

## It's a Matter of the Heart

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ وَلِلَّهِ الْحَمْدُ

As we are gathered here today to listen to the Khutba of Eid ul Adha, it would do us well to remind ourselves of the spirit of the sacrifice that we are about to make. Today the best Ibaadah that you can possibly do is the Udhiya (Qurbani). There is nothing that pleases Allah ﷻ more on this day.

*Abdullah Ibn Umar ؓ said: "Rasoolullah ﷺ lived in Madina for ten years and every year he slaughtered an animal." (Ahmad-Saheeh by al-Albaani)*

*Zaid bin Arqam ؓ reports that the Sahaba asked him: "Ya Rasoolullah ﷺ, what is this sacrifice?" He said: "It is the way of your forefather Ibraheem ؑ." They asked: what (reward) is for us therein?" He replied: "There is a reward for every hair." They asked: "For the wool, O Messenger of Allah?" He replied: "There is one reward for every strand of wool." [Ahmad; Ibn Majah]*

*Rasoolullah ﷺ said: The son of Adam does not do any action on the day of sacrifice which is more pleasing to Allah ﷻ than the sacrifice of animals. (Tirmizi and Sunan ibn Majah)*

*Abu Hurayrah (RA) reported that Rasoolullah ﷺ said, "Whoever can afford to offer a sacrifice but does not do so, let him not approach our place for prayer [EIDGAH]. (Reported by Ahmad and Ibn Maajah; classed as saheeh by al-Haakim).*

We are called Muslims because our father Ibrahim ؑ named us 'Muslims' by His statement and his actions.

My brothers and sisters I want to remind myself and you that the meaning of being Muslim is to submit to Allah ﷻ without question, without argument, without reservation

or hesitation. To submit joyfully and eagerly. That is the symbol of our trust in Him. And that trust is what earns His pleasure and His help. That is why the iconic symbol of Islam is the Sajda – a state of total submission and helplessness, a symbol of total unhesitating obedience, a symbol of total trust and faith.

The life of Ibrahimؑ is a symbol of all of these things.

The reward of Tawakkul (reliance, trust) is the Nusrah (help) of Allahﷻ who is not subject to any of His laws. Remember Tawakkul comes only and only from obedience. You can't live a life of disobedience and expect your heart to be filled with the Noor of Tawakkul.

The whole journey of Hajj is a reminder for us about obeying not because it is convenient or pleasant or logical but because we love Allahﷻ and this is what He told us to do. We put on the Ihraam which is neither graceful nor comfortable. We make Sayii, commemorating what our mother Hajarؑ did. She did it for a reason. For us, Allahﷻ made her action, the reason.

We stand in Arafah on the day of Hajj instead of being at the Ka'aba. We pick up stones in Musdalifa and throw them at the Jamaraat in Mina. Not one of these rituals is either reasonable or logical – but then, love is neither reasonable nor logical. Love is to leave all reason and logic for the only One who is worthy of being loved. That is why Allama Iqbal (RA) said:

ضحیح ازل یہ مجھ سے کہا چتر میں نے  
جو عمت کا غلام ہو وہ دل نہ کر قبول

The spirit of the Udhiya (Qurbani) is submission to the Will of Allahﷻ. Submission when the very action of submission may well be painful to yourself. When submitting to the Will of Allahﷻ may mean denying yourself something that you find pleasant. When the submission may seem to be a source of loss or even harmful to the one who looks at it with eyes blinded by the Dunya. But to the one who sees with the eyes of Taqwa as Ismailؑ did, he will see the blessing behind it. He will see the beauty of

fulfillment of the purpose of our very existence, in obeying Allahﷻ without question. To seek His pleasure above all else and to be prepared to sacrifice our dearest possessions, actions, and desires, for the pleasure of Allahﷻ.

Allahﷻ said:

لَنْ يَنَالَ اللَّهَ لُحُومُهَا وَلَا دِمَاؤُهَا وَلَكِنْ يَنَالُهُ التَّقْوَىٰ مِنكُمْ كَذَلِكَ سَخَّرَهَا لَكُمْ لِتُكَبِّرُوا اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ مَا هَدَاكُمْ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُحْسِنِينَ  
إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُدَافِعُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ خَوَّانٍ كَفُورٍ

**Surah Al-Hajj: 37-38** *It is neither their meat nor their blood that reaches Allah but it is (taqwa) piety from you that reaches Him. Thus We have made them subject to you that you may magnify Allah for His guidance to you. And give glad tidings (O Muhammad) to the Muhsinun. Truly Allah defends those who believe. Verily Allah does not like any treacherous ingrate (those who disobey Allah)*

The purpose of Qurbani is to inculcate the spirit of submission, of sacrificing our personal desires to win the pleasure of Allahﷻ and become among those who Allahﷻ called Al-Muhsinun. It was the blessed Sunnah of Rasoolullahﷺ that he used to advise the women especially on Eid day. In keeping with that Sunnah I would like to advise my sisters in Islam that the example of Hajarﷺ is an excellent example for them to emulate.

