

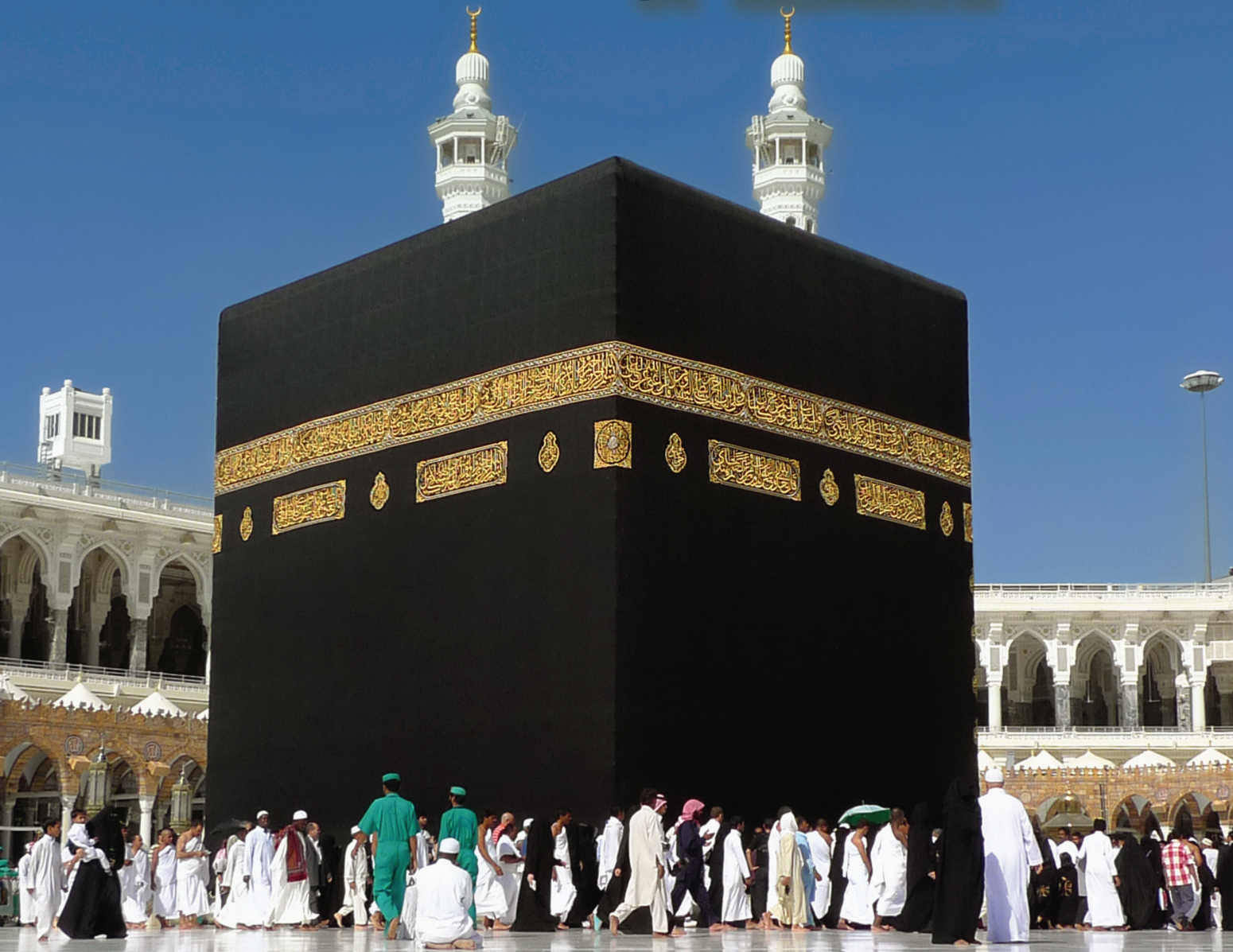
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WISDOM

A Source of Inspirational and Traditional Islamic Knowledge

AL-TINOLUK

HAJJ: A SPIRITUAL JOURNEY OF REBIRTH



Osman Nuri Efendi:
Pilgrimage in Islam

Professor Henry Francis B. Espiritu
The "Feast Of Sacrifice": Its Spiritual
Significance For The Ummah

Ali Riza Temel:
The Biggest Test Of The Prophet
Abraham

EDITORIAL

*D*ear Readers,

“...And [due] to Allah from the people is a pilgrimage to the House – for whoever is able to find thereto a way....” (Al-i Imran:3/97)

The Prophet (upon him peace) said: “Islam is built upon five (pillars): the testimony that none has the right to be worshipped except Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, the establishment of the prayer, paying Zakat, Hajj to the House (i.e. Ka’bah,) and fasting in Ramadan.” (Bukhâri)

Every year, Muslims from all over the world take part in the largest gathering on Earth, the Hajj, or pilgrimage to Makkah. The Hajj is a religious obligation that every Muslim must fulfill, who have the physical and financial ability to undertake the journey, at least once in his or her lifetime. Hence this issue focuses on Pilgrimage in Islam. Hajj was prescribed in the sixth year after Hijrah upon the revelation of the following verse in which Allah Says: “And complete the Hajj and ‘Umrah for Allah...” (Baqarah:2/196) The Messenger of Allah (upon him peace) said: “Hajj is mandated once, so whoever does it more (than that), then it is supererogatory.” (Abu Dâwud)

In this edition you shall read our beloved teacher Osman Nuri Efendi’s article entitled “Pilgrimage in Islam”, which explains spiritual benefits of Hajj for the believers both in this world and the Hereafter.

Professor Henry Francis B. Espiritu’s article, The “Feast of Sacrifice”: Its Spiritual Significance for The Ummah”, explicates that the ceremonial sacrificing of an animal at *Eid-ul-Adha* is symbolic of killing the animal passions within ones’ self and how Prophet Abraham (upon him peace) sacrificed everything in his life for the sake of gaining Allah’s pleasure.

May Allah bestow His Mercy on us in this world and the Hereafter.

We wish you a blessed Eid al-Adha!

Elif Kapici

editor@sufiwisdom.net



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Chairman

Abdullah Sert

Managing Editor

M. Lutfi Arslan

Editorial Board

Elif Kapici
Professor Suleyman Derin
Professor Henry Francis B.Espiritu
Melek Zeynep Oyludag

Design

Altinolukgraphic • Saban Muslu

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Distribution and Subscription Representatives

Australia - Fatih Ciftci 3 Yaralla crt. Meadow heights Melbourne VIC
E-mail: australia@sufiwisdom.net

UK - Selim Bicen 13 - 16 Pier Streetaberystwyth SY23 2LJ Ceredigion
Phone: +44 1970617417 • **E-mail:** england@sufiwisdom.net

UK - Elif Kapici - 57 Woodlands
Northampton NN4 5BZ

USA - Mahmut Tugrul Tasgetiren 4785 Chestnut Ridge Rd.
No:2 Amherst, Ny 14228

Phone: 716-208-5893 • **E-mail:** usa@sufiwisdom.net

USA - Jacqueline V. Frank 8508 So. 71st East Ave. tulsa, OK 74133

Head Office

İkitelli Organize Sanayi Bölgesi Mahallesi Atatürk Bulvarı
Haseyad 1. Kısım No:60/3 C
İkitelli - İstanbul / TURKEY

Phone: +90.212.671 07 00 (pbx) - **Fax:** +90.212.671 07 17

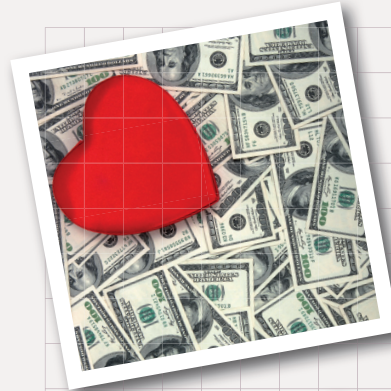
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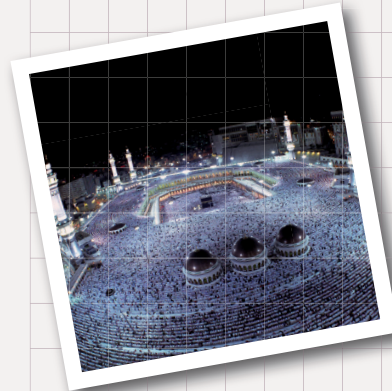
**Melek Zeynep
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**Illnesses of the
Heart Series:
Miserliness**



Kerim Buladi

**The
Inheritance
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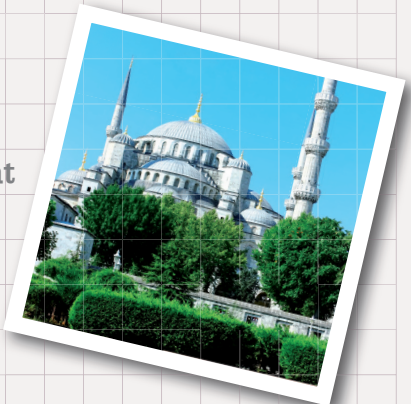


**Abdulkerim
Eren**

**Arafat: The
place where
unity is
commemorated**

**Halime
Demiresik**

**Sayyidah
Safiyyah Bint
Huyay (III)**



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Pilgrimage in Islam

Pilgrimage is commanded to be performed at least once in a lifetime; therefore it is a great mistake for able Muslims to delay it. The Prophet states that those who are required to perform pilgrimage should rush to do it.

Pilgrimage is the fifth pillar of Islam and it is a duty that has been continuing to resurrect the hearts of the believers from the first Prophet Adam (upon him peace) to the last Prophet Muhammad (upon him peace). It is a sublime way of worship that makes us realize the secret of the words “die before you die.”

Pilgrimage is not a new invention of Islam. Prior to Islam, pilgrimage was established in Mecca. However, the Arabs had changed it into a kind of immoral ceremony. The tribe of Quraish who had an eminent place among other Arab tribes used to worship Ka’aba dressed in a normal way. However, the other Arabic tribes both men and women, used to visit the Ka’aba and circumambulate around it naked. It was up to the Quraish tribe to cover them and dress them, and if they do not give clothing to the visitors, they would continue to worship in a naked state. Also, these people used to sacrifice animals to Allah and used to spread their blood on the walls of the Ka’aba. Instead of using the meat of the sacrifices in a beneficial way, they used

to burn their flesh. Islam erased all these evil pilgrimage rites that were made up by the Arabs and many other superstitious acts. According to Islam, the main purpose behind the acts of all worship is to remember Allah, to ask his forgiveness and to glorify His words. Islam, by removing the superstitions that were added by the Arabs purified the Hajj returning it to its original pure form.

Pilgrimage possesses many benefits for the believers both in this world and in the next. Allah's limitless mercy manifests itself in the times of pilgrimage in these sacred lands. Those Muslims, who are engulfed in the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, meet each other in an atmosphere of love and respect and establish bonds of brotherhood among themselves.


Through Hajj, we take lessons from the submission of the prophets Abraham (upon him peace) and Ishmael (upon him peace) and we can appreciate their strong trust in Allah. As related in the Qur'ân, when Abraham (upon him peace) received the commandment to sacrifice his son for the sake of Allah, he submitted to the Divine Will. In the same vein, Ishmael stoned Satan who tempted him to revolt against his father and escape from being slaughtered. As Ishmael stoned Satan, we should stone our low desires and ego. The Hajj is also an enormous gathering of different nations and different colors that reminds us of the Day of Judgment, where people will be gathered before the Divine

court without discrimination of color and nationality. This shocking scene will break the barriers of race and nationality, making all of humanity brothers and sisters, hence making the bond of faith as the strongest one among all other bonds.

In Hajj, all Muslims wear white seamless garments, replacing their normal garments. This symbolizes the soul's separation from the dress of the ego and its elevation over the human weaknesses, the low desires of the flesh. The place in which the Hajj is performed has also a special place in the lives of Muslims. These are holy places in terms of the Divine blessings and spirituality, possessing Divine signs. In these places, one is always reminded of the limitless mercy of Allah and His endless blessings. The Qur'ân describes the holiness of these Divine climates as the signs of Allah and alternatively as the sacred places of Allah. Another purpose behind the pilgrimage is that the pilgrim experiences the same things that the companions and the Prophet lived through in these holy lands.

In another *hadith*, the Prophet (upon him peace) describes Hajj as stoning Satan, running between the hills of Safâ and Marwa, and circumambulating the Ka'aba. The main purpose behind all these acts is the remembrance of Allah.

Safâ and Marwa are the two hills between which Hagar was running in desperation in order to find water for her and her thirsty son Ishmael. Then, Allah the Almighty



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gave them the well of Zamzam, which is till today, giving water to the pilgrims. In order to remind us of this incident, the running (*sa'y*) between these two hills has been made among the rituals of the pilgrimage.

In order to show the significance of these two hills, Allah, Most High, states in the Qur'an: "Behold! Safa and Marwa are among the Symbols of Allah. (Baqara, 2:158)

The Ka'aba is a very important center that all Muslims face during their ritual worship. It is the place where the hearts of Muslims beat. As the heart is the location of the manifestations in the human sphere, the Ka'aba is the location of Divine manifestations in the worldly sphere. In other words, the Ka'aba possesses the same place as the heart possesses in the human body.

Allah, the Almighty, commanded the pilgrims to perform the prayer of circumambulation behind the place dedicated as his position. In that way they will follow his steps in submission to the will of Allah.

