



EID UL AD'HAA KHUTBAH

8 December 2008: 10 Dhul Hijja 1429 AH

SACRIFICE AND PRAISE: TWO ASPECTS OF LOVE

9 Takbir

(Sura al Fatihah)

Wa azzin finnaasi bil Hajji ya'-tuuka rijaalanwwa alaa kuli Dhaamiriny-ya-tiina min-kulli fajjin 'amiiq: Li-yash-haduu manaafi-a' lahum wa yadhkurus-mallaahi fiii 'Ayyaamim-Ma luumaatin 'alaa inaa radhaqahum-mim bahiimatil-'an-'aam: fakuloo minhaa wa 'at-imul-haaa-'I sal-faqiir.

And proclaim unto mankind the Pilgrimage. They will come unto thee on foot and on every lean camel; they will come from every deep ravine: That they may witness things that are of benefit to them, and mention the name of Allah (Subhanallah wa ta'ala) on appointed days over the beast of cattle that He hath bestowed upon them. Then eat thereof and feed therewith the poor unfortunate. (22:27-28)

Bismillah ar Rahman ar Rahim.

Again this year, over 1.3 billion Muslims around the world will celebrate the Feast of the Sacrifice, the Eid al Qurban and the Eid ul Hajj. Most of us understand that the reason for this pilgrimage season has to do with the Prophet Ibrahim's (*alahis salaam*) building the Ka'ba, and also his attempt to sacrifice his first son, Ismail. Muslim scholars have been teaching Muslims that Allah Swt inspired Ibrahim (*alahis salaam*) to sacrifice his son in a dream and asking him to slaughter him with a knife. It is found in the Torah, it is found in the Qur'an. The Torah teaches that Abraham was ordered by Allah to sacrifice his only son, Isaac; but his first son we know was Ismail, which of course is contradictory, but that's all right. We will not get into contradictions on the Eid.

It also teaches that a great conversation took place between the two of them, a very important conversation. We'll get to the conversation in a moment. It's important to understand that so many billions of people in the world relate to this story, whether Ismail or Isaac. Though our brothers and sisters, the Christians and Jews, don't still perform symbolic sacrifice and have revised their understanding in a slightly different way, still the concept of sacrifice is very important to every one of us in the world today. Today, we will reflect a little on a world bereft of chosen sacrifices, and filled with unwilling sacrifices. Sacrifice requested by the hand of Allah is one thing, but demanded by the greed of human beings is another.

Whichever account one takes into consideration, either as a Muslim or a Christian or a Jew, Sidna Ibrahim loved his son. There is no doubt that Allah Swt's request of Sidna Ibrahim had profound and lasting lessons for all humanity; certainly the Ahl al Kitab. The lesson is more than just a test of obedience; indeed, it is a testimony of love—the love of Ibrahim for Ismail, and the love of Allah Swt for Ibrahim. [It is a] testimony that love and trust are mutually inclusive.

It was said that when his son was old enough to work with him, Ibrahim said, “Oh my son, I have seen in a dream that I must sacrifice you. So look, what is your view?” He said, “O my father! Do what you are ordered. By the Will of Allah you shall find me steadfastly patient.” Then, when they had both surrendered themselves to Allah, he laid him face down. And We called out to him, “O Ibrahim! You have faithfully fulfilled the vision. Truly in that way We reward those who excel (in goodness) Truly that was the clear test (of both his submission and obedience.)” Then We ransomed him with a tremendous sacrifice. And among the people of later days We left for him the greeting,

“Peace be upon Ibrahim.”

In that love, it is clear that there is a relationship between love and obedience. Obedience is a testimony of true love, whether the children to the parent, the parents to one another; to our leaders, to our prophets, to our Lord. It demands we really understand the relationship of love, obedience, and surrender. After all, we do call ourselves Muslims. It’s important to understand the relationship of love, obedience and sacrifice as Muslims to understand what it means to find safety and security/*taslim* in being Muslims, and in love.

His attempt to proceed with the sacrifice and to trust in Allah, and the trust of Allah that His command would be obeyed—moreover it is a testimony to the total balance of the reality that is Islam—the obedience, trust and love put into action will yield only more and more of the same. We live in a world where we don’t understand trust; we don’t understand obedience; and we don’t understand surrender. We certainly don’t understand sacrifice that is chosen. The growth and reward come from such qualities of love and trust and will—*mahabbat*, *tawakkul* and *irāda*. In reverse order, I might add: the will, the trust, and the love is the correct order.

[Some] of the challenges of this story are to contemplate justice, and the [story’s] sustainable lesson for us, and the qualities of Ibrahim and Ismail (as); the connection between our self and this illustrious and noble father and son; that enduring love that transcends millenniums, which testifies to the original intent and understanding of the love and qualities and attributes of Allah Swt; and the constancy and consistency in the System and Reality that is embedded in the *ibāda*. We see even in the animal kingdom love and affection to offspring. We see over history the power of identity and the challenge of obedience. The Qur’an teaches that Allah *Subhanallah wa’ta’ala* never advocates evil or

injustice; that Allah Swt loves those who love Him, and that Allah comes running toward the one who walks toward Allah Swt. We are informed and shown again and again the Mercy and Compassion of Allah, and we are told of the value of Piety, and the value of acting with justice and goodness and purity.

Allah commands justice, the doing of good, and liberality to kith and kin.

And He forbids all shameful deeds and injustice and rebellion.

Thus, it was indicated to Ibrahim (*alahis salaam*) to sacrifice his son. He believed in the dream, and verified it over three nights of [having] the same dream. He knew from *that* the dream came from Allah *Subhanallah wa'ta'ala*. It was verified, and supported