

by Imam Zafrullah Domun

After reciting the *Tashahhud*, the *Ta'uz* and the first chapter *Al Fatiha* of the Holy Quran, Imam Zafrullah Domun said:

Once again by the Grace of Allah we are privileged to be witnessing another Eidul Adha. I take this occasion to wish an Eid Mubarak to you all and to all Muslims around the world. May Allah enable all Muslims around the world to live in peace and may they all enjoy the good company of all their Muslim brothers and sisters. Those who get the opportunity to go for Hajj experience Eid in a different way than those who stay in their own country. When we are at home the distinguishing feature of this Eid is the sacrifice of animals with a view to have forgiveness from Allah and with a view to getting an increase in God-Fearingness. Let us hope and pray that for each one amongst us the coming of this Eid continues to remind us about what we need to do to walk into the footsteps of those who have been forward in offering sacrifices of all that they possessed in Allah's path.

Regarding this Eid in particular we remember the example of Hazrat Ibrahim (as) and his son Ishmael and his wife Hajra and also our Holy Prophet Mohammad (saw) who revived the Hajj and taught Muslims how it should be performed. For the past thirteen and three quarter centuries plus some years Muslims have been performing the ceremonies of Hajj as the Holy Prophet (saw) did it. Furthermore Muslims around the world who stayed in their particular countries have been sacrificing millions of animals following the tradition laid down by Hazrat Ibrahim (as) and his family. So we who are living in this present age connect with these noble people of the past especially through the ceremonies of the Hajj ,but also through participation in animal sacrifices for all those who have the means to defray the expenses.

Speaking about how this sacrifice of animals was established Allah says in the Holy Quran in chapter 37 verses 103-114

“And when he was old enough to work with him, he said,

‘O my dear son, I have seen in a dream that I am slaughtering thee. So consider, what thou thinkest of it!’ He replied, ‘O my father, do as thou art commanded; thou wilt find me, if Allah pleases, of those who are patient”

We can deduce that this event took place after Hazrat Ibrahim had left his wife Hajra and his son Ismail in the desert of Mecca for some time. We understand from the Book of Hadiths that he used to visit them. Later on his son helped with putting together the stones

with which they made the walls of the Ancient House. It was on one such moment that Hazrat Ibrahim spoke to his son Ismail about a dream that he had seen in which he was slaughtering him. One can only imagine the pain of a man who got a son after waiting for a very long time because he got him in old age and then when the child was growing up he understood from his dream that he should slaughter that child. Anyone who has children can imagine how difficult a moment it was for Hazrat Ibrahim. Nonetheless being a man who had understood throughout His life that Allah is true to His Promise and that He never abandons His dear ones he was determined to carry out what he thought was the will of Allah. Speaking about the readiness of both of them to carry out the will of Allah the Holy Quran says: *“And when they both submitted to **the Will of God**, and he had thrown him down on his forehead, We called to him: ‘O Abraham, ‘Thou hast indeed fulfilled the dream.’ Thus indeed do We reward those who do good.”*

Commentors cannot say for sure how this dream has been fulfilled. But Allah says it clearly that when he was ready for this ultimate sacrifice the dream has been fulfilled and there was no need for this human sacrifice. In its stead something else was ordered as explained in the words “That surely was a manifest trial. And we ransomed Him with a great sacrifice”. In other words since Abraham was ready in his heart of heart to make the ultimate sacrifice by slaughtering his son , Allah initiated and perpetuated through Abraham the sacrifice of animals. It symbolizes the readiness to sacrifice all that is dear to one to win the pleasure of Allah. This is the message that this Eid brings us. It is true that we are not forbidden to be merry and to amuse ourselves on this occasion but for someone who is eager to understand the meaning of life it is the renewal of the commitment to do whatever is necessary to win the pleasure of Allah that is important. I think all of us should keep this well in mind. Since Hazrat Ibrahim was true to his Promise and he was sincerely devoted to Allah, Allah says of him

**“And We left for him a good name among the following generations
‘Peace be upon Abraham!’
Thus do We reward those who do good.
Surely, he was one of Our believing servants.”**

These words of Allah have been fulfilled to the letter in his case and his children. Today he is revered by the three major religions of the world, namely, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. These three religions form almost half of all mankind living today. His declaration of faith in Allah when he said *“Inni wajahto wajhiya lillazi faataras samaawaate wal arza hanifaw wa maa ana minal moushrekeen”* meaning “I have turned my face towards Him who created the heavens and the earth, being ever inclined to Him and I am not of those who associate gods with Him” is repeated by every Muslim several times per day. Allah

has fulfilled His Promise to Him when He told him “*Inni jaaeloka linnaase imaama*” - “I shall make you a leader of men”.