In short with all these characteristics, the Ka'aba is a shadow of the

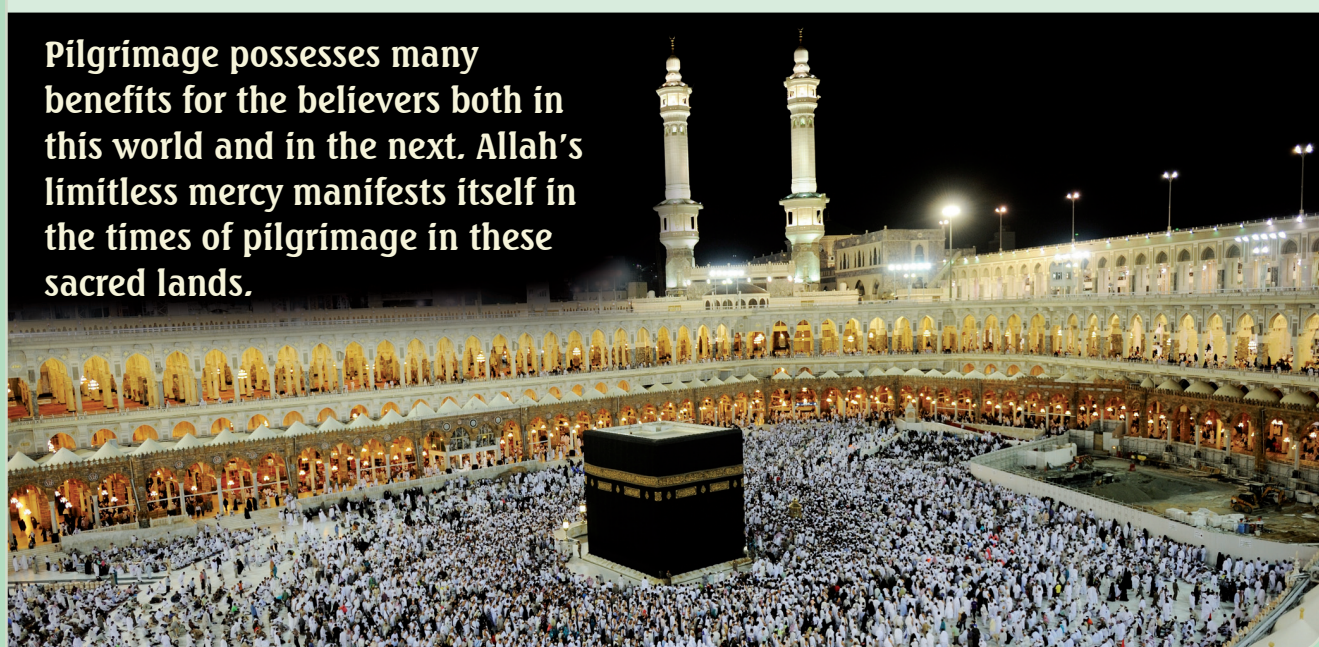
Divine Kingdom and a source of Allah's Mercy and Blessings. Allah's attributes of Mercy and Forgiveness manifest themselves here more than anywhere else in this Holy Land. It is the source of Divine Illumination and the sun that illuminates our hearts.

"Lo! the first Sanctuary appointed for mankind was that at Becca, a blessed place,

a guidance to the peoples; Wherein are plain memorials (of Allah's guidance); the place where Abraham stood up to pray; and whosoever entereth it is safe. And pilgrimage to the House is a duty unto Allah for mankind, for him who can find a way thither. As for him who disbelieveth, (let him know that) lo! Allah is Independent of (all) creatures. (Al-i Imran, 3:96-97)

As a manifestation of the Islamic spirit, everyone is equal in the lines of congregational prayers. If the head of government comes late to the mosque, he prays at the back. If a poor Muslim comes early, he prays in the first line. People are required to pray wherever there is an empty place. Uniforms and epaulets are useless in the mosque. This concept of equality was manifested in the pilgrimage on even a fuller scale. As everyone is buried with a white shroud, all the pilgrims wear the same clothes and the difference of qualities in garments completely disappears. Pilgrimage represents a level of equality that is only repeated after death. As a head of state is buried in a white shroud, even the poorest is buried with the very same shroud. Pilgrims covering their chests with a large towel and their waists with a large towel reflect the state of the dead in their graves. We should know that death is the inescapable law that Allah has enforced for all transient beings. The length of life is counted with complete precision so that even the number of breaths is counted and recorded. There is an appointed

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time of death (*ajal*) for every person and this will never change. We have never heard of anyone who escaped death. Since the time of our death is unknown to us we should not neglect to perform the duty of pilgrimage. Otherwise, the following bad news from the Prophet will be valid for us:

“If someone dies without going for pilgrimage even though he had the requirements of food, drink and transportation, there is nothing that will prevent this person to die as a Jew or Christian.” (Tirmidhi, Haj, 3)

This clear warning of the Prophet reminds those heedless Muslims who do not perform this commandment even though they have the necessary means that they will be punished in the Hereafter.

Negligence of this commandment means to despise the commandment itself.

Pilgrimage is commanded to be performed at least once in a lifetime; therefore it is a great mistake for able Muslims to delay it. The Prophet states that those who are required to perform pilgrimage should rush to do it. (Jāmu’l-fawāid, II, 77)

The House of Allah is full of the reminders of Abraham (upon him peace) and his family’s trust and submission to Allah. When we mention the words trust, submission and pilgrimage immediately the names Abraham (upon him peace) and Ishmael (upon him peace) come to our minds. Due to their sincerity, pilgrimage was made an obligatory act of worship that will continue until the last

day of the world.

Trust in Allah means to depend on, to have full confidence in, and to appoint someone as a representative. In Sufism, it signifies one whose heart is filled with Allah, only trusting in Him and seeking refuge only in Him. When Allah the Almighty asked Moses (upon him peace) about his rod he answered: “It is my rod, I lean on it...” Allah the Almighty said: “throw it down”, since this dependence on the rod shadowed his full dependence on Allah.

Concerning to whom we should trust, Allah the Almighty, states in the Qur’ān:

“In Allah let believers put their trust!” (Tawba, 9:51, Ibrahim, 14:11)

“So put your trust (in Allah) if ye are indeed believers.” (Māidah, 5:23)

“And whoever trusts in Allah, He is sufficient for him.” (Talaq, 65:3)

The Prophet states that if we trust in Allah fully, He will sustain us as he sustains the birds that leave their nests hungry in the morning and return to them with a full stomach in the evening. Trusting in Allah does not signify giving up all kinds of necessary steps, and to ignore the laws of nature. It means to put full trust in Allah after fulfilling the necessary conditions to reach a result and not to trust in the means itself, ignoring Allah’s will. Rather the slave should seek refuge in the power of Allah.

Allah the Almighty states: “And take counsel with them in the affair; so when you

Those Muslims, who are engulfed in the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, meet each other in an atmosphere of love and respect and establish bonds of brotherhood among themselves.



have decided, then place your trust in Allah; surely Allah loves those who trust.” (Al-i Imrân, 3:159)

Allah is the helper of the believer in both worlds. Whoever puts full trust in Him, He suffices for the needs of the slave. Real happiness and bliss lie in returning to Him both on the personal and social level by asking his help and putting our trust in Him.

In Arabic, the word ‘*salema*’ signifies submission and connotes the meaning of yielding (the will), and accepting the acts of Allah with pleasure.

The Prophet Abraham (upon him peace) had filled his heart with the love of Allah. When the angels asked Allah: “How can Abraham (upon him peace) be your friend who has his life, possessions and family (that will keep him engaged from You)?” Then, Allah the Almighty showed the angels his submission to the Divine will in three different tests.

The first test was about his life, that when he was about to be catapulted into the fire the angels rushed to help him, but he refused their offer and said: “I do not need your help. Who gave the power of burning to the fire? Allah is the best of helpers.” In that way he took refuge only in Allah. As a reward of this sincere submission to Allah’s power, Allah the Almighty commanded the fire:

“We said: O fire, be coolness and peace for Abraham.” (Anbiyâ, 21:69)

In the second test, he was tested about

his wealth. Gabriel had gone to Abraham and begged for some of his flock. When he praised Allah he said: Take this flock and they are yours.” In that way, he also successfully achieved the test of sacrificing wealth for the love of Allah.

The real servanthood towards Allah is nothing but submission to Him. However, submission is based on love and obedience. We have seen the best example of this submission based on love in Abraham (upon him peace).

His own life, family and wealth did not prevent him in fulfilling the Divine commands due to his full devotion and submission to Allah. In order to reward his sincerity, the rites of pilgrimage will be performed up until Judgment Day to symbolize his submission and trust in Allah. His tongue reflecting the situation in his heart continuously would say: “I submit myself to the Lord of the worlds.” (Baqara, 2:131)

In addition to the examples of Abraham and Ishmael who showed unequalled levels of sacrifice and submission to Allah, the Prophet Muhammad (upon him peace) showed the rituals and essentials of pilgrimage in his farewell pilgrimage. In particular, his farewell speech that was made on this occasion is the best guidance for pilgrims until Judgment Day. In this speech, he designated the basic rights and responsibilities of Muslims and strengthened the lines of Muslims with love and mercy. Those who intend to go on pilgrimage should prepare themselves both

spiritually and materially. Trust in Allah does not mean to ignore making provisions for the journey of pilgrimage. Some of the Yemenites would go to pilgrimage without taking any essentials such as food and drink saying: “We trust in Allah!” When they reached

Mecca they would beg due to hunger. In order to warn about this kind of wrong conception of trust in Allah, the Qur’ān states:

“And make provision, for surely the provision is the guarding of oneself, and be careful (of your duty) to Me, O men of understanding. (Baqara, 2:197)

As understood from the verse, a Muslim needs both kinds of provisions in the Holy Lands. He needs material provisions like enough food, and spiritual food like submission, patience and so on. Only the Muslim who has purified his heart from spiritual diseases can achieve this. Only through possessing such a heart can we understand the reality of the acts of worship, in particular the pilgrimage.

Many legal things that are allowed in other times of the year are forbidden in this time. Therefore, the pilgrim first should prepare his heart to be able to perform this difficult duty. From the first moment the pilgrim intends to go on pilgrimage,

Satan tries his best to corrupt its quality. The pilgrimage journey seems very easy and enjoyable but it is full of difficulties. This is

also true for the rites of pilgrimage; hence the pilgrim needs to adorn himself with patience and forbearance. Hence the pilgrim should pray: “O my Allah! Please make it easy for me!” We should not forget when we chant at the pilgrimage time:

“Labbayk Allahumma Labbayk Lâ Sharika laka Labbayk, Innal Hamda wan-ni’mata laka wal mulk lâ Sharika laka”.

“Here I am at your service O Allah, Here I am at your service (I respond to Your call, and I am obedient to Your orders) You have no partner, Here I am. Surely, all the praise and blessing and sovereignty are for You. You have no partner.”

As a matter of fact, we confirm that we are answering his invitation. We are admitting that in the kingdom of the heavens and earth there is no partner with Allah. Hence, we are promising to Him that we shall not obey the temptations of Satan and the ego.

Otherwise, if we perform the pilgrimage heedlessly, without obeying the principles we have recounted so far, it will not benefit us. In particular, those who go to the holy lands with illegal earnings and savings that are in conflict with the most essential principle of Islam, that is, no act of worship can be performed with religiously illegal earnings. Hence, their words “we are at your service” will signify that “we are not at your service” since we broke the most significant rule of the pilgrimage.

Through Hajj we take lessons from the submission of the prophets Abraham (upon him peace) and Ishmael (upon him peace) and can appreciate their strong trust in Allah.



Hence we can say that the most important rule of the pilgrimage is *halâl* (religiously legal) earnings, then secondly a sincere heart.

Every time the pilgrim says “*Labbayk*”, these words should light a fire in his heart. Only in that way can a believer approach Allah. Otherwise mere words without really meaning it have no benefit. Hadrat Husain’s face, the grandson of the Prophet would turn pale whenever he said “*Labbayk*” fearing that the answer from Allah would be “*lâ labbayk*.” May Allah enable us to perform the pilgrimage with both our bodies and souls. The principles of pilgrimage guide man to mercy and to an intense spiritual life. When he wears the special white seamless garment (called *ihram*) he leaves all sorts of rough and unkind behavior. It makes man kinder and nicer since hunting animals, plucking the plants, breaking the green branches of trees and hurting creatures are forbidden during the days of pilgrimage.

Allah the Almighty, states in the Qur’ân: “So whoever determines the performance of the pilgrimage therein, there shall be no intercourse nor fornication nor quarrelling amongst one another; and whatever good you do, Allah knows it; and make provision, for surely the best provision is the guarding of oneself, and be careful (of your duty) to Me, O men of understanding. (Baqara, 2:197)

The pilgrims will not fight and hurt others; they will behave nicely and kindly to others for the sake of their Creator. In

particular, hurting the hearts of the believers is considered a big sin. Therefore Sayyidina Umar would not kiss the Black Stone in order not to hurt other pilgrims due to the crowding.