Hagarﷺ, the African servant slave of Ibrahimﷺ and Sarah, who historians estimate lived between 1930 BC and 1840 BC and who Ibrahimﷺ married and from whom Allahﷻ gave him Ismailﷺ. Here was a woman who on the one hand was obedient enough to her husband to accept the fact that he was leaving her and her infant son alone in an uninhabited valley on the order of Allahﷻ. Then she had enough Tawakkul on Allahﷻ to know that if He ordered this, then He would care for them. She allowed her husband to leave them and go on his way knowing that he was doing the work of Allahﷻ.

Ali Shariati wrote in his book about Hajj about Hagar's place in the Islamic tradition. He noted that "all of the Hajj is joined" to her memory. *"He chose a black slave woman – the most humiliated of his creatures – to be the mother of great Prophets of God and manifestations of the most magnificent values which God creates."* The paradox is, of course, that women continue to be excluded and discriminated against at horrifyingly high rates in Muslim countries, particularly in the Arab world. Social indicators and gender statistics from the United Nations reveal that women in the Arab region are on average more disadvantaged economically, socially, and politically than women from other parts of the world.

Then when her husband had left Hajar عليها السلام did not sit idle but made effort to see how she could secure the safety of herself and her son. Allah ﷻ liked that action of her's of running from Safa to Marwa and back to Safa so much that He made it a Rukn (pillar) of Haj and Umrah. Only then did Allah ﷻ send Jibreel عليه السلام to bring forth Zamzam for them. Then Hajar عليها السلام negotiated an agreement with the people of Jurhum that came there, ensuring that she and her son retained propriety rights over Zamzam which was the main resource at that place. This is a lesson that is worth learning in worldly wisdom and taking care of the affairs of this life in such a way that the family is looked after. Allah ﷻ put respect for Hajar عليها السلام in the hearts of the tribal leaders so that they honored and obeyed her.

As Ismail عليه السلام grew up, his mother Hajar عليها السلام put the spirit of obedience to Allah ﷻ and love for his father in the heart of the little boy such that when his father came he was not a stranger. The boy knew him, loved him and awaited him. Then when his father, Ibrahim عليه السلام Khaleelullah related his dream to his son, the son immediately accepted the Will of Allah ﷻ without question. All this happened despite the fact that until that time, the father had not taken any direct part in the upbringing of the child. Ismail عليه السلام was the product of a single mother. But when that mother has Imaan and is connected to Allah ﷻ, then He ﷻ guides and protects and helps. It is not a question of how many parents but what kind of parents.

Society is neither corrupted nor improved by children. It is corrupted by the parents of those children who then complain about the children, conveniently forgetting their

own role in their upbringing. I remind you, please take that role seriously if you want children who will be a source of blessing to you and not children whose actions will light the fire in your grave. See what Allah ﷻ told us about the result of that upbringing:

فَلَمَّا بَلَغَ مَعَهُ السَّعْيَ قَالَ يَا بُنَيَّ إِنِّي أَرَى فِي الْمَنَامِ أَنِّي أَذْبَحُكَ فَانظُرْ مَاذَا تَرَى  
قَالَ يَا أَبَتِ افْعَلْ مَا تُؤْمَرُ سَتَجِدُنِي إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ مِنَ الصَّابِرِينَ

*Saffaat 37: 102. And, when he (his son) was old enough to walk with him, he said: "O my son! I have seen in a dream that I am slaughtering you (in sacrifice to Allah), so look, what do you see!" He said: "O my father! Do that which you are commanded, In-sha' Allah you shall find me of As-Sabirin."*

Please reflect. What kind of conversation is that? Between a father who is over 80 years old and a son who is less than 10. The father tells his son about his dream where he saw himself slaughtering his son and then asks him, 'Look (inside your heart), what do you see?' The father stayed away all those years and then when he comes, he is talking about slaughtering? And he is not asking his son, 'What do you think? What is your opinion?' He asks him, 'What do you see?' When I thought about this Ayah it blew me away. What must be the spiritual development of that child that his father can confidently ask this kind of question and expect a serious response? Who enabled that level of connection with Allah ﷻ, that level of Tazkiyyatun Nafs where the child could answer:

يَا أَبَتِ افْعَلْ مَا تُؤْمَرُ سَتَجِدُنِي إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ مِنَ الصَّابِرِينَ

My sisters, your role as a mother is simply the most critically important role that you can ever have. That is why Allah ﷻ gave it to you and not to the man. Try to wrap your mind around that and give that role the importance that it deserves. Motherhood is not about feeding the child's belly but about feeding his soul. And for that you must know how to cook the food of the soul. It won't simply happen because you are a woman. You have to work hard. You have to make the effort if you want a son or daughter who will not only be a credit to you but a means of Thawaab ul Jaariya when

you are gone. In plain language it means to give them twice the time and half the money you give now. I quote from something that a dear friend sent me:

