

by Imam Zafrullah Domun

Once again by Allah's Grace we are all assembled here and Muslims would be assembled in their respective mosques or open spaces to celebrate Eidul Adha. On this auspicious occasion I wish to extend my greetings of Eid Mubarak to you all and also to all Muslims around the world. At least for this year there are no disagreements for the day to celebrate Eidul Adha. Although almost all Muslims are unified in the fundamental Islamic beliefs, yet there are many disagreements about some minor matters. Unfortunately, these minor matters have broken the unity of Muslims around the world and they keep fighting amongst themselves. This sad state of affairs will continue as it has deep roots in the past. Despite many attempts that have recently been made we see no progress in sight. Unless and until some Muslim leaders do come to understand that they should not control the mind of others this strife that we see in the Muslim world will go on. However, what we can and should do is that we do not allow beliefs to undermine relationship amongst Muslims. We are accountable to Allah for our beliefs and our deeds and we should seek to please Him without harming anyone. The many lessons that we can take from Eidul Adha is mostly of self-denial and not self-indulgence.

On this auspicious occasion of Eidul Adha We make sacrifice of animals in remembrance of a servant of Allah who was ready to sacrifice his own son because he understood that Allah had ordered him to do so. Of course we are speaking of Hazrat Ibrahim(as) in memory of whom and his son Ismail and his wife Hagar that Hajj has been established and on Eid day animal sacrifices are offered. Unfortunately, here in Mauritius due to the diseases affecting animals many Muslims would not be sacrificing animals. Allah knows best why this is so, nonetheless as good Muslims our spirit of sacrifice or our readiness to sacrifice for other's benefits or other's comfort should be with us always. Those who have enough and who intended to participate in animal sacrifices can offer the money for distribution to the poor. There are still poor people here in Mauritius and elsewhere. This money may bring some relief to their misery. So if under exceptional circumstances animal sacrifices are not possible we have alternative ways to spend in the cause of Allah manifesting our spirit of sacrifice.

Today is an Eid, meaning a festival. On such occasion we are expected to be happy. It is not at all forbidden for us to wear beautiful clothes and to eat and drink and to visit friends and relations and spend some good time together provided we do not go out of bounds. However, for the benefit of our own soul and that of our friends it is not out of place at all to reflect on the background of this festival.

We should bear in mind that all the three main religions of today, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, revere Hazrat Ibrahim (as). We will not go into details but all the adherents of these groups consider him to be the origin of their doctrine of monotheism. Today in the world there are approximately 2 billion Christians, maybe 30 million Jews and about 1.6 billion Muslims. And there are approximately 7 billion people living in the world today. This means that at least half of these are affiliated to Hazrat Ibrahim(as) and they revere him. I do not know if the Jews and Christians do mention him every day in the prayers. But we are all aware that several times during the day Muslims mention him and his followers with great reverence in their daily prayers. Now this was a man whose father and whole family were idolaters and they did not know the True Lord. At that time when he was quite young or of middle age Allah revealed Himself to him and gave him the mission to preach monotheism to his people who were steeped in idolatry. At the same time Allah promised him that his progeny would be like the stars in the sky whilst he was married but did not even have one child. Allah told him that he would make him a leader of men. No one knows except Allah of course when he lived but it is guessed that it should have been around 5 thousand years ago. Throughout history people who looked up to him have been increasing and today almost half of all people living still revere him. Amongst Muslims such is his reverence that with the arrival of the Holy Prophet Mohammad (saw) some events in his life and that of his family have been perpetuated so that people might remember them and might strive to copy his spirit of sacrifice.

Now I wish to say a word about his being the bosom friend of Allah (Khalilullah). We have a reference for this in the Holy Quran (4:124) "*wattarazallaho Ibrahimia khalila*" which we translate as "And Allah took Abraham as his friend." The word "Khalil" is translated as "friend". In fact, the word has a wider meaning than just friend. A Muslim translator of the holy Quran says that in Arabic, this word denotes the dearest or most sincere friend

who has no rival in the love and reliance placed upon him. (Daryabadi, The Holy Qur'an, Vol. 1, p. 91A).

With regard to this verse, the commentator Al Bayzawi says: “Abraham, in a time of dearth sent a friend of his to Egypt for a supply of corn: but the friend denied saying, in his excuse, that though there was a famine in their country also, yet, had it been for Abraham's own family, he would have sent what he desired, but he knew he wanted it only to entertain his guests, and give to the poor, according to his usual hospitality. The servants whom Abraham had sent on this message, being ashamed to return emptyhanded, to conceal the matter from their neighbors, filled their sacks with fine white sand, which in the East pretty much resembles meal. Abraham being informed by his servants on their return of their ill success, the concern under which he was, threw him into a sleep and in the meantime Sarah, knowing nothing of what had happened, opening one of the sacks, found good flour in it and immediately set to making bread. Abraham on waking and smelling the new bread, asked her whence she had the flour". Why,' says she, from your friend in Egypt". “Nay’ replied the patriarch, 'it must have come no other than my friend, God Almighty.'