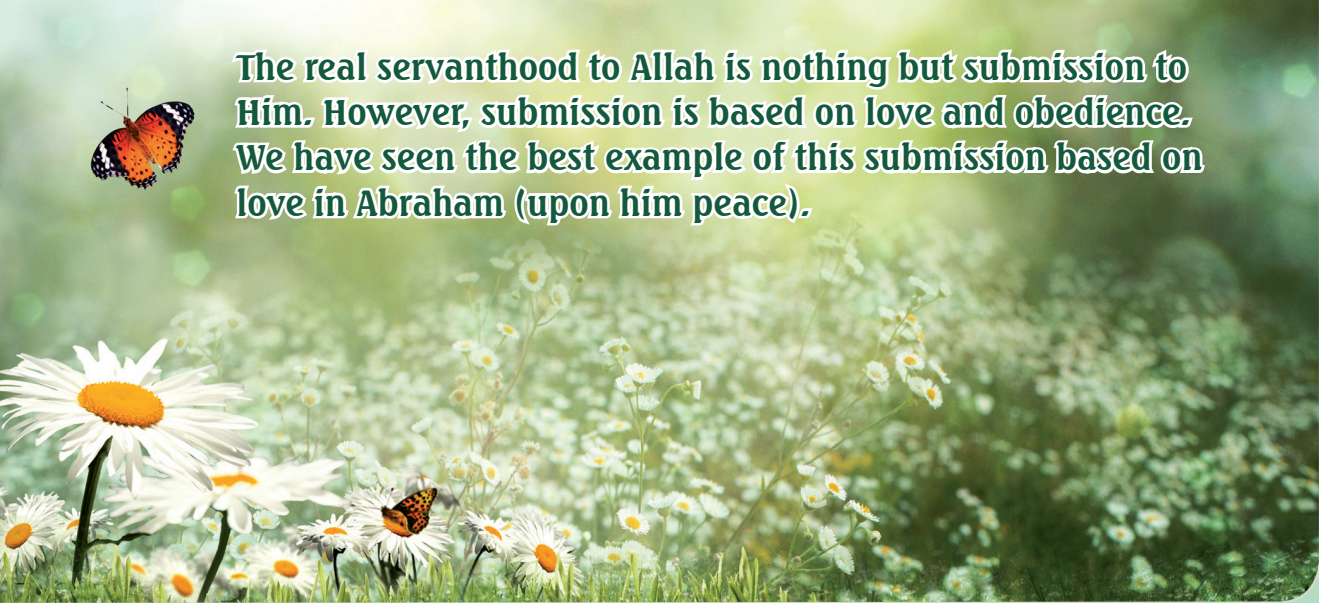
In Islam, every kind of worship begins with an intention. The intention for pilgrimage begins with wearing *ihram*. Having put on this special garment, the pilgrim is transformed into a spiritual state, leaving his ordinary conduct. The white garment reminds him of death and the shroud. Hence he spends his time in contemplating death and how to make preparations for it. With all its eloquent principles, pilgrimage makes man attain the highest state as informed by the Qur’ân:

“Surely We created man of the best stature.”
(Tîn, 95:4)

The Prophet (upon him peace) gives the following good news for the pilgrims: The greater pilgrimage and the lesser pilgrimage cleanse the pilgrim’s sins as the nitric acid of the goldsmith cleans gold and silver. (Nesâi, Tirmidhi)

The following *hadith* also gives good news for the pilgrims: The Prophet said, “Whoever performs *Hajj* for Allah’s pleasure and does not have sexual relations with his wife and does not do evil or sins, then he will return as if he were born anew (without any sins remaining).” (Bukhârî, Volume 2, Book 26, Number 596)

This good news is valid for those who have performed the Hajj in an acceptable way,



The real servanthood to Allah is nothing but submission to Him. However, submission is based on love and obedience. We have seen the best example of this submission based on love in Abraham (upon him peace).

which is called *al-Hajj al-Mabrûr*. Those who have achieved this level of pilgrimage also attain the following virtues:

- 1- Sense of responsibility,
- 2-Pardoning nature,
- 3-Keeping the body and actions pure,
- 4-Islamic brotherhood,
- 5-Consciousness that superiority is only on the basis of *taqwâ* i.e. awe of Allah,
- 6-Legal earning
- 7-Sincerity

Hence, pilgrimage is not just an act of worship performed for Allah. It also develops man's capabilities. It develops the social, moral and political condition of the *Ummah*. It teaches the universal aspects of Islam more than any other act of worship.

On the personal level, pilgrimage gives man a chance to evaluate his actions and behaviors and to correct his mistakes for the future life.

Pilgrimage is obligatory once in a lifetime. However, as in the daily prayers and fasting, a believer can perform supererogatory pilgrimages as well. Some Muslims consider going on pilgrimage more than once as a waste of money. This kind of heedless remark borders on disbelief and only those who do not understand the purpose and the transformative power of Hajj can utter such a remark.

From the Time of Happiness (the time of the Prophet), Muslims have always practiced the supererogatory acts of worship with devotion and love. These willingly performed acts of worship bring the servant closer to Allah as stated in the well-known *hadith*. They give depth and insight to the soul. They render the Muslim more generous and merciful. Allah becomes their eyes by which they see, the ears by which to hear. In short, their acts such as hearing, thinking become guided by the Divine Light.

This spiritual development can be realized through supererogatory acts of worship and showing mercy to the creation. The great Imam Abu Hanifah, went on pilgrimage 55 times. I think this shows the significance of the pilgrimage and there is no need for extra words.

In short, the greatest gift that pilgrims should take back to their countries is the good characteristics of the Holy Lands. They should carry back memories by continuing to practice the good virtues they have cultivated during their visit. They will thus function as windows for the spiritual beauty of the Holy Lands to reach those who have not yet gone there.

May Allah grant us a life of submission to Allah and trust in Him. Let our Refuge and Helper be only Him. May Allah make us fulfil the duty of pilgrimage with a heart that feels the blessings of the Holy Lands.



The intention for pilgrimage begins with wearing ihrâm. Having put on this special garment, the pilgrim is transformed into a spiritual state, leaving his ordinary conduct. The white garment reminds him of death and the shroud.

THE “FEAST OF SACRIFICE”: its *Spiritual Significance For The Ummah*

The Prophet Muhammad was clearly informed by Divine Revelation of this great fact that fasting and sacrifice are both universal pious acts prevalent in every race, religion and ethnicity of peoples in the world.

The Qur’ânic Philosophy of the Feast of the Sacrifice (Eid-ul-Adha)

The Holy Qur’ân testifies to Allah’s divine ordainment of the Feast of Sacrifice (*Eid-ul-Adha*) by this declaration: “And for every nation, We appointed acts of devotion (sacrifices) that they might mention the name of Allah on what He has given them of the cattle and quadruped beasts” (*Surah Hajj*, 22:34). Eminent academic scholars of archaeology, anthropology and history unanimously attest that animal sacrifices and various rites of offerings to the Deity as undertaken by various tribes, races and ethnicities can be found universally throughout human history, and these pious acts of sacrifices can be traced even as far back to the most primitive time at the dawn of humankind’s advent on earth. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his Companions), to whom the abovementioned passage (*Surah Hajj* 22:34) was revealed through Divine Revelation, himself knew of only few nations in his



The Qur'ân strongly criticized and corrected the false polytheistic, selfish and self-serving notion of sacrifice found in many religions that Allah, being likened to a needy human being, requires some gift as bribe to make Allah pleased with the sacrificer. Allah is above need of anything that could be supplied by His creation.

part of the world, and humanly speaking, he could not possibly know the fact that animal sacrifice has been a universal practice among all peoples on earth. Therefore the verse concerning sacrifice is indeed a clear proof of the truth that the Holy Prophet Muhammad is truly a genuine recipient and a true messenger of Divine Revelation from Almighty Allah.

Similarly, in the case of fasting, it is a universal act of worship, so widespread that fasting was prevalently practised even among primitive peoples of the world, just as the Qur'ân tells Muslims that "fasting had been prescribed for those people before you" (*Surah Baqarah* 2:183). Therefore, the Holy Prophet Muhammad was clearly informed by Divine Revelation of this great fact that fasting and sacrifice are both universal pious acts prevalent in every race, religion and ethnicity of peoples in the world. And the same applies to the remaining two practical ordinances of Islam, namely: prayer (*salaah*) and charity (*zakaah*). These traditions of worship are spread throughout humankind because, according to the universal teaching of Islam regarding *risalaah* (prophethood), Allahu Taala had raised prophets in all nations and races on earth, and these messengers of Almighty Allah taught human beings to serve the One and Only God in the ways that are innate to human nature.

However, as time went by, all these widely-prevailing divine practices as ordained by past

prophets sent by Almighty Allah to various nations and tribes had become corrupted and surrounded by vast arrays of misconceptions and superstitions. The advent of the Holy Prophet of Islam is for the divine purpose of restoring these acts of worship to their true significance, pristine meaning and real objective. As regards the attitude of sacrifice in various religions such as the Hindu, shamanic, animistic and various pagan religions, the worshippers offered a sacrifice as a gift to polytheistic deities, to a tribal or racial god, or to some other deity that they imagine, in order to please that deity, and to placate the anger of the deity or to get some favor from him/her. For example, the idolatrous books of the Hindus show that their sacrifice was in fact a bribe given to secure the favor of particular godlings, spirits, gods and goddesses. It was believed that if one offered the proper animal or grain or wine as sacrificial offering, the pagan deities could not refuse one's prayer and is forced to grant what one has asked for.

The Holy Qur'ân strongly criticized and corrected the false polytheistic, hedonistic, selfish and self-serving notion of sacrifice found in many religions that Allah, being likened to a needy human being, requires some gift as bribe to make Him happy, contented and pleased with the sacrificer. In criticizing this false notion among the previous religions, the Qur'ân says that Allahu Taala is above need of anything that could be supplied by His creation. In the words of the Holy

Qur'ân: "Allah is above any need, and you are the needy" (*Surah Mubammad* 47:38), "He is above need of your thanks (or praise)" (*Surah Zumar* 39:7), "He is above need of the things in this world" (*Surah Abl-Imran* 3:96). Here, it is also fitting to quote this verse: "Shall I take for my friend and protector someone other than Allah? He feeds (you) and is not fed (by you)." (*Surah An'am* 6:14). These Qur'ânic viewpoint as expressed in the above verses is significant because in most sacrifices what were offered were some eatables, ranging from grain and butter to, of course, animals such as chickens, goats, cows, bullocks and sheep: and the one who performs the sacrifice vainly thinks that he has placated God's anger and has gained His approval by the act of sacrificing per'se. For instance, in a Hindu paganistic fire sacrifice, sandalwood and clarified butter are fed into the fire, and it is believed that the deity in the fire, whom they call "Agni", carries these offerings to the higher godlings in the skies. But the Quran tells us that the All-Merciful Allah is the One Who sustains or feeds all creatures and is not fed by anyone. In truth, Almighty Allah is in no need of our thanks or praise.

Abraham's Sacrifice: Denying of Worldly Goods and Repudiating our Animalistic Nature

This brings us to the subject of the sacrifice which Prophet Abraham was intending to make of his son, Hazrat Ismail, and how, through this incident, Allahu Taala

communicated to mankind that sacrifice is not, in itself, what is really required, but that Allah Almighty was only testing Prophet Abraham if he fully believed and unreservedly submitted himself to the will of Allah. We remember that in the Qur'ânic narrative, it was after much prayer that Abraham had a child, a son, and this happened in his old age. When Hazrat Ismail reached his early teens, Abraham saw in a dream that he was sacrificing him. As human sacrifice, particularly of the first-born son, was a practice prevailing among various nations around him, Prophet Abraham came to interpret the dream that he was being instructed by Allahu Taala to sacrifice Hazrat Ismail. Having obtained Hazrat Ismail's consent, Prophet Abraham tried to perform this act, but Allahu Taala stopped him and said: "You have already fulfilled the vision" (*Surah Saffat* 37:104-105). It was Abraham's complete resignation to Allah's command and his absolute surrender to whatever things he had, even giving-up his beloved child that merited him nearness to Allah and not the actual sacrificing of Ismail. To mark this event of Prophet Abraham's absolute surrender, the practice of the sacrifice of an animal was instituted, which takes place annually at the time of the *Hajj* pilgrimage to Makka.

Regarding the animal that Muslims are required to sacrifice, the Qur'ân unequivocally says: "Not their flesh, nor their blood reaches Allah. What reaches Him is your righteousness" (*Surah Hajj* 22:37). According

The Qur'ân tells us that the All-Merciful Allah is the One Who sustains or feeds all creatures and is not fed by anyone. In truth, Almighty Allah is in no need of our thanks or praise.





Consulting with and appreciating the opinions of those under one's authority is certainly a sacrifice but it can lead to perfect unity and harmony in the community.

to Hazrat Shah Waliullah Dehlavi, a famous Naqshbandi saint and *muhaddith* scholar of India, this verse clearly means that what reaches Allah is the sacrifice of our very own self, that is, the sacrifice and surrender of our animalistic desires or bestial *nafs* (lower desires) as symbolized by the animal being offered (See Shah Waliullah, *Aqidat-ul Hassanab-e-Ahlus Sunnah* [The Pure Creed of Sunnis], Chapter 14, Section 3). As per Hazrat Shah Waliullah Dehlavi, when the animal is being sacrificed, the sacrificer is explicitly making the direct action while implicitly intending (*niyyah*) that he is sacrificing and slaughtering his animalistic *nafs* (the lower desires or base ego) within himself. This is the significant purpose and profound meaning of the sacrifice which has been ordained by Almighty Allah and continued as a practice in Islam up to now and until the Day of Judgment.

Significance of the Qur'anic Concept of "Sacrifice" in Islamic Ideology and Ethics

Aside from the call to unity of mankind through the holy personage of Prophet Abraham, who is considered to be the Father of Believers as well as Father of the Monotheistic Faiths (Judaism, Christianity and Islam), another lesson to be learned from the Feast of Sacrifice (*Eid-ul-Adha*) is the true meaning of "sacrifice" in Islamic perspective. As we have already explained in the earlier section, the ceremonial sacrificing of an animal at *Eid-ul-Adha* is symbolic of killing the

animal passions within ones' self. By willing to sacrifice his only child, Prophet Abraham was sacrificing everything in his life for the sake of gaining Allah's pleasure. Prophet Abraham was given a son at a very old age; Hazrat Ismail, was not only a source of love and affection for Prophet Abraham, but also of strength economic support and security to him in his old age. Yet Prophet Abraham was willing to sacrifice all of this in order to submit to what Allah has commanded. And this is the true meaning of sacrifice, as we are told in the Qur'an: "Not their (animal's) flesh, nor their blood, reaches Allah, but to Him is acceptable observance of duty on your part" (*Surah Hajj 22:37*). Thus, true sacrifice for Allahu Taala is not the offering of food, money or even another's life and property, but rather the sincere willingness to wholeheartedly submit to His will. Such loyalty to Allah and not to anything else—not even to one's most beloved relations on earth! This is, in fact, a perfect illustration of firm faith in Allah's will. Nothing, not even the life of his only son, could compete with Abraham's allegiance to His beloved Creator.

There is also another aspect of the Abrahamic sacrifice in this Qur'anic narrative that is often overlooked by many. When Prophet Abraham was given the vision from Allahu Taala that he interpreted as a request to sacrifice his son, Ismail, he then went and asked his son for his opinion and his consent! He was a father, in a position of authority over his child, yet he consulted with his son and

sought his advice (See *Surah Saffat* 37:102). This point is so crucial in the narrative, so much so that Hazrat Shah Waliullah Dehlavi declared that the ‘sacrifice’ is both Abraham and Ismail’s sacrifice (See Shah Waliullah, *Aqidat-ul Hassanaab-e-Ablus Sunnah* [The Pure Creed of Sunnis], Chapter 15, Section 7). Consulting with others is certainly a sacrifice for it comprises the giving up of one’s power, authority and control. The great principle of consultation, mutual agreement and consent, which are the very cornerstone of *Sunni ijmaah* (Islamic consultative democracy), was shown by Prophet Abraham even under these trying and difficult conditions. Every person in a position of authority over others, whether a president of a nation, a monarch or a leader of an Islamic society, should learn from this beautiful precedent set by Prophet Abraham. Consulting with and appreciating the opinions of those under one’s authority is certainly a sacrifice but it can lead to perfect unity, understanding, amity and harmony in the community. As in the case of Prophet Abraham and his son Hazrat Ismail, it is related in the Qur’ân that “both of them submitted to Allah” (See *Surah Saffat* 37:103). Thus, *Eid-ul-Adha* also provides an opportunity to acknowledge the importance of the principle of mutual consultation, a necessary sacrifice for good leadership and a precondition to peace and unity in the Islamic *Ummah*.

