Eid Al-adha

DISCLAIMER: This reminder was originally delivered in Arabic on Friday, 27th November 2009. Any meanings lost in translation are not to be attributed to the speaker as reminders are translated by volunteers. The mosque has no official translator and volunteers often have no formal qualifications to translate on the day. Please forgive any errors as they are from our human weakness and any right guidance is from God.

God says “and proclaim to the people the Hajj [pilgrimage]; they will come to you on foot and on every lean camel; they will come from every distant pass – That they may witness benefits for themselves and mention the name of Allāh on known days over what He has provided for them of [sacrificial] animals. So eat of them and feed the miserable and poor” [Al-Hajj [22:27-28].

Today is the day of Eid Al-adha, the day of the great pilgrimage (Al-hajj Al-Akbar). It is the day when the pilgrims move from Muzdalifah to throw at the Jamarat Al-Aqabah, slaughter their sacrifice, shorten or shave their hair, perform Tawaf Al-Ifadah after they stood on the mount of Arafat supplicating, praising and remembering God with the best of remembrance (La ilaha illa God wahdahu la sharik lahu; lahu al-mulk wa-lahu al-hamd wa-huwa 'ala kulli shay'in qadir).

(God is Great, God is Great, God is Great, there is no God but God, God is Great, God is Great and for God is all Praise).

Eid al-Adha does not pass without reminding us of a situation of faith, seeking reward from God and patience when facing trials. It reminds us of the situation of Abraham (may peace be upon him) when he was ordered to slaughter his son and the situation of Ismaeel (may peace be upon him) and his compliance with his father's desire when he learned that it was an order from God to Ismaeel's father. It was a situation that reflected all meanings of obedience, following and discipline from the prophet towards the order of his Lord and from the boy towards the order of boy's father. They are ties of faith which connect us to the old time after Abraham (may peace be upon him) and Ismaeel (may peace be upon him) raised the foundations of the sacred house “And [mention] when Abraham was raising the foundations of the House and [with him] Ishmael, [saying], "Our Lord, accept [this] from us. Indeed You are the Hearing, the Knowing. Our Lord, and make us Muslims [in submission] to You and from our descendants a Muslim nation [in submission] to You. And show us our rites and accept our repentance. Indeed, You are the Accepting of repentance, the Merciful. Our Lord, and send among them a messenger from themselves who will recite to them Your verses and teach them the Book and wisdom and purify them. Indeed, You are the Exalted in Might, the Wise." [Al-Baqarah 2:127-129]. It was the supplication of Abraham (may peace be upon him) which was granted by the appointment of the prophet (pbuh) to his mission.

It also reminds us of our best moments when God blessed His Messenger Muhammad (pbuh) with conquest and victory, God says “Certainly Allāh has showed to His Messenger the vision in truth. You will surely enter al-Masjid al-îrām, if Allāh wills, in safety, with your heads shaved and [hair] shortened, not fearing [anyone]. He knew what you did not know and has arranged before that a conquest near [at hand].” [Al-Fath 48:27].

While we enjoy this atmosphere of faith we remember that great day in the history of Islam, the day of Araafah. It is the day when the prophet (pbuh) performed his farewell pilgrimage with 100,000 of his companions. That day, the prophet (pbuh) looked at the thousands complying with the call of belief and rushing to obey the Most Merciful so he (pbuh) felt joyful when he saw them following the truth and guided to the right way of Islam. It was narrated in the two Sahih (Bukhari and Muslim) from Umar ibn al-Khattaab (may Allaah be pleased with him) that a Jewish man said to him, ‘O

Ameer al-Mu'mineen, there is an verse in your Book which you recite; if it had come to us Jews, we would have taken that day as an Eid (festival).' Umar said, "Which verse?" He said: "This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favour upon you and have accepted for you Islam as religion" [Al-Maidah 5:3]. Umar said: 'I know on which day and in which place that was revealed to the prophet (pbuh). It was when he was standing in Arafaah on a Friday.'

