

KHUTBA

English – 20.11.09

Hajj

Dear Muslims,

Hajj is a reply to the call from Allah as he said to Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him)

And proclaim the Pilgrimage among men: they will come to thee on foot and (mounted) on every kind of camel, lean on account of journeys through deep and distant mountain highways. – Quran Al-Hajj 27. This vers was translated by Ibn-kathir as follow:

(And proclaim the pilgrimage among men) meaning, “announce the pilgrimage to mankind and call them to perform pilgrimage to this House which We have commanded you to build.” It was said that Ibrahim said: "O Lord, how can I convey this to people when my voice will not reach them?'. It was said: "Call them and We will convey it." So Ibrahim stood up and said, "O mankind! Your Lord has established a House so come on pilgrimage to it." It is said that the mountains lowered themselves so that his voice would reach all the regions of the earth, and those who were still in their mothers' wombs and their fathers' loins would hear the call. The response came from everyone in the cities, deserts and countryside, and those whom Allah has decreed will make the pilgrimage, until the Day of Resurrection: "At Your service, O Allah, at Your service." This is a summary of the narrations from Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid, `Ikrimah, Sa`id bin Jubayr and others among the Salaf. And Allah knows best. This was recorded by Ibn Jarir and by Ibn Abi Hatim).

Hajj is also a heritage from Prophet Ibrahim and an answer to his pray when he asked Allah ***...so fill the hearts of some among men with love towards them, and feed them with fruits: so that they may give thanks.*** - Quran Ibrahim 37. That is why we all have special feeling and emotions towards Kaabah. That is why we all like to walk around it in “Tawaf” and we all miss it when we are long away. That is why we are spiritually connected to it and pray towards its direction “Kiblah”. That is why most of the people find the tears suddenly coming out of their eyes when they are there.

In fact, Hajj is a compilation of incidences and events which have encountered Prophet Ibrahim. When we are doing it, we are living and experiencing a bit of what the Prophets has experienced. We are experiencing some of the difficulties and suffering they face and understand the sacrifices they have made to deliver the Message, the Message from Allah.

When we are there, we remember that this place was not as we see it now. It was an isolated place with no people and resources. We remember when Prophet Ibrahim left his family there, obeying the order from Allah. We remember when he turned back before he left and said:

O our Lord! I have made some of my offspring to dwell in a valley without cultivation, by Thy Sacred House. – Quran Ibrahim 37

We live this moment as Prophet Ibrahim lived it and realize how faithful, and submitted to Allah he was when he left his wife and his beloved son in that lonesome place. He left them with no company, surrounded only by the mountains and beasts. Why? It is only because Allah ordered him to do so. We also notice the strong faith of his wife when we recall their conversation before he left them. She asked him: “Did Allah ordered you to do so (i.e. to leave us here alone)?” He replied: “Yes”. She commented, faithfully: “Then we are secured”. They both accept the will of Allah and submitted to Him because they knew that Allah is merciful and will not punish those who obey Him.

We recall what happened after Prophet Ibrahim left them there, when they stayed for a while eating and drinking what they had. The water stock finished from the skin-bottle and the mother became thirsty. As a result, she did not have milk to breastfeed her child. The child was suffering of hunger.

As the mother couldn't watch him at that situation, she started to look for help. She went up Al-Safa Mountain in hope that she could find someone who could help them with some water. She didn't see anyone. She came down and went up the other mountain, Al-Marwa. Again she didn't see anyone. She kept shuffling between the two mountains for 7 times (that is why we do the same in Hajj and Umra). After she did it for 7 times, she heard a voice. She went back to check her child and found an angel there digging the ground with his wing. He kept digging until the water came out (Zamzam). She started to fill the skin-bottle. Thereafter, she drank and fed her child. The Angel said to her: Don't be afraid, you are safe (i.e. Allah will take care of you). This child will build the house of God in this place with his father.

We continue to live with the story of Prophet Ibrahim until the last day in Hajj. At the last day, when we slaughter, we remember when the faith of the whole family was tested. It was when the son, prophet Ismail had grown up. Prophet Ibrahim was ordered to slaughter his own and beloved son. As usual, the response was immediate. Prophet Ibrahim called his son and told him what he was ordered. How did the son respond? Or first let us ask ourselves; what would you do if your father told you that he will slaughter you? At least, most of us will find it hard to accept and most likely we will refuse to respond. But the response from Prophet Ismail was different. It was an immediate acceptance: ***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 will find me, if God so wills one practicing Patience and Constancy!*** - Quran Al-Safat 102. So, Prophet Ibrahim laid his son down and prepared to slaughter him. Miraculously, the knife did not cut his throat and he was ransomed by a sheep from heaven: ***So when they had both submitted their wills (to God), 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.*** - Quran Al-Safat 103-108.

Dear Muslims,

Few people understand this concept of Hajj; that it is for us to practice the absolute submission and succumb to Allah, as Prophet Ibrahim did, at least one time in our life. That is why we are bound to many obligations the moment we wear "Ihram". That is also the reason behind the great reward given to those who perform Hajj in the right way.

Abu Huraira (may Allah be pleased with him) told: ***"Allah's Apostle said: '(The performance of) 'Umra is an expiation for the sins committed (between it and the previous one). And the reward of Hajj Mabru (the one accepted by Allah) is nothing except Paradise.'"*** Narrated by Albukhari

He also said: ***"The Prophet (PBUH) 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 (after Hajj free from all sins) as if he were born anew'"*** Narrated by Albukhari.

Lastly, for those who are going for Hajj, I urge you to make your best to do Hajj in the proper way so you get the big reward.

And for us, who are not going for Hajj, we ask Allah to help us to go for Hajj, and be one of those blessed people who are able to perform it in the correct way; "Hajj Mabru".

Khutba by Sidi Mohamed Ould Cherif