To deepen our reflection on the sacrifice of Abraham and Ismail we can surmise that there is another kind of ‘sacrifice of son’ as well, which is greatly beneficial to the piety of

the family. Often parents tolerate and cater to the wrong ambitions, habits, vices and desires of their children, out of misguided love, rather than correcting them. For instance, fathers in position of authority misuse their leadership power to allow wrongdoings, flagrant misdeeds and injustice by their children to continue unchecked. The worst examples of this are when wayward children of presidents and rulers feel free to violate the law of the land as well as transgress the rules of ethical sensibilities because the father condone the evil doings of their son and does not stop them nor allow the law to take action against them. These are occasions when a father should sacrifice his love for the son in the path of justice and righteousness.

Pilgrimage (Hajj) –A Practical Illustration of “Unity” and “Sacrifice” in Islam

The lessons of unity that one derives from the observance of the Feast of Sacrifice are all practically manifested in the *Hajj* pilgrimage. People of all nations, colors, socio-economic status and ethnicities, come together as equals, standing shoulder to shoulder as they circumambulate the Holy *Ka’bah* in their simple white sheets: offering prayers to the One Sovereign Ruler of All, Allah Almighty. There is no better example of the expression of human unity and oneness of community other than what is shown by Islam through the various rites in the *Hajj* pilgrimage. Moreover, the pilgrims voluntarily suffer

Eid-ul-Adha also provides an opportunity to acknowledge the importance of the principle of mutual consultation, a necessary sacrifice for good leadership and a precondition to peace and unity in the Islamic Ummah.



the hardships of the journey, giving up their homes and native lands, surrendering the various normal luxuries one is accustomed back home, incurring the costs of travel and experiencing various physical difficulties. Indeed, such devotion is unique in the world, a true sacrifice, an ultimate display of selflessness—even dying in the desert if it needs be for the sake of fulfilling the rites of pilgrimage.

The Holy *Ka'bah* itself, the focal point of the *Hajj* pilgrimage, specifically, is a monument to the absolute oneness of Allahu Taala, for it was cleansed by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his Companions) of all 360 idols that were inside it and restored to a place where the One True God Allah Almighty was, and is still today, the only One worshipped and glorified. From the perspective of Islamic Sufism, the heart is the *Ka'bah* or the house of Allah inside the human person. And just as the idols and deities of polytheists were removed from the physical structure of the *Ka'bah* that is considered the heart of Islam, so too, it is understood that the purpose of the *Hajj* is to sacrifice the many evil idols hidden within the *Ka'bah* of own one's heart just as well.

Surely, the *Hajj* pilgrimage, one of the five pillars of Islam, an obligatory duty given to every able-bodied Muslim, presents an opportunity to put into practice the fundamental lessons learned from the festival celebrating the holy personage of Abraham. The lesson that Allah intends for us in the sacrifice of Abraham is to be ever prepared

to sacrifice, when required in the cause of Islam, whatever we hold dearest to us, be it our lives, wealth, our family and loved-ones, our position in society, relationships, etc. It is not the thing we sacrifice that matters, but the sacrifice of our attachment to it and of our desire to possess and keep it, when that desire conflicts with doing our duty to Allah Almighty. True sacrifice of life is to spend our life working for the cause of Islam, only for the sake of winning Allah's pleasure.

In conclusion, we must remember once more that the sacrifice of an animal at *Eid-ul-Adha* is simply a token of our firm resolve to make real sacrifices of those animalistic desires hiding within our heart and mind. On every *Eid-ul-Adha*, year after year, we should strive to give up at least one bad habit or vice permanently. It is in doing this which is the real sacrifice that Allah accepts from us. Aside from the ritual sacrificing of an animal on this occasion in remembrance of Prophet Abraham's ultimate sacrifice, if we also strive to sacrifice our prideful ego, slaying our animalistic passions and idols of selfishness, vanity and self-love within ourselves, and reaffirm our commitment to submit to Allahu Taala's will every day of our lives, then we will have truly learned and benefited from the narrative of Prophet Abraham and his son Hazrat Ismail's sacrifice. In the faithful application of this lesson of *Eid-ul-Adha* lies the prospect of establishing unity and peace and of winning Allah's favor and pleasure. May Almighty Allah give us the guidance and the strength to put these precious lessons into practice. Amen, a thousand times, Amen!





Illnesses of the

Heart Series: Miserliness

If the one who is forgiven all sins, the Prophet (upon him peace) begs for protection from this illness, then it should cause one to shudder at the thought of this illness entering his/her heart without the guarantee of having been forgiven.

“Woe to every (kind of) scandal-monger and backbiter, (One) Who pileth up wealth and layeth it by thinking that his wealth would make him last forever! By no means! He will be sure to be thrown into that which breaks to pieces. And what will explain to thee that which Breaks to Pieces? (It is) the Fire of (the Wrath of) Allah kindled (to a blaze) which doth mount (Right) to the hearts: It shall be made into a vault over them in columns outstretched’.” (Al-Humaza, 104:1-9)

The Prophet Muhammad (upon him peace) often made the *dua* “O Allah! I seek refuge in you from miserliness” and indeed he was the manifestation of the attribute of Allah; “The Most Generous”. This fact alone has to make one understand the gravity of the situation for those who are miserly. The mere fact that Allah always condemns the miser to Hell fire in the Qur’ân must emblazon on the hearts of the Muslim *Ummah* the necessity, the urgency, of avoiding being miserly. If the one who is forgiven all sins, the Prophet (upon him peace) begs for protection from this illness,

Sayyidina Ali once said “Miserliness is dishonor. Patience is bravery. Piety is a shield against hell. Cowardice is an inferiority complex.”



then it should cause one to shudder at the thought of this illness entering his/her heart without the guarantee of having been forgiven.

The Companions of the Prophet (upon him peace), even after his death, never allowed the gravity of this illness to leave them. When he was the Caliph, Sayyidina Abu Bakr once said to a person who called him miserly: “Do you say, ‘You are like a miserly to me?’ There is no worse disease than miserliness” (*Al-Muwatta*) and Sayyidina Ali once said “Miserliness is dishonor. Patience is bravery. Piety is a shield against hell. Cowardice is an inferiority complex.”

Its effect on a society can be understood in a *hadith* found in the writings on Imam Ghazali: “The Prophet said: Save yourselves from miserliness, because the nations before you were destroyed by it. Miserliness enjoined them to tell falsehoods and so they spoke falsehood. Miserliness enjoined them to make oppression and so they become oppressors. Miserliness enjoined them to cut blood ties and so they cut it off.”

It is for this reason the Allah in the Qur’ân reminds and warns those who would be miserly of the only fate which awaits them. A look back on Humaza, it is said “with certainty” that the one who

hoards and amasses wealth, and does not use it for the service of Allah, will be thrown in to Hellfire; the flames and heat of which are so strong that it will break the person into pieces. If one thinks about the pops of embers off a log, or the explosion of a clay brick heated too much, one can see an insufficient example of the meaning of this verse. These are the ones who foolishly thought their hoards of wealth would extend their lives, yet all it does is extend their torment. The immortality of the hellfire is an evil abode indeed.

In another verse in the Qur’ân Allah continues the warning that the one who hoards is actually being beckoned to by the Hellfire and explains that miserliness, like worry, is a result of impatience with Allah:

By no means! For it would be the Fire of Hell! Plucking out (his being) right to the skull! Inviting (all) such as turn their backs and turn away their faces (from the Right) And collect (wealth) and hide it (from use)! Truly man was created very impatient. Fretful when evil touches him; and miserly when good reaches him.” (*Al-Ma’arij* 70:15-20)

About such people who are mentioned in this verse, Allah’s Messenger (upon him peace) said: “The generous man is near to Allah, near to Paradise, near to men and far from Hell, but the miserly man is far from



The Prophet said: “The generous man is near to Allah, near to Paradise, near to men and far from Hell, but the miserly man is far from Allah, far from Paradise, far from men and near to Hell. Indeed, an ignorant man who is generous is dearer to Allah than a worshipper who is miserly” (Tirmidhî).

Allah, far from Paradise, far from men and near to Hell. Indeed, an ignorant man who is generous is dearer to Allah than a worshipper who is miserly.” (Tirmidhî)

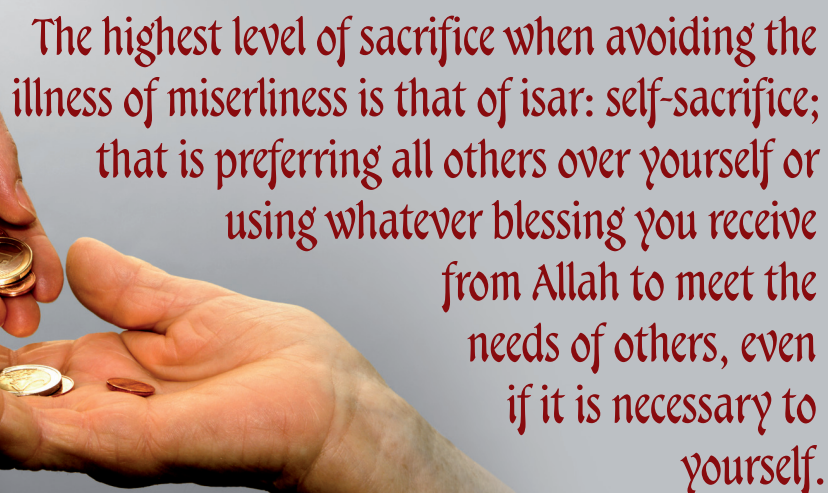
It is clear that miserliness is destructive to the heart and soul of the person whose is infected by it. They lose their patience, they worry when they should be seeking guidance and help from their Lord, and they worry about their worldly future; at the cost of their eternal future. Even when the blessings of Allah are bestowed upon them in some abundance they withhold sharing it to such accesses that it begins to pile up and does neither the withholder nor their society any good.

Miserliness can be divided into two aspects: the *Shari'a* side and the *mur'u'a* (gentlemanly) aspect. The *Sharia'a* aspect is miserliness with regard to the requirements by Law; for instance, one who is miserly in *zakat* and *sadaqa*, perhaps for some fear of poverty. Another part of this is if one is miserly with their family upon whom they have been admonished to be generous; such as a man being miserly toward his wife or children (even after divorce), or his parents in their advancing age. On the other side, the gentlemanly aspect deals with creditors and hosts. They are not required necessarily to be generous, but treating others without empathy is considered reprehensible.

For example, one day Imam Abu Hanifa was walking on the street when he saw a man coming from the other direction that owned him money. Briefly he thought to ask for some payment on the amount when he saw that at the same time the man saw him and crossed the street to avoid him. Imam Abu Hanifa was heartbroken over the event and went to the man and asked him for what reason he crossed the street, to which the man replied that he has done so out of embarrassment; he knew that he owed Imam Abu Hanifa the debt for some time, but was as of yet unable to repay him. At that Imam Abu Hanifa immediately released him of the debt to avoid the man having to feel this embarrassment.

In another example, there was a wealthy man who would send the servant to collect the debts owed to him. He would instruct the servant that if he found the person from whom he was to collect without means to pay the debt, then the servant would absolve them of the debt. This man died with no good deeds other than this, and in a *hadith*, the Prophet (upon him peace) said that Allah had forgiven the man just as he had forgiven the debts of the people.

The highest level of sacrifice when avoiding the illness of miserliness is that of *isar*: self-sacrifice; that is preferring all others over yourself or using whatever



The highest level of sacrifice when avoiding the illness of miserliness is that of isar: self-sacrifice; that is preferring all others over yourself or using whatever blessing you receive from Allah to meet the needs of others, even if it is necessary to yourself.

blessing you receive from Allah to meet the needs of others, even if it is necessary to yourself. One of the great stories from the Battle of Yarmuk came from Huzayfah. He raced around the battlefield among the injured searching for his cousin. When he found him he brought him some water for he was calling “water, water”. Just as he brought the cup to the lips of his cousin, they heard the voice of Hisham ibn As calling out “water, water”. His cousin told him to take the water to the other man, which he did. Again just as he raised the cup to the lips of Hisham, a third man called out “water, water”. Hisham ordered Huzayfah to the third man. Huzayfah found the third man just as he was breathing his last breath, and raced back to Hisham, whom he found had also died. He finally returned to his own cousin to find he, as well, had expired... none of them had ever touched the water.

This level of self-sacrifice is the highest and should be the aim of each and every Muslim. But this is not an easy level to grasp, for the *nafs* (ego) always wills man toward self-preservation and satisfaction. However, by remembering the condemnations in the Qur’ân against those who leave this illness in the heart, without repentance, one may find the cure. By reciting the characteristics of the one who is saved from the poisons of this illness, one can avoid falling to the

pitfalls of miserliness in this world and the Hellfire in the next.