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God addresses you by saying (This day I have perfected for you your religion). It is a godly call that brought the glad tidings of a great blessing to our Ummah, the blessing of the perfection of our religion with no deficiency, faults or shortage. A religion with no restriction of time and place as it is for all times and places. This blessing is saying to every human: only by religion and worshiping God do you free yourself from the control and slavery of other humans - you are slave only to you Lord who created you, proportioned you, and balanced you. By the blessing of religion you submit to God only and to his law and legislation for the creation belongs to God only. The verse "This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favour upon you and have accepted for you Islam as your religion" is telling us about a great matter and even greater mission. It is telling us that God is satisfied with the religion he chose for those who believed in Him "Allāh named you "Muslims" before [in former scriptures]" [Al-Hajj 22:78] so all praises to God who chose us to be Muslims. This verse is telling us that God (Glory be to Him, the Most High) loves this Ummah and is satisfied with it and that is why he chose its religion, legislation and prophet. He made it the last of nations, its prophet the last of prophets and its book the last of books.

But this blessing has with it a responsibility on our shoulders. We should realise the blessings of God upon us and fulfil the duty of thanking God for them and seeking His forgiveness for any shortcomings "And if you should count the favour of Allāh, you could not enumerate them. Indeed, mankind is [generally] most unjust and ungrateful." [Abraham 14:34]. We should also recognize the value of this choice and the greatness of this responsibility so we stick to the right path of Islam, follow the tradition of the best of the creation (pbuh) and follow his footsteps in calling for the religion of God. How little will we be in the eyes of God if we accept less than this and that which God does not accept for us! And how little will we be in the eyes of God if we do not hold on to the message of Islam and follow the law and the path of God "And if you turn away, He will replace you with another people; then they will not be the likes of you." [Muhammed 47:38].

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The day of sacrifice is a day when the prophet (pbuh) legislated to us that we sacrifice as a ritual. This ritual should get us closer to God. God says "Indeed, We have granted you, [O Muhammad], al-Kawthar. So pray to your Lord and sacrifice [to Him alone]."[Al-Kawthar 108:1-2]. He also says: "And the camels and cattle We have appointed for you as among the symbols of Allāh; for you therein is good" [Al-Hajj 22:36]. It was narrated that the prophet (pbuh) sacrificed with two rams and Muslims followed him. Sacrifice is a confirmed Sunnah, the prophet (pbuh) said:" The first thing we do on this day of ours is pray and then we go back and slaughter. Whoever does that has followed our Sunnah. Whoever sacrifices before the prayer, that is just meat which he has presented to his family and it is

not a hajj rite at all". It is permissible to slaughter during the three days in the morning or evening but it is better to perform it in the morning of any of these three days.

It is the tradition of the prophet (pbuh) for the one who slaughters to eat from his sacrifice, give it as a gift to relatives and friends and to give it in charity as God says "So eat of them and feed the miserable and poor" [Al-Hajj 22:28] and "then eat from them and feed the needy and the beggar" [Al-Hajj 22:36] and the prophet said: "eat, save and give away as sadaqah".

Oh Muslims,

Eid is a gift from God that He wanted to be a time for happiness and serenity and doing good. We should not leave its moments without clearing our hearts, remembering the ties of brotherhood and spreading the joy among ourselves and others. Let us show the manifestations of care, cooperation and harmony in our Eid. Let the emotions of goodness, love and affection lead us to all good, God says "The believers are but brothers, so make settlement between your brothers. And fear Allāh that you may receive mercy" [Al-Hujurat 49:10].

This Eid is four days - this day and the following three days. They are days of eating, drinking and remembering God (Glory be to Him, the Most High). Takbeer is a sunnah during these days at all times specially after the obligatory prayers. It should be combined with Tahmeed, Tasbeeh and praising God for his blessings upon us and for the religion that He chose for us "and to glorify Allāh for that [to] which He has guided you; and perhaps you will be grateful." [Al-Baqara 2:185].

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