One may believe in this story and one may not. It does not matter. For people who have faith in Allah, that He is All Powerful and can do whatever He likes such an event is not impossible nor improbable. This story only illustrates Hazrat Ibrahim’s faith and trust in Allah. Belief in the Promise of Allah despite nothing appearing to fulfill that belief was a characteristic of Hazrat Ibrahim (as). Such a faith characterized his wife Hajra, who when she was left in the middle of the desert of Mecca had firm faith that Allah would not abandon her and her son Ismail if it was His bidding that they should be left there. So was the trust in Allah of little Ismail when his father told him about how he was to be sacrificed. We read in the Holy Quran about this incident thus:

“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 please, of those who are patient.’

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.

That surely was a manifest trial.

And We ransomed him with a great sacrifice.

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. (37:103-112)

With the arrival of Islam, the life history of Hazrat Ibrahim and his family has been given a new impetus. He is now established as a patriarch and the place where he and his close one lived have been declared a place of pilgrimage to remind Muslims of the sacrifices of this great family. The hajj is a reminder of what Hazrat Ibrahim (as) and his family endured for the Love of God. Hajjees go there to remind themselves of what a family truly devoted to Allah was like and through the rites that they accomplish Allah promises them forgiveness and Paradise.

On this occasion we cannot forget to mention the speech that the Holy Prophet Mohammad (saw) made on the day of Arafat in the year 632AD. We all need to remind ourselves of this message from time to time. And today is one such occasion so that we might reflect upon it. There are several versions of this speech. I have taken one version from Bukhari.

After praising, and thanking Allah The Holy Prophet (saw) said:

“O People, lend me an attentive ear, for I know not whether after this year, I shall ever be amongst you again. Therefore, listen to what I am saying to you very carefully and TAKE THESE WORDS TO THOSE WHO COULD NOT BE PRESENT HERE TODAY.

Beware of Satan, for the safety of your religion. He has lost all hope that he will ever be able to lead you astray in big things, so beware of following him in small things People, just as you regard this month, this day, this city as Sacred, so regard the life and property of every Muslim as a sacred trust. Return the goods entrusted to you to their rightful owners. Hurt no one so that no one may hurt you. Remember that you will indeed meet your LORD, and that HE will indeed reckon your deeds. ALLAH has forbidden you to take usury (interest), therefore all interest obligation shall henceforth be waived. Your capital, however, is yours

to keep. You will neither inflict nor suffer any inequity. Allah has Judged that there shall be no interest and that all the interest due to Abbas ibn ‘Abd’al Muttalib (Prophet’s uncle) shall henceforth be waived...

O People, it is true that you have certain rights with regard to your women, but they also have rights over you. Remember that you have taken them as your wives only under Allah’s trust and with His permission. If they abide by your rights, then to them belongs the right to be fed and clothed in kindness. Do treat your women well and be kind to them for they are your partners and committed helpers. And it is your right that they do not make friends with any one of whom you do not approve, as well as never to be unchaste.

O People, listen to me in earnest, worship ALLAH, say your five daily prayers (Salah), fast during the month of Ramadan, and give your wealth in Zakat. Perform Hajj if you can afford to.

All mankind is from Adam and Eve, an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; also a white has no superiority over black nor a black has any superiority over white except by piety (taqwa) and good action. Learn that every Muslim is a brother to every Muslim and that the Muslims constitute one brotherhood. Nothing shall be legitimate to a Muslim which belongs to a fellow Muslim unless it was given freely and willingly. Do not, therefore, do injustice to yourselves.

Remember, one day you will appear before ALLAH and answer your deeds. So beware, do not stray from the path of righteousness after I am gone.

O People, NO PROPHET OR APOSTLE WILL COME AFTER ME AND NO NEW FAITH WILL BE BORN. Reason well, therefore, O People, and understand words which I convey to you. I leave behind me two things, the QURAN and my example, the SUNNAH and if you follow these you will never go astray.

All those who listen to me shall pass on my words to others and those to others again; and may the last ones understand my words better than those who listen to me directly. Be my witness, O ALLAH, that I have conveyed your message to your people”. (Bukhari)

These are words that have been pronounced fourteen hundred years ago but they are as relevant today as they were before. Had Muslims taken to heart the message that it contains they would have tried to behave in such a way as to

reflect these teachings in their lives. Unfortunately that is not the case. Each one has his own version of Islam that he wants to impose on others and whilst trying to do so they forget Islam's essence. May Allah help all Muslims to know and practice the Islam that has been taught by the Holy prophet Mohammad (saw). In this Islam there is no place for terror, fighting except in self-defense, for insulting one another or even for social boycott. In the Islam taught by the Holy prophet (saw) there is real love and real desire for peace and brotherhood and for sharing. May Allah help all Muslims to realize this. Ameen.