Continuing the verse above Allah declares:

Not so those devoted to prayer. Those who remain steadfast to their prayer; And those in whose wealth is a recognized right for the (needy) who asks and him who is prevented (for some reason from asking); and those who hold to the truth of the Day of Judgment; and those who fear the displeasure of their Lord for their Lord’s displeasure is the opposite of peace and tranquility; and those who guard their chastity except with their wives and they whom their right hands possess for they are not to be blamed. But those who trespass beyond this are transgressors. And those who respect their trusts and covenants; and those who stand firm in their testimonies; And those who guard (the sacredness) of their worship; such will be the honored ones in the Gardens of (Bliss). — (Al-Ma’arij, 70:21-35)

The remedy for miserliness can be found in doing the opposite of one’s desires. If one desires to hoard, then one should spend for the sake of Allah. If one desires to amass wealth, then one should find a cause to devote a share of one’s wealth to or even start a *waqf* or fund for charitable deeds. The most important thing is to find balance in the generosity, as the Qur’ân tells us: “Those

who when they spend are not extravagant and not miserly but hold a just (balance) between those (extremes)”. (Al-Furqan, 25:67)

Other ways that one can cure the disease of miserliness that has settled in to the heart are by taking a daily dose of these medicines:

1. Appreciate the reason wealth has been created, for Allah does wish his blessings to be amassed and withheld;
2. Search for *halal* (legitimate) sources of income for the money from these sources come with their own blessing and their own protection;
3. Be proportionate about the amount of earnings one makes. There used to be a time among the *Ummah* that a shop owner,

having earned what he needed for the day would close his shop so that other shop keepers could earn a share that day as well;

4. Be honest and modest and have good motives for earning money. Sayyidina Ali once said: In all your actions keep yourself confined to the Divine service and things which help it. Your dress, your sleep, your eating and drinking are all Divine services if done with that object in mind.

May Allah protect us from the poison of miserliness. May Allah inspire our hearts to Divine service, and earning for the sake of spending in His way. May Allah pour forgiveness and Mercy upon us and save us from the certainty of the Hellfire as a result of this poison deteriorating our hearts. Ameen.

The remedy for miserliness can be found in doing the opposite of one's desires. If one desires to hoard, then one should spend for the sake of Allah. If one desires to amass wealth, then one should find a cause to devote a share of one's wealth to or even start a waqf for charitable deeds.





MY JOURNEY TO ISLAM:

Reading the Prophet's Biography Led Me to Islam

When I took my Shahadah a few months later, after reading and asking so many questions, I felt like I could not wait even one more day to convert to Islam.

WISDOM: Tell us a little bit about your background and what made you decide to convert to Islam?

My name is Amanda Richards and I am half Irish and half Bulgarian. I work as a teacher in Ireland. I was born in Bulgaria in 1985 and I grew up in a very strict traditional Christian family. My family wanted to guarantee that we will be brought up as Christian, in the Orthodox way.

We went to Oman for a holiday and I was like 17 or 18 years old and we did a tour in Muscat on the second day of our holiday, and it was Friday. Suddenly the *adhan* (call to prayer) came for the prayer time and everything stopped. People stopped their cars, took their prayer rugs and just went out to pray on the streets. At that moment the sound of the *adhan* changed my heart, and I did not know what it was but it never left me the same, it changed something and it stayed. I decided to learn what *adhan* actually says.

After we returned back, I started to search the meaning of *adhan* and I also searched the life of the Prophet Muhammad (upon him be



We, Muslims, have a mission in this life. Within the community we should call the people to Islam with our good preaching and our best character.

peace). The more I read, the more I became amazed. The more I read, the more I loved the Prophet (upon him peace).

When I took my *Shahadah* (testimony of faith in Allah and the Prophet) a few months later, after reading and asking so many questions, I felt like I could not wait even one more day to convert to Islam. And since then my parents are supportive of me, even of my wearing hijab. They have not converted yet. Truly only Allah can open our hearts. I keep making *dua* (supplications) for them.

WISDOM: What was the most surprising thing you learned about Prophet Muhammad?

When I read the life of the Prophet (upon him peace) and the covenants of the Prophet with various non-Muslim communities, I was not the least bit surprised at his tolerance. What amazed me the most was not just his tolerance: It was the deep and profound love and affection that he expressed towards other Judeo-Christian communities.

And the second thing that amazed me a lot was the role of the Muslim women during the time of the Prophet. The Prophet (upon him peace) described women as “the twin halves of men,” which emphasized the idea that their role in society is complementary to that of men.

WISDOM: What were some big changes in your life after you converted to Islam?

The first change I made was that I started dressing more modestly. Eventually I started wearing *hijab*. The process was more gradual for me so that those close to me were already used to seeing me dressed in long sleeves in summertime and having my hair covered in some sort of way. I prayed about it many times because this was one of the hardest changes for me to make.

Giving up alcohol was more difficult because it is such a large part of our social culture where I live and is offered at almost every family gathering.

Since I converted to Islam the most challenging changes have all been internal. The more I learn about Islam the more I am challenged to be compassionate, kind, well-mannered, patient, well-intentioned, pious, humble...

WISDOM: What are some beautiful aspects that you like about Islam, which you cannot find in other religions?

The sense of sisterhood among women. I love praying alongside my sisters in Islam and sharing with them. The Holy Prophet (upon him peace) said:

“A man went to visit a brother of his in another village. Allah sent an angel to wait for him on the road. When the man came along,

the angel asked him, 'Where are you headed?' He said, 'I am going to visit a brother of mine who lives in this village.' The angel asked, 'Have you done him any favor (for which you are now seeking repayment)?' He said, 'No, I just love him for the sake of Allah.' The angel told him, 'I am a messenger to you from Allah, sent to tell you that He loves you as you love your brother for His sake.'"

And we are encouraged to tell one another, to promote a loving bond between each other.

Anas said that a man was with the Prophet (upon him peace), when another man passed by. The first man said, "O Messenger of Allah, indeed I truly love this man." The Prophet (upon him peace) asked him, "Have you let him know that?" He said, "No." The Prophet (upon him peace) said, "Tell him." He caught up with him and told him, "Truly I love you for the sake of Allah," and the man said, "May Allah love you who loves me for His sake."

WISDOM: What is it like to be a good Muslim wife and a mother?

To my understanding, becoming Muslim meant following the advice of the Qur'ân and *Sunnah* (the manner of life of the Prophet), which means things like making an effort when I catch myself enumerating my husband's shortcomings; to stop myself and reflect on my own shortcomings, to try to see things from his viewpoint and to reflect on the things I appreciate about him and to give

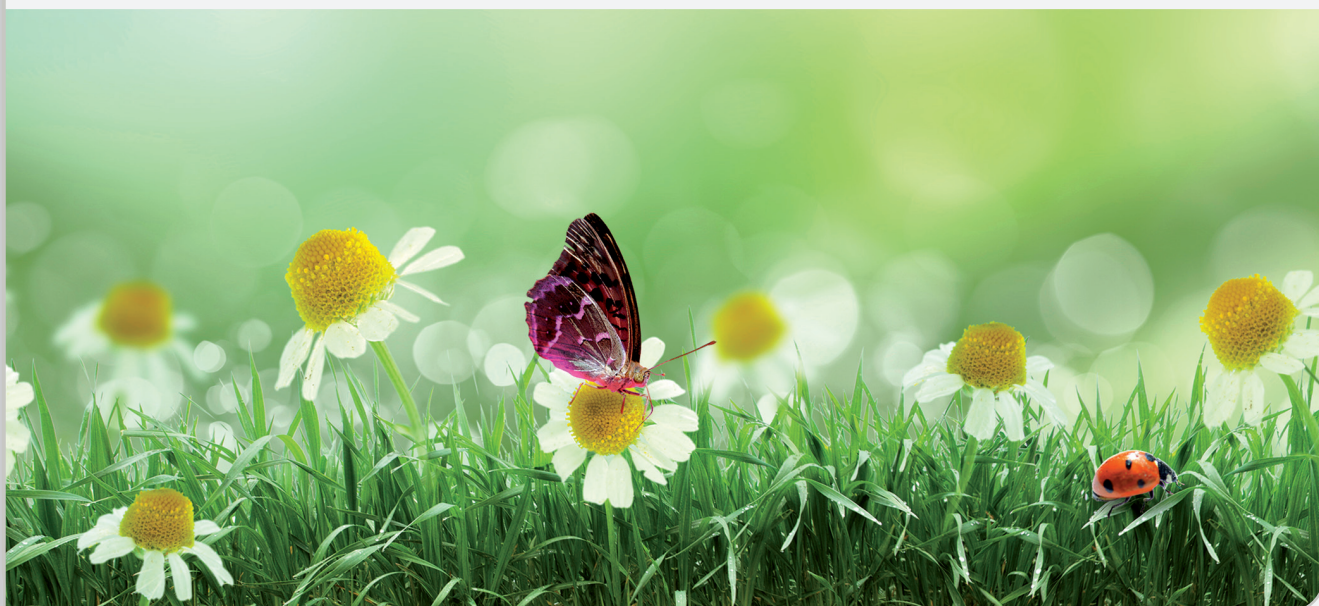
thanks to Allah for my marriage.

Being a mother is truly a blessing. Again following the Qur'ân and *Sunnah* means being gentle, patient and striving to be an ideal role model for your children. Children learn more from watching what you do than what you say. Like marriage, a healthy relationship with your children revolves around building trust between each other. To me it is very important to treat my child with utmost kindness and patience and in return I expect respect and good behavior. Children learn empathy and compassion or a lack thereof from their parents and caregivers. So how parents raise their children affects all of society. It is vitally important to understand the stages of development of your child.

WISDOM: In your opinion, how can Islam be better presented by us, Muslims?

We, Muslims, have a mission in this life. Within the community we should call the people to Islam with our good preaching and our best character.

The Prophet (upon him peace) said, "the best among you are the best in character (having good manners)." Muslims need to be always polite, humble, patient, loving and well mannered when he/she deals with others, whether they were Muslims or non-Muslims. Allah Almighty certainly does not love those who are offensive and rude to others.



The Biggest Test Of The *Prophet* *Abraham*

Life is a test from the start to the end. We call it a test of servanthood. Everyone is being tested by everything. Poverty and wealth, illness and health, status, rank, offspring and children, commands, prohibitions etc.

Allah created mankind in order to test. He created death in order to punish or reward according to the result of the test. This reality is expressed in the following way: "He Who created Death and Life, that He may try which of you is best in deed: and He is the Exalted in Might, Oft-Forgiving". (*Mulk*, 2)

Life is a test from the start to the end. We call it a test of servanthood. Everyone is being tested by everything. Poverty and wealth, illness and health, status, rank, offspring and children, commands, prohibitions etc. "Be sure we shall test you with something of fear and hunger, some loss in goods or lives or the fruits (of your toil), but give glad tidings to those who patiently persevere". (*Baqarah*, 155). With respect to the result of all struggles, servanthood is the proving struggle.

The ones who were put through the greatest tests were the prophets. This is because they took the greatest and the noblest duty upon themselves. They are also the most beautiful examples of servanthood. The Prophet (upon

him peace) was asked as to who are the ones with the heaviest tests. He remarked: "The prophets and other people in accordance with their ranks." (*Tirmidhi, Zuhd*)

Every prophet was tested in accordance with himself. The test of Abraham (upon him peace), the father of the prophets, was a clear and absolute test in accordance with its mention in the Qur'ân. Abraham (upon him peace) was tested by his father Azar, the king Nimrod and the Babylonians and their idols. As a consequence of his struggle against the idolaters, he was thrown into the fire. Allah rescued him from the fire. However, Prophet Abraham's test to sacrifice his son was very difficult. This is because he had grown old, was really fond of his child and wished for the continuation of his lineage. This was a natural desire. Abraham (upon him peace) prayed to his Lord as follows: "O my Lord! Grant me a righteous (son)!" (*Saffat*, 100). Since she thought this request of Abraham could not be fulfilled, his elderly wife Sarah requested that he marry his slave Hajar. Upon this, Prophet Abraham married Hajar and Hajar brought a child named Ismail into the world. "So We gave him the good news of a boy ready to suffer and forbear." (*Saffat*, 101)

Once there was a child from Hajar, Sarah became unhappy due to envy and sadness and wanted to distance herself from Abraham (upon him peace) and Hajar. In accordance with Allah's command, Prophet Abraham accepted Sarah's wish. Allah informed Abraham about taking Hajar and Ismail to Makkah. At that time, Ismail was still an infant. Abraham accompanied the child and his mother. Allah's will was guiding him. He continued the journey until Allah commanded to stop in a desolate, barren and empty place where the Ka'ba would be built in the future. Eventually he settled his wife Hajar and Ismail in Makkah and he returned, entrusting them to Allah. However, he didn't dismiss them from his mind at all. From time to time he visited. On one of these visits he saw himself being commanded to sacrifice his son Ismail in a dream.



Every prophet was tested in accordance with himself. The test of Abraham (upon him peace), the father of the prophets, was a clear and absolute test in accordance with its mention in the Qur'ân. Abraham (upon him peace) was tested by his father Azar, the king Nimrod and the Babylonians and their idols.



**The father giving away
his son and the son
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Allah certainly does not
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to a test.**

The dreams of the prophets are true. They are at the level of divine revelation. At that time, Ismail had become old enough to walk." Then, when (the son) reached (the age of) (serious) work with him, he said: "O my son! I see in vision that I offer thee in sacrifice: Now see what is thy view!" (The son) said: "O my father! Do as thou art commanded: thou wilt find me, if Allah so wills one practising Patience and Constancy!" (*Saffat*, 102) According to what has been narrated Abraham had seen this dream on the nights of the 8th, 9th and 10th of Zul-Hijjah, the nights of Al-Tarwiya, Arafah and Nahr. This dream was on the level of a command which it is compulsory for a prophet to fulfil. Abraham did not attempt to carry out this command upon his son Ismail by force. Rather he preferred to consult with him because he wanted to ensure beforehand that he would gain reward and good deeds through his obedience and submission.

The expression "My sweet little son" shows the deep affection Abraham harboured for his son. Despite this, he kept Allah's command in the foreground. It is necessary not to forget how terrifying a test this was.

Ismail's (upon him peace) submission is a heroic example for children and young people. Not every hero is charged with extending his neck to the knife in response to Allah's command. Especially in our days of secular morals and education, leave aside this kind of obedience and submission, a good number of children and young people won't give a

positive reply to even a simple request.

We certainly don't expect the role of a father like Abraham or a child like Ismail from anyone. This is an ideal picture. However, without even minimum obedience and discipline to enable the continuation of family and social order, neither the test of citizenship nor that of servanthood will be passed.

The test of Prophet Abraham and his son Ismail concludes as follows:

"So when they had both submitted their wills (to Allah), and he had laid him prostrate on his forehead (for sacrifice), We called out to him "O Abraham! "Thou hast already fulfilled the vision!" - thus indeed do We reward those who do right. For this was obviously a trial And We ransomed him with a momentous sacrifice:

And We left (this blessing) for him among generations (to come) in later times: "Peace and salutation to Abraham!" Thus indeed do We reward those who do right. For he was one of our believing Servants. And We gave him the good news of Isaac - a prophet, - one of the Righteous." (*Saffat*, 103-112)

This self-sacrifice of Abraham and Ismail is one of the greatest and highest events in the history of self sacrifice. Abraham was at his old age. This child was his life, his beloved child, the hope of his life, the inheritor of his name. Allah had commanded him to sacrifice his son to measure his faith, the level

of his obedience to Allah's command. The father and son passed the test by resisting every kind of human desire and weakness. In response to Allah's command they said "Certainly!" Words and pens are incapable of describing this self-sacrifice. Man's most valuable possession is his life and his beloved children. Since these are beloved, the utmost obedience and love can be shown to them. Anything that can be sacrificed from these will be sacrificed. There are two aspects of sacrifice in this picture. The father giving away his son and the son giving away himself. Allah certainly does not want the sacrifice of people. The purpose is to measure the level of self sacrifice, to be subjected to a test.

Jihad is a test of being able to surpass life, zakah of surpassing wealth, *hijrah* (migration) of surpassing one's native land. Leave aside

responding to Allah's command to surpass life, which test will those who can't even face the tiniest inconvenience pass? How can one who can't even sacrifice a sheep gifted by Allah claim servanthood next to an Abraham who was able to envisage sacrificing his son.

Ultimately the aim of all forms of worship is testing. Do the servants thank or do they not? Do they obey or do they not? The purpose of '*Haram*' (forbidden) things and prohibitions is this. The servants willpower to fulfil commands and resist prohibitions is their indicator. Allah addresses us in the Qur'ân as follows: "Do men think that they will be left alone on saying, "We believe", and that they will not be tested? We did test those before them, and Allah will certainly know those who are true from those who are false".

(*Ankabut*, 2-3)

The expression "My sweet little son" shows the deep affection Abraham harboured for his son. Despite this, he kept Allah's command in the foreground. It is necessary not to forget how terrifying a test this was.



THE INHERITANCE LEFT BEHIND BY Prophet Abraham

One of the prophets with the most information given about him in the Qur'ân is Prophet Abraham (upon him peace). Abraham came into the world from a pagan society. Many prophets whose names are mentioned in the Qur'ân came from his lineage.

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At a young age, Abraham withdrew from the idols that his father and his people were worshipping and displayed a brave struggle against them. He did not shy away from criticism even telling his father on this subject that "Lo! Abraham said to his father Azar: "Takest thou idols for gods? For I see thee and thy people in manifest error."¹

Ibrahim believed in Allah's existence and oneness with the wisdom he had been gifted upon and he showed his submission with the statement "For me, I have set my face, firmly and truly, towards Him Who created the heavens and the earth, and never shall I give partners to Allah."² He resisted the pagans on his own. (See. Maryam, 19/42-49; Anbiya, 21/52-67; Saffat, 37/85-99)

Upon Allah's command, Abraham took

his first child Ismail and his mother Hajar from Palestine to the Hijaz and left them close to the peak of mount Safa.³

According to the narration of Imam Bukhârî, Prophet Abraham (upon him peace) took Hajar and his son Ismail to Makkah. He left them on the upper-side of the well of Zamzam beside the Ka'bah. At that time there was no one in Makkah and there was no water there. He left a sack with dates inside and a skin full of water beside them. A while later Abraham was setting off to return when Ismail's mother Hajar called out following along after him saying "Oh Ibrahim! Where are you going leaving us in this valley with no people or anything?" Despite carrying on this call repeatedly, Abraham did not turn back and look at her. Finally, when Hajar asked "Oh Abraham! Did Allah command you to do this"? Prophet Abraham replied, "Yes". Upon this Hajar said: "In that case, Allah will not abandon us" and then she returned back to her child. Abraham continued on his journey. When he had reached a peak from which they could not see him, he turned towards the Ka'bah, lifted his hands and prayed with the following words:⁴

"O our Lord! I have made some of my offspring to dwell in a valley without cultivation, by Thy Sacred House; in order, O our Lord, that they may establish regular Prayer: so fill the hearts of some among men

with love towards them, and feed them with fruits: so that they may give thanks."⁵

As can be seen, Prophet Abraham settled a part of his lineage in a barren and rocky place unsuitable for agriculture; and turning towards the place where the Ka'bah would be built he made '*dua*' (supplication). The primary point of the '*dua*' was to establish the '*salah*' (prayer). Since praying the '*salah*' is at the top of the servant's duty, he first mentioned them establishing this as the foremost priority. Secondly he wished for Allah to incline people's hearts towards them.

Those people who serve their creator, who submit to Him, love Allah and Allah also makes other people love them. As a matter of fact, it is stated in a verse of the Qur'an that those who have good conduct will love Allah and others will also be made to love them. (See, Maryam, 19, 96)

By virtue of having been granted a mature wisdom and because he knew this fine point, Prophet Abraham first prayed to Allah to foreordain the '*salah*' (prayer) for his offspring and he left the rest of his wishes later. Allah accepted his '*dua*' and brought forth people from his offspring who performed the *salah*. The *salah* performing generations which came later had love for Prophet Ismail, his mother and the believers who descended from them.



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The Qur'ân informs us of the important '*dua*' Abraham (upon him peace) made: "And He gives you of all that ye ask for. But if ye count the favours of Allah, never will ye be able to number them. Verily, man is given up to injustice and ingratitude.

Remember Abraham said: "O my Lord! make this city one of peace and security: and preserve me and my sons from worshipping idols.

"O my Lord! they have indeed led astray many among mankind; He then who follows my (ways) is of me, and he that disobeys me, - but Thou art indeed Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.

"O our Lord! I have made some of my offspring to dwell in a valley without cultivation, by Thy Sacred House; in order, O our Lord, that they may establish regular Prayer: so fill the hearts of some among men with love towards them, and feed them with fruits: so that they may give thanks.

O our Lord! truly Thou dost know what we conceal and what we reveal: for nothing whatever is hidden from Allah, whether on earth or in heaven.

"Praise be to Allah, Who hath granted unto me in old age Isma'il and Isaac: for truly my Lord is He, the Hearer of Prayer!

O my Lord! make me one who establishes regular Prayer, and also (raise such) among my offspring O our Lord! and accept Thou

my Prayer."⁶

We should not forget that we perform the prayer and love the prayer with the blessings of this *dua* which Abraham (upon him peace) made. After he raised the foundations of the Ka'bah together with his son Ismail, he asked Allah for an '*ummah*' (community) who are Muslims and who worship Allah (see Baqarah, 2/128). Allah accepted this request of his and brought the last of the prophets and the '*sayyid*' (master) of the prophets Muhammad (upon him peace) from his lineage making us his '*ummah*'.

Prophet Abraham (upon him peace) supplicated in the form "O my Lord! bestow wisdom on me, and join me with the righteous; grant me honourable mention on the tongue of truth among the latest (generations)."⁷; and as a result of this, he was always remembered by later generations of believers. In every *salah* that they perform, all of the Muslims mention Abraham (upon him peace) and pray for him. Since he is the father of the prophets after him, Abraham has an exceptional place among the members of the three Semitic religions, Muslims, Jews and Christians. Allah took him as a friend. The value given to Prophet Abraham by Allah is explained as follows: "Who can be better in religion than one who submits his whole self to Allah, does good, and follows the way of Abraham the true in Faith? For Allah did take Abraham for a friend."⁸

In the Qur'ân, the inheritance which Abraham (upon him peace) left and which made him the father of monotheism is referred to with importance: "Behold! Abraham said to his father and his people: "I do indeed clear myself of what ye worship:

"(I worship) only Him Who made me, and He will certainly guide me."

And he left it as a Word to endure among those who came after him, that they may turn back (to Allah)."⁹

The "word" mentioned in the verse which is left behind as an inheritance is '*tawhid*' (monotheism). For this reason, there was no

lack of believers in Allah from his offspring. There were even people among the community of Makkah who were described as a '*jabiliyya*' people (ignorant of divine guidance) who showed loyalty Abraham's beliefs when the Prophet (upon him peace) had not yet been addressed with the revelation. May our Lord make all believers firm upon this path.

Notes: 1) Surah An'am, 6/74. 2) Surah An'am, 6/79. 3) Baydâvî, Anvârû't-Tanzîl, Bayrut, ts. III, 533. For in-depth information see: Ismail Yigit, Peygamberler Tarihi, Istanbul, 2005, s. 236-237, 241. 4) Bukhârî, Musâkât, Anbiyâ, 9, Ahmad b. Hanbal, I, 347. 5) Surah Ibrahim, 14/37. 6) Surah Ibrahim, 14/34-40. 7) Surah Shuarâ, 26/83-84. 8) Surah Nisâ, 4/125. 9) Surah Zukhruf, 43/26-28.



THE MOST LEARNED

of Halal and Haram:

Muadh bin Jabal

During the battle of Hunayn, our Prophet left him as the leader of Makkah and ordered him to teach the people the Qur'ân and explain the religious fundamentals of Islam. After carrying out this role, he also continued to teach the Qur'ân and religious knowledge after going to Madinah.

Muadh bin Jabal, born in Madinah in the year 605, was from the greatest of the companions. He was a righteous person who was very careful with the observance of what is '*halal*' (permissible) and '*haram*' (forbidden).

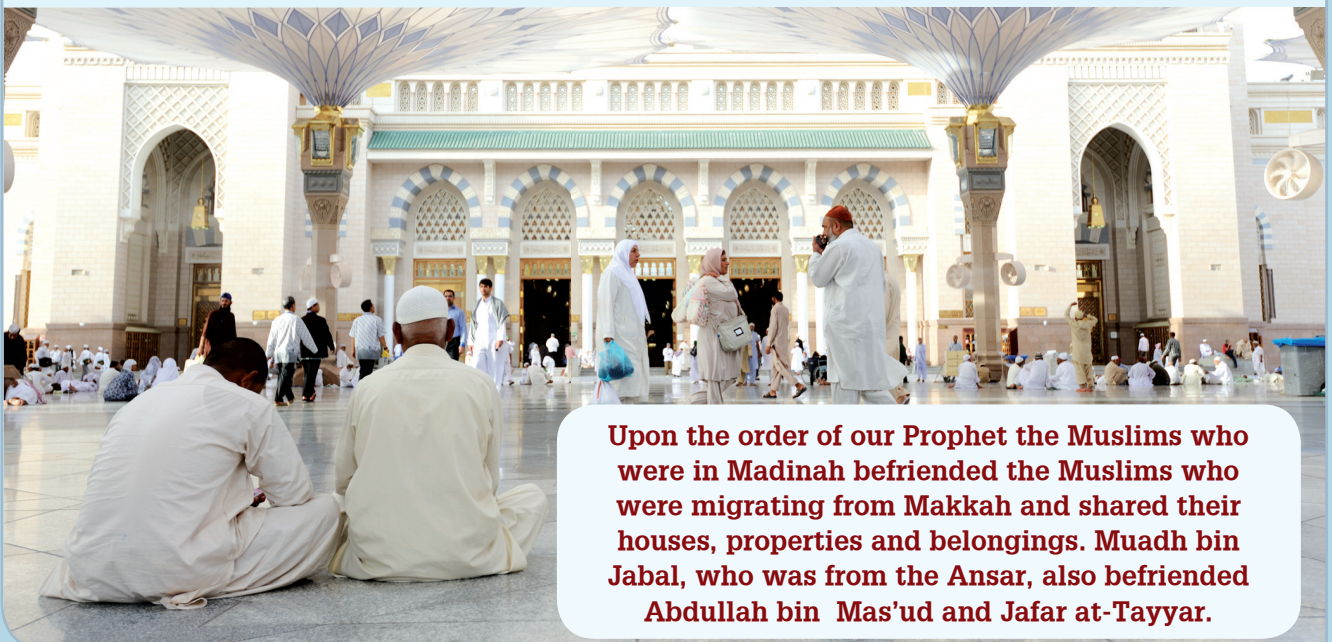
During the second treaty of Aqabah, Muadh bin Jabal, having promised to serve Islam, was one of the 70 Muslims from Madinah who were protecting the Prophet (upon him peace) as if they were protecting their own lives and property. He became Muslim when he was 16. When our Prophet and the companions made the '*hijra*' (migration) from Makkah to Madinah, all their properties and possessions remained in Makkah. Upon the order of our Prophet the Muslims who were in Madinah befriended the Muslims who were migrating from Makkah and shared their houses, properties and belongings. Muadh bin Jabal, who was from the *Ansar*, also befriended Abdullah bin Mas'ud and Jafar at-Tayyar.

Muadh bin Jabal participated in the battles of Badr, Uhud, Khandaq and Bani Quraydha and the conquest of Khaybar. He was also present during the conquest of Makkah and after this during the battle of Hunayn, our Prophet left him as the leader of Makkah and ordered him to teach the people the Qur'ân and explain the religious fundamentals of Islam. After carrying out this role, he also continued to teach the Qur'ân and religious knowledge after going to Madinah.

Muadh bin Jabal narrated as follows: One day I arrived in the presence of the Messenger of Allah. The Prophet (upon him peace) said to me "Oh Muadh! How did you stay awake this evening?" I replied: "Oh Messenger of Allah! I stayed awake believing in Allah". Upon this, the Messenger of Allah (upon him peace) remarked, "Oh Muadh! There is evidence for the truth of every statement of yours. What is the evidence for the truth of this statement?" I replied in the following way: "Oh Messenger of Allah! When I enter the daytime from the night, I don't expect another evening. Also when it is evening time, I do not expect to live until the morning. When I take a step, I do not assume that I will take a second. I know that every person has an '*ajal*' (time of death). I know that when the '*ajal*' comes, at that moment it will catch up with that person. All people will be collected on the Day of Judgement. Some of them will

be with the Prophet. Some of them will be with those who worship idols. I imagine as if I am seeing the punishment of the people of '*jahannam*' (hellfire) and the blessings of the people of '*jannah*' (heaven)." Upon this the Messenger of Allah remarked, "Oh Muadh! You have done well. Carry on thinking like this and do not ever stop."