In addition we learn from the Holy Quran that it was he who was told by Allah to establish the pilgrimage. We read in Sura *al Hajj*:

27. And *remember the time* when We assigned to Abraham the site of the House *and said*, ‘Associate not anything with Me, and keep My House clean for those who perform the circuits, and those who stand up and those who bow down *and fall prostrate in Prayers*;

28. ‘And proclaim unto mankind the Pilgrimage. They will come to thee on foot, and on every lean camel, coming by every distant track,

29. ‘That they may witness *its* benefits for them and may mention the name of Allah, during the appointed days, over the quadrupeds of *the class of* cattle that He has provided for them. Then eat ye thereof and feed the distressed, the needy.

30. ‘Then let them accomplish their needful acts of cleansing, and fulfill their vows, and go around the Ancient House.

The pilgrimage to this House of Allah started about four thousand years ago. In the beginning there were very few people who attended. But people continued to go throughout the ages. But the monotheism that was preached by Hazrat Ibrahim eventually was replaced by the polytheism and in the time of the Holy Prophet there were about 360 idols in the precincts of the Kaaba. This happened despite the fact that many prophets were sent to the progeny of Hazrat Ibrahim (as). When we reflect on this aspect of history we can conclude that there is no guarantee that what we believe will be believed by our progeny unless and until each generation does what is needed to keep the flame of faith and monotheism alive. Since people are not ready to make the necessary sacrifices to adhere to monotheism, slowly their hearts are overcome by polytheistic beliefs and they drift away from the true God. Belief in the true God is kept alive when Muslims in each succeeding generation learn what it is and bequeath it to their children. This is an important point on which we all should reflect and act upon if we expect faith to be alive in us and in our succeeding generations. Hazrat Ibrahim was well aware of this and he prayed in the following words to Allah as we read in Sura *Albaqara*:

127. And *remember* when Abraham said, ‘My Lord, make this a town of peace and provide with fruits such of its dwellers as believe in Allah and the Last Day,’ He said, ‘And on him too who believes not will I bestow benefits for a little while; then will I drive him to the punishment of the Fire, and an evil destination it is.’

128. And *remember the time* when Abraham and Ishmael raised the foundations of the House, *praying*, ‘Our Lord, accept *this* from us; for Thou art All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

129. ‘Our Lord, make us submissive to Thee and *make* of our offspring a people submissive to Thee. And show us our ways of worship, and turn to us with mercy; for Thou art Oft-Returning *with compassion and Merciful*.

130. 'And, our Lord, raise up among them a Messenger from among themselves, who may recite to them Thy Signs and teach them the Book and Wisdom and may purify them; surely, Thou art the Mighty, the Wise.

By the Grace of Allah each one of these prayers has been heard and today Mecca is one of the most prized places on earth and it is the place where that great prophet Mohammad (saw) was born. He brought the message of monotheism back to earth and today the kingdom of Saudi Arabia is the envy of many. The amount of money that the Saudis have invested in Mecca to create facilities for the pilgrims is really staggering. Each year they try to organize the hajj in a better way and they have been making great improvements since their coffers have been filled with petrodollars. But most of these facilities are only material. Today the Saudis are being forced to review their own understanding of Islam. The creation of ISIS under caliph al Baghdadi is being viewed as a threat to them and to other countries in the region. Now they understand where their own Wahhabi version of Islam has led them to. Now they are trying to control all the Imams in all their mosques so that they do not present extreme views in their sermons. They are in the process of compiling an encyclopedia of Friday sermons to be given to imams. Those imams who refuse to follow the official line are being removed from office. Nowadays they have started espousing views that have been put forward by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), the Promised Messiah and Mahdi more than hundred years ago. Incha Allah I will explain more about their change of attitudes in a Friday sermon.

To come back to the sacrifice that Muslims make in remembrance of the sacrifice of Hazrat Ibrahim (as) we should remember well that Allah says: "*Lan yana lallaho lahoumoha wa laa dimaaha wa lakil lanalahouttaqwa minkoum*" meaning "neither their flesh nor their blood reaches Allah; it is only your righteousness that reaches Him"(22:38). The size of your animal is not important. What is important is how fearful of Allah you are as a person. Many Muslims say they believe in Allah and they believe in the last day but almost every day they commit such actions as if there is no one looking at them. We will continue to stress that it is the duty of each Muslim to increase his fear of Allah in his heart. If the fear of Allah continues growing in your heart you are on the path to achieve the goal of your life. But if fear of Allah is only a pious wish and you do nothing to really put it into action then you are mistaken and your actions will be in vain. Let us hope and pray that Allah inclines our heart to follow the example of the noble prophets and pious people who preceded us. Eids come and Eids go away but the Muslim has to practice the teachings of Islam every moment of his life and it is incumbent upon him or her to try to please Allah at every moment.

May Allah open our heart to understand the essence of Islam and not just be amongst those who practice its rituals. May Allah be with you and with me and may we all lead a life with which He is satisfied with us. Eid Mubarak once again to you all. Ameen!