*Abu Bakr ﷺ wasn't poor like Abu Dharr ﷺ or Abu Hurayrah ﷺ, but he was better than them. He wasn't perpetually tortured like Khabab ﷺ and Bilal ﷺ, or Sumayyah ﷺ and Yasir ﷺ, but he was better than them. He wasn't severely injured in battle like Talha ﷺ or Abu Ubaydah ﷺ or Khalid ﷺ, but he was better than them. He wasn't martyred like Hamza ﷺ or Umar ﷺ or Uthman ﷺ or Ali ﷺ, but he was better than them!*

*So what was the secret that made Abu Bakr ﷺ better than everyone?*

*Bakr ibn Abdullah Al-Muzani said, "Abu Bakr ﷺ didn't precede them due to offering a lot of prayer and fasting, but because of something that settled in his heart."*

*It's the actions of the heart you see. That's what made his faith outweigh the faith of the entire Ummah.*

*We learn that faith (Iman) is actions of the heart combined with statement of the tongue and actions of the limbs, but we ignored the actions of the heart even though that is its essence and core.*

*Every act of worship has an essence and a physical manifestation.*

*So the manifestation of Salah is the standing and ruku and sujood, but its essence is the Khushu' (the humility, awe, reverence, concentration) of Allah ﷻ. The manifestation of fasting is to withhold from everything that breaks the fast from sunrise to sunset but its essence is Taqwa (consciousness) of Allah ﷻ. The manifestation of hajj is the Tawaf and Sa'ee and standing in Arafat and so on. But its essence is honoring the symbols of Allah ﷻ. The manifestation of dua is the raising of hands and praise and request but its essence is the brokenness and need of Allah. The manifestation of Dhikr is saying Allahu Akbar and AlHamdulillah, and La illaha ila Allah etc. but its essence is the remembrance, reverence and love of Allah ﷻ.*

*For on the day of Judgment it is the hearts that will be exposed, and only those who come with a serene heart, and a heart that is repentant (Qalbun Saleem) who will be saved on that day. Let us then remember to monitor our hearts as severely as we monitor our actions and remember that in this world we traverse distances with our feet, but in the hereafter distances are only traversed by our hearts.*

*-Adapted from the page of Shaykh Alaa ElSaadawi*

My sisters, I would like to remind myself and you that the Nusrah of Allahﷻ comes only to those who choose to be obedient to Him. And Allahﷻ provides for them from sources that they could not imagine. But all that is only for the Muttaqoon – the obedient, not for the Fasiqoon – the rebellious. Selective obedience is disobedience. When you pick and choose what you will obey you are not obeying at all – stop fooling yourself – you are consciously choosing to disobey. You are playing with fire. Choose your actions consciously for you will pay for them very dearly.

As Heﷻ said:

وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا  
وَيَرْزُقْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ وَمَنْ يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَهُوَ حَسْبُهُ

*Talaq 65:2-3 And for one who has Taqwa, He grants a way out [of problems] and provides for him in a manner beyond all expectation [from sources he can't imagine]; and for one who places his trust in Allah He [alone] is sufficient*

My brothers and sisters, in the kind of world we live in today, to build a relationship with Allahﷻ is increasingly more important. Since you can only give what you have, your responsibility is twofold. You need to build the relationship for yourself as well as to create an environment at home where this concern is voiced and worked on. Remember you can only give what you have. Only a lighted lamp can light other lamps and illuminate. So seek to build your connection with Allahﷻ. Remember that when you are lying with your breath stuck in your throat – a time that will come upon every one of us, man or woman, it is only that connection which will help. All your money,

power, friends and family will not be able to do a whit to help you even to breathe easily. They can't make you live; they can't even help you to die easily. So leave them and obedience to them and pleasing them by displeasing Allahﷻ. And cling to the obedience of Allahﷻ, no matter who is displeased. Remember that the only one who is displeased with obedience to Allahﷻ is Shaytaan – who sometimes looks like a human being. Ignore him and recall the examples of the Anbiya who we follow.

My brothers and sisters in Islam, I would like to remind you that Allahﷻ will not ask you which day you fasted for Yawm ul Arafah or which day you celebrated Eid ul Adha. But He will ask you what you did to split the Ummah. So beware of falling into the trap of self-righteousness and imagining that you have this direct line to Allahﷻ and that He is talking to you. Let us remember that to have a difference of opinion is not only permissible but it is a sign of concern that our scholars and A'imma have for the Deen. But to use that difference of opinion as a way to attack others and pronounce judgments on them and to split the Ummah into groups is the work of Shaytaan. Stay away from such people, admonish them, ignore them and don't follow them.

I would like to wish you all a wonderful Eid ul Adha and request you in the middle of your enjoyment of eating good food and meeting relatives and friends to spare a little time to remember and remind each other of the true spirit of sacrifice (Qurbani). To remember and remind each other of Muslims in other parts of the world who don't have the means or the safety to celebrate this Eid. I want to remind you that many such people live right here amongst us. Let us go and look for them and bring a smile to their faces and ensure that they have a good full meal today and that their children wear good clothes. May Allahﷻ be pleased with you and accept your worship.

**Eid Mubarak to you all.**