During the period when the Prophet (upon him peace) was sending workers to Muslims towns charged with governance and *zakat* collection he turned to the companions one day after the '*fajr*' (dawn) prayer and remarked, "Who from amongst you will go to Yemen?" Sayyidina Abu Bakr said, "I will go oh Messenger of Allah". A while later our Prophet remarked, "Which of you will go to Yemen?" This time Sayyidina Umar said, "I will go, oh Messenger of Allah". A little later the Prophet again said, "Who from amongst you can go to Yemen?" Muadh bin Jabal stood up and said, "Oh Messenger of Allah! I will go." Upon this our Prophet (upon him peace) remarked, "Oh Muadh! This role is yours." Muadh bin Jabal who spent all his property for '*jihad*' in the way of Allah prepared to go to Yemen in order to take up the role of governance there, to explain Islam to the people, to teach the Qur'ân, to receive the *zakat* (alms-giving) collected in Yemen from those tasked with this duty and to resolve disputes by acting as judge. Before



Upon the order of our Prophet the Muslims who were in Madinah befriended the Muslims who were migrating from Makkah and shared their houses, properties and belongings. Muadh bin Jabal, who was from the Ansar, also befriended Abdullah bin Mas'ud and Jafar at-Tayyar.



During the caliphate of Sayyidina Umar, he was appointed as zakat officer in a town and later to teach religious knowledge and the Qur'ân in the region of Syria.

leaving, our Prophet (upon him peace) said the following to him: "You will encounter a community from the People of the Book. When you reach them, first invite them to attest that there is not god other than Allah and Muhammad is Allah's Messenger. If they accept this, inform them that Allah has made '*salah*' (prayer) compulsory five times a day. If they do this then tell them that Allah has commanded the rich to give the *zakat* to the poor. If they accept this then be careful when collecting *zakat*! Do not (only) take the best of their possessions! Keep away from the curse of the wronged one. Allah immediately accepts the '*dua*' (supplication) of the wronged one."

Muadh said that: "The Messenger of Allah ordered taking from them a one-year old male from every 30 cows or a female calf and from every non-Muslim who has reached adulthood, one dinar or Yemeni cloth equivalent to it, one tenth from every crop irrigated with rain-water and one twentieth from things irrigated at a cost." When Muadh bin Jabal left to go to Yemen, our Prophet (upon him peace) walked with him for a while and when they bid each other farewell, he (upon him peace) remarked, "Oh Muadh, you might not be able to see me again after this year. Perhaps you will come to visit my mosque and my grave when you return here". On hearing this, Muadh bin Jabal

began weeping with sorrow. Our Prophet said, "Do not cry, Oh Muadh! Those who are spiritually close to me, are those who serve Allah properly wherever they are." and the Prophet later asked "When a case is brought to you and you judge between people, what will you judge with?"

Muaz bin Jabal said, "I will judge with Allah's book (the Qur'ân)."

The Prophet remarked, "What if you can't find it clearly in there?" to which he replied,

"I will judge with the '*sunnah*' (practice) of the Prophet". The Prophet (upon him peace) then remarked,

"What if you can't find it clearly in there" to which he replied,

"I will judge based upon my understanding, making '*ijtihad*' (reasoning independently)."

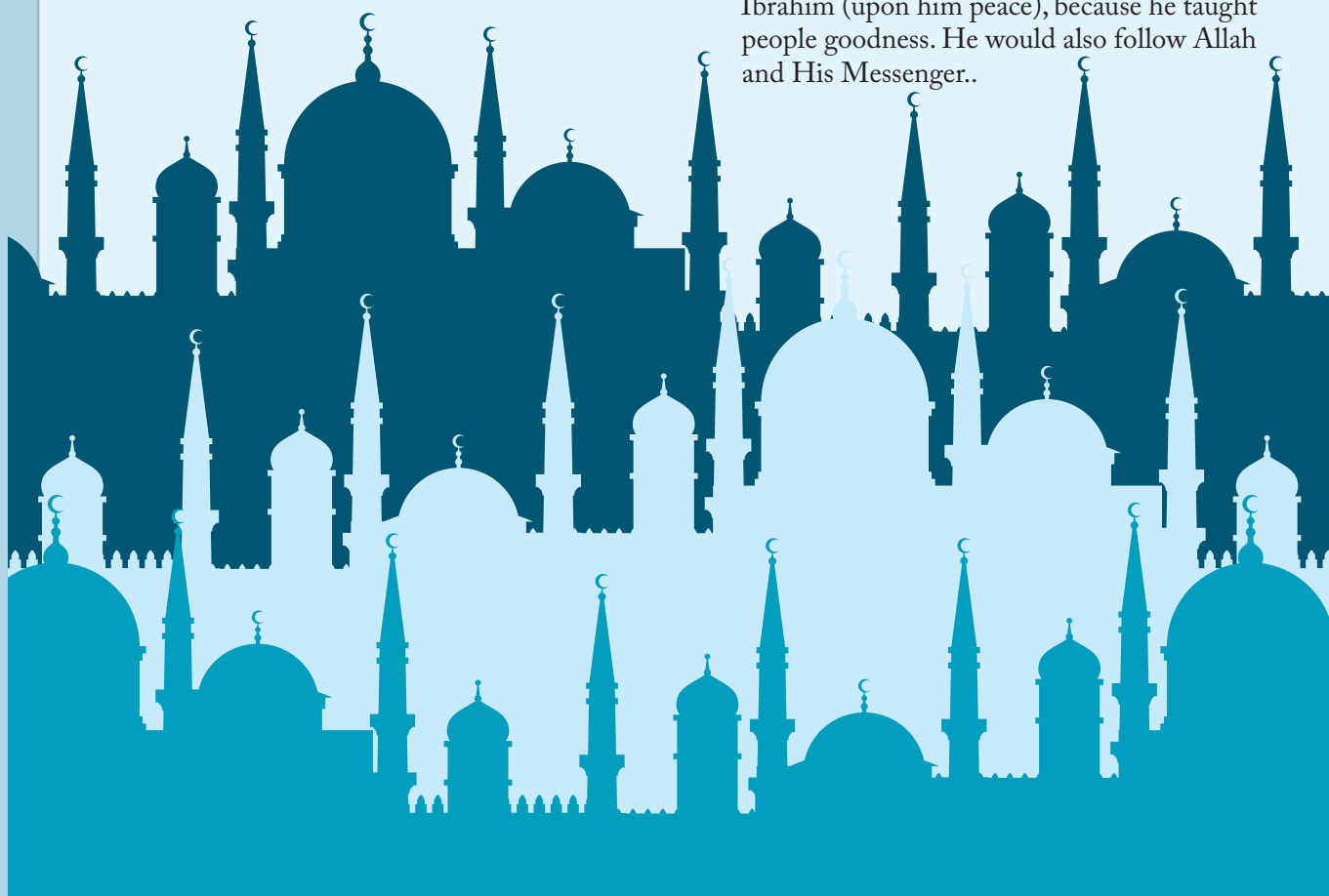
Being very pleased with this reply of Muadh bin Jabal the Holy Prophet (upon him peace) placed his blessed hand on his chest and remarked, "Alhamdulillah (all praises are due to Allah)! Allah has made the Prophet's envoy pleasing to the Messenger of Allah. Later he made '*dua*' for Muadh bin Jabal as follows: "May Allah protect you from calamities which come from all sides, may he ward off the evil of people and *jinn*s from you" and he remarked, "Allah causing one person to reach guidance because of you is better for you than the world."

Muadh bin Jabal stayed in Yemen for a long time. He fulfilled the role that was given to him. He also received the news of our Prophet's passing when he was there. Later he completed his service in Yemen and returned to Madinah. While he remained in Madinah, Muadh bin Jabal was made a member of the consultation committee chosen by Sayyidina Abu Bakr during his caliphate. Going to the area of Syria during this period, not only did he participate in the battles fought there but he also taught people religious knowledge and the Qur'an. During the caliphate of Sayyidina Umar, he was appointed as *zakat* officer in a town and later to teach religious knowledge and the Qur'an in the region of Syria. When he was carrying out this role in the region of Palestine, he fell ill with an infectious disease due to the plague which had spread here and at the age of 38 in the year 640 AH, he passed away in the town of Amwas between Jerusalem and Ramalah. May Allah have mercy on him.

The virtues of Muadh bin Jabal

Muadh bin Jabal's virtues and merits are many. The Messenger of Allah (upon him peace) praised him in many *hadiths*. "Muadh bin Jabal is from the religious scholars of the '*ummah*' (community) and is very advanced." "Among the people, the one who knows what Allah has made '*halal*' (permissible) and '*haram*' (forbidden), the best is Muadh bin Jabal." "Take the Qur'an (learn it) from these four people: Muadh bin Jabal, Ubay bin Ka'b, Abdullah bin Mas'ud and Salim Mawla Abu Hudhayfah."

"On the day of reckoning, Muadh will come to his place of gathering one step ahead of the scholars of my *ummah*" Anas bin Malik of the companions said that: "The Qur'an was collected from the following four people, Ubay bin Ka'b, Muadh bin Jabal, Zayd bin Thabit and Abu Zayd. All four of them are from the *Ansar*. Abdullah bin Mas'ud remarked that, "Muadh bin Jabal was like a '*jamaat*' (congregation) on the correct path following Allah and His Messenger (upon him peace). We would compare him to Ibrahim (upon him peace), because he taught people goodness. He would also follow Allah and His Messenger..



SAYYIDAH SAFIYYAH BINT HUYAY (III)

Sayyidah Safiyyah had lofty morals and the maturity to respond to those who treated her badly with kindness. She was a person who was intelligent, gentle and virtuous.

The Morals and Virtues of Sayyidah Safiyyah

The marriage of the Pride of Humanity to Sayyidah Safiyyah (r.ah), the daughter of Huyay, one of the leading Jews, was a means for the Haybar Jews to become closer and for the enmity between the Muslims and the Jews to be reduced, marking the start of friendly relations.

Sayyidah Safiyyah (r.ah) demonstrated closeness to the Jews to a degree that was noticeable and about which people complained: in fact, she was their representative in the households of happiness. One day, during the caliphate of Umar (ra), the *jariya* of Sayyidah Safiyyah (r.ah) came to the caliph and complained: “*O chief of the believers! Safiyyah loves Saturdays and continues the practices of the Jews.*”

Umar (ra) sent a man to investigate the truth of the situation. Our respected mother said: “*You ask me about Saturdays. Ever since Allah has blessed me with Fridays I have not loved that day. When it comes to your questions about the Jews, we are related and I am maintaining my ties with my relations.*”

Sayyidah Safiyyah (r.ah) later turned to her

jariya and asked her why she had slandered her owner. The girl replied “*The devil made me do it*”, confessing to her crime. The reaction of Sayyidah Safiyyah (r.ah) to this answer is magnificent in showing us to what a great degree she had adopted the morals of Islam. She said to the slave who had slandered her: “*Go, I give you your liberty!*”¹

As we have seen, Sayyidah Safiyyah (r.ah) had lofty morals and the maturity to respond to those who treated her badly with kindness. She was a person who was intelligent, gentle and virtuous. However, she had no patience for injustice. In fact, during the political upheaval that began during the caliphate of Uthman she was on the side of the caliphate of the believers and did not join in opposition to him; and at the same time she helped him to what extent she could. In this matter her slave, or according to another report, her nephew whom she had adopted, Kinana, tells us:

*“Safiyyah (r.ah) mounted a mule and came to the rebels to defend Uthman. While going there she met Ashtar an-Nahai. Ashtar, not knowing who was sitting on the mule, struck the mule on the face. Then Safiyyah (r.ah) turned to me and said: ‘Protect me, do not allow me to be humiliated!..’ Later she made a secret path between her house and Uthman’s. She stretched a plank between the two houses. In this way she took food and water to his house.”*² This action shows how courageous she was.

This mother of believers, who died

during the caliphate of Muawiya (ra) bin Abi Sufyan, was buried in the Baki cemetery.³ She reported ten hadiths.⁴ One of these can be found in both Bukhari and Muslim. May Allah be pleased with her.

Lessons to be Learned from Her Life

1-Sayyidah Safiyyah (r.ah) first heard about Islam while still young and a Jewess. Her tribe and family looked on Prophet Muhammad (saw) with hatred as he had not come from the Jewish people, and Sayyidah Safiyyah (r.ah) grew up in such an environment. Despite this environment of blind bigotry, intransigency and hatred, her heart was not blackened, her perception and discernment were not blinded, and her heart was not hardened. At the first opportunity, when she felt free to do so, she chose Islam. In fact, when in a position to choose freely for herself, rather than choosing freedom and her own tribe, she preferred belief in Allah and His Prophet and became one of Prophet Muhammad’s (saw) pure wives. Our own preferences should always be with Allah and His Prophet (saw).

2-In a short time the affection she felt for Prophet Muhammad (saw) became so great that immediately after their marriage Sayyidah Safiyyah (r.ah) was afraid that her tribe, which was misled, would cause him harm and she undertook the protection of the Prophet (saw) against every kind of danger.



After becoming Muslim, Sayyidah Safiyyah gave importance to the ties of kinship, and did not break off relations with relatives and friends; and thought of them even when she was dying.



The forgiveness shown by our Mother Sayyidah Safiyyah to the jariya who slandered her is a good example of how Muslim women should not harbour resentment, but rather forgive and thus be granted the forgiveness of Allah.

3-Prophet Muhammad (saw) did not hold back from responding to this affection and respect, and was with her constantly during the incertitude and pressure that occurred upon her return from Haybar. This situation of Prophet Muhammad (saw) is a good example of how a man should protect his wife against pressure and problems that come from those around them and how he should reassure and comfort his wife in times of trouble.

4-After becoming Muslim, Sayyidah Safiyyah (r.ah) gave importance to the ties of kinship, and did not break off relations with relatives and friends; and thought of them even when she was dying. Sayyidah Â'ishah (r.ah) defended Sayyidah Safiyyah (r.ah) against those who complained to her, when Sayyidah Safiyyah (r.ah) left an inheritance to her non-Muslim relatives, that it was necessary to respect the love and affection that Sayyidah Safiyyah (r.ah) had for her relatives.

5-The forgiveness shown by our Mother Sayyidah Safiyyah (r.ah) to the *jariya* who slandered her is a good example of how Muslim women should not harbour resentment, but rather forgive and thus be granted the forgiveness of Allah.

6-There are two different reports about how old Sayyidah Safiyyah was when she married Prophet Muhammad (saw), either 17 or 27. If we accept that she was 17 then,

if we remember that she had been married twice before marrying Prophet Muhammad (saw), then she had been married at a very young age for the Arab traditions. This event shows that the customs of marriage changes according to the climate, geography, culture, traditions and customs, and that it also changes throughout history.

7-It is very significant that Sayyidah Â'ishah (r.ah) acted not according to her emotions in the matter of Sayyidah Safiyyah's (r.ah) will, but rather according to justice and equity. This shows us which side we should uphold when caught up in a conflict.

8- The fact that Prophet Muhammad (saw) spent the first night after being married to Sayyidah Safiyyah (r.ah) just talking and not sleeping shows us to what degree he was concerned with the problems of his wives. Sayyidah Safiyyah (r.ah) was in need of a great deal of comforting and reassuring, having just lost her father and husband in battle; to the same extent women today are in need of the same interest and love when they become oppressed by the troubles of life. The matter that Prophet Muhammad (saw), as the "head of the family", gave the most importance to was "conversation with the members of the family." He made great efforts to not neglect this and it can even be said that he took precautions to ensure that he had "quality time" with his wives.

Prophet Muhammad (saw) was a

This marriage of Prophet Muhammad (saw) was also directed against lessening the resentment, grudge and hatred felt by the Jews; as with this marriage Prophet Muhammad (saw) became a relative of the Jewish tribe.



wonderful example in this way, because women, as part of their nature, are inclined to conversation and in particular are in need of someone to listen to them. For this reason, to ensure and bolster the peace of the family, a husband should devote a special time for listening to his wife's troubles; and he should take her seriously, thus showing her that he values his partner.

9- Finally, the following point should be made clear: the religion of Islam has never been a religion that belongs to any one race, tribe or class. According to Islam, there are two nations, the Nation of Believers and the Nation of Unbelievers. After a person believes in Islam, no matter what tribe, race or social status they come from, they are considered to be a "sibling" of other believers, with equal rights.

This marriage of Prophet Muhammad (saw) was also directed against lessening the resentment, grudge and hatred felt by the Jews; as with this marriage Prophet Muhammad (saw) became a relative of the Jewish tribe. Some of the Companions, including the wives of Prophet Muhammad (saw), had doubts about Sayyidah Safiyyah (as), remembering the former hostility, and remained distant from her. However, Prophet Muhammad (saw) was not pleased by this behavior and from time to time he was forced to seriously reprimand them for these actions.

In truth, both in the eras of the earlier Prophets and in that of Prophet Muhammad (saw), true believers emerged from the Jews, a people recognized for their life-long betrayal and enmity to Islam: true believers can still emerge from them today. Guidance to Islam is determined by Allah and no one can know when, or to whom, or for what reason guidance will be granted.

For this reason, it is our responsibility to be aware of the tricks and traps set by people with bad intentions and to take precautions against them. However, this defensive attitude must not be used against one who says that they have chosen Islam, rather we are to embrace the believer who has received guidance, even if they come from among our enemies. We cannot judge what is in their hearts: only Allah can know that. This is one of the most magnificent characteristics of our religion.

Muslims can never be the enemy of a tribe as a whole, even if they are the most ferocious enemies! In such an "enemy" society, the good and the bad, the leaders and those who are just merely living their lives, can never be held as one, even during battle, as this situation is contrary to the essence of Islam: humanity, justice, equity and fairness.

Endnotes: 1) Ibn-i Abdi'l-Berr, el-İstiâb, IV, 339; Ayşe Abdurrahman, Ibid., page: 120-121. 2) Ibn-i Sa'd, et-Tabakat, VIII, 128; Ayşe Abdurrahman, Ibid., page: 121-122. 3) Ibn-i Sa'd, et-Tabakât, VIII, 129; Ibn-i Hacer, el-Isabe, IV, 339. 4) Afzalurrahman, Ibid., II, page: 193.

ARAFAT:

The place where unity is commemorated

Arafat is the place where people get to know themselves and profess their servanthood abundantly. In that stopping area, upon that smooth platform; the vicinity of which is surrounded by enormous dark brown rocks, the pilgrims-to-be begin to comprehend for what reason and from where they came into the world with innermost feeling.

Arafat is the name of the mountain where the Hajj pilgrims stop for rest. It comes from a root meaning knowing, understanding, recognizing, and a beautiful smell. Among the specialties of Arafat mountain is: Adam and Hawa encountering and recognizing one another here, Prophet Abraham recognizing this place after seeing it from previous descriptions, Adam and Abraham learning the 'manasiq' (rites of the Hajj) here through angel Jibreel, Ismail finding and meeting his mother here again after parting from her for a while and the Hajj pilgrims who stop here professing Allah's lordship, sovereignty, and His being free of all wants while everyone exists in need of Him. Again it is here that the pilgrims understand their own incapacity, weakness and neediness, being cleansed from the dirt of their sins and earning a spiritual scent appropriate to 'Jannah' (gardens) near to Allah.¹

When the Prophet (upon him peace) was asked, "How is Hajj performed?", a reply was given as follows: "Hajj is Arafat (i.e. to be in Arafat). Those who reach Arafah have attended the Hajj."² Thus it may be clearly understood

from the '*hadith*' (prophetic narration) that without going out to Arafat on the day of 'Arafah' and without pausing there, the rite of Hajj is not accepted and Hajj is not completed. To pause at Arafat is the first and primary pillar of the Hajj. It is for this reason that millions of people run to Arafat in order to fulfil the first pillar of the Hajj. They all pause together at the appointed day and time and they exert all their efforts in order to fulfil this duty.

Arafat is the place where people get to know themselves, understand their nothingness and profess their servanthood abundantly. In that stopping area, upon that smooth platform; the vicinity of which is surrounded by enormous dark brown rocks, the pilgrims-to-be begin to comprehend for what reason and from where they came into the world with innermost feeling. They realize the reason for their existence and where the true journey begins and comes to themselves. "Nay, man will be evidence against himself."³ Man is the eye to his own heart. This verse is very worthy of attention. People are not composed of bodies which would not know what they did. Man is explained as conscious having a discernment which senses himself in his own heart. Every human senses everything that happens within them which interferes with their consciousness, in other words their '*ruh*' (soul). They find themselves witness to all of their acts and movements.⁴

At Arafat, the pilgrims-to-be find the opportunity to review their past, their present

state and their future from top to bottom. They examine their conscience, measure their sincerity and account for what they did and what they could not do. They reflect upon their sins and the disobedience which stains their hearts. They try to appreciate Arafat as the most important location for making '*tawbah*' (repenting) and being forgiven. They put forward their regrets while shedding tears. They seek ways of becoming pure, honest and balanced.

In summary, they try to attain the honour of servanthood by throwing off all the selfishness of their ego. They catch fire and burn with the agony of finding and recognizing themselves.

Arafat is a place of equality. All the pilgrims-to-be are equal there. Everyone experiences the delight of being 'Abdullah' (a servant of Allah) in Allah's presence. Every kind of status, rank, degree and wealthy place is abandoned for equality. In that place, there is a ruthless competition for earnestness, sincerity and modesty. "O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise (each other). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things)."⁵

This is the greatest revolution in the history of mankind which actualizes the Qur'an. Apart from this, there is no system of law which makes



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this worldwide principle supreme. Everyone is equal in Allah's presence. The only ones who are higher in His sight are the ones who are most dutiful to Him and the ones who fear Him the most. At Arafat, this universal principle is experienced in a vibrant manner. Here, there is a competition for piety and deference towards Allah. Those who turn to Allah with patience, steadfastness and sincerity will leave having profited. Those who spend their time reflecting deeply, doing *dhikr* (remembrance of Allah) making *dua* (supplications), and seeking forgiveness as if they were squabbling with that time, who get rid of their worldliness whatever it is, will be successful. Those who discern that they are living the most calm and peaceful period of their lives underneath tents and on top of sand will be happy and find pleasure. Those however who seek the ease of the country and home that they came from and in this sense experience an ebbing and flowing in their hearts will suffer and maybe leave Arafat without benefiting sufficiently. This is because the pilgrim-to-be did not come there to approve of it, they came there to be approved by Allah.

Arafat is a place which rests upon the throne of *dua*, prayer and supplication, where everything belonging to the world is forgotten. It is the name of a location where tears are accompanied by souls being purged and purified of sins, Arafat. Wrapped in their '*ihram*' garments and stripped of all the differences of the world, the children of Adam rehearse the Day of Judgement. In the struggle and panic to

come to terms with themselves everyone tries to cry with the love and emotion they acquire from their hearts. Everyone tries to make Arafat a witness to their servanthood and submission. Everyone is head-to-head with their faith and their piety. Being awake and reflective, distressed and sorrowful to the degree they have been stripped of the '*dunya*' (worldly life), with hands open they beg for mercy, forgiveness and purification. Everyone makes an effort to attain the mystery of the verse "When My servants ask thee concerning Me, I am indeed close (to them): I listen to the prayer of every suppliant when he calleth on Me: Let them also, with a will, Listen to My call, and believe in Me: That they may walk in the right way."⁶ They seek ways to be close to Allah. They wish to spend the sweetest, most emotional and valuable time of their lives by sacrificing recreation, food and drink.

They are patient, they do not complain, they reach the understanding that they are facing a great trial. They seek all the ways of being successful and continue their waiting. Herein is one of the meanings of being present at Arafat. Arafat is not a region of lakes, it is not a coastal strip, not a forested area, not a tourist area. Arafat is a place where faith, perseverance, determination, sincerity, devotion and one's conscience is measured. The wait in Arafat is a display of the religious and humanistic attitude that the pilgrim-to-be exhibits towards Allah, towards their *nafs* (ego), towards their friends and towards other people. The wait in Arafat is the emergence in the soul in the clearest

manner of the sincerity and determination of faith and love, reverence and brotherliness towards people.

Humanity becomes apparent there. People's self-sacrifice and faithfulness; in short, their humanity shows itself there. Arafat is a place where unity is commemorated. All pilgrims-to-be are present here to represent the Muslims of the countries they live in, even all the Muslims of the world under the banner of unity. Gathered upon the sacred statement "*La ilaha ilallah, Mubammadur rasulullah*" (There is not God but Allah, Muhammad is His Messenger), they hold a "conference of unity". With their feelings, thoughts, '*duas*' (supplications) and petitions focused upon their own improvement and the well-being of all humanity, they continue their stand.

The wait at Arafat is the name of an endeavour which recalls the walk to eternity; paving the way for it. It is the name of an important standing and waiting as the prior preparation of believers for when they will be collected in Allah's presence. Those who pause at Arafat with this kind of faith, understanding and sense will certainly leave having profited and will attain tranquillity. Those pilgrims who can come to themselves, examine themselves

and review their yesterday, today and tomorrow without fearing making it personal, in this place where the messengers of Allah, Abraham and Adam waited, have been given the good news that the doors of *tarwabah* (repentance) and mercy will be opened. Arafat is the place where one is being tested. Therefore, for intentions to be sincere and to be free of all kinds of '*waswasa*' (apprehension) and hesitation is very important. How joyful for those who when seeking the answer to questions such as, why did you come?, why are you here?, what did you expect?, what did you find? are able to say, "What didn't I find in the struggle to reform my ego in the name of servanthood in the name of humanity on the path of making *dua* for my mother, father, children, the '*Ummah*' of Muhammad (upon him peace) and all of humanity? What didn't I witness getting to know myself and turning to my essence? What didn't I see in the name of apprehending my nothingness, my egotism and my selfishness?"

Notes: 1) Elmalılı, Muhammed Hamdi Yazır, Hak Dini Kur'an Dili, İstanbul, 1971, I, 722; Ibn Manzûr, Lisânu'l-Arab, Beyrut, 1999, IX, 157. 2) Tirmidhî, Tefsîr, 2/22; Abû Dâvûd, Manâsiq, 68; Ibn Mâjah, Manâsiq. 3) Kiyâmet, 75/14. 4) See. Yazır, Muhammed Hamdi, Hak Dini Kur'an Dili, VIII, 5479. 5) Hujurât, 49/13. 6) Baqara, 2/186.



Quiz For Children



1. Who were the three Jewish communities living in or around Madinah during the time of Prophet Muhammad?
 - a. Quraysh, Tamim, Nadir
 - b. Nadir, Qaynuka, Qurayda
 - c. Qaynuqa, Qurayda, Banu Bakr
 - d. Hashim, Banu Bakr, Nadir
2. Where was the first Jum'ah salat in Islamic history held?
 - a. Migration
 - b. Revelation of the Qur'an
 - c. In Masjid Nabawi
 - d. In Masjid Quba
3. The cave of Thawr is related to which event in Islamic history?
 - a. Dhilhijjah
 - b. Muharram
 - c. Battle of Uhud
 - d. Battle of Badr
4. Which Prophet Addressed the ruler Nimrod?
 - a. Moses
 - b. Jesus
 - c. Adam
 - d. Abraham
5. The foundations of the Kabah were laid by.....
 - a. Adam
 - b. Nuh
 - c. Abraham
 - d. Ilyas
6. Dhul Qarnain built a wall to protect people from.....
 - a. Nimrod
 - b. Dajjal
 - c. Yajuj and Majuj
 - d. Pharoah
7. Hajj was ordained in the.....
 - a. 14th Hijra
 - b. 8th Hijra
 - c. 10th Hijra
 - d. 15th Hijra
8. In Hajj, on what day do the Muslims performing Hajj assemble in Arafah?
 - a. 8th Dhul Hijjah
 - b. 9th Dhul Hijjah
 - c. 10th Dhul Hijjah
 - d. 11th Dhul Hijjah
9. What is the meaning of Al-Hadi as mentioned in the Qur'an?
 - a. The Merciful
 - b. The Compassionate
 - c. The Light
 - d. The Guide
10. Which Prophet was known as Khalilullah?
 - a. Abraham
 - b. Moses
 - c. Salih
 - d. Hud

Hey Kids! Maybe you can win a prize!

The first 25 entries that answers the questions correctly will win. Encircle your answers, fill out the form, and mail to: Wisdom - Quiz, 8508 So. 71st East Ave. Tulsa, OK 74133 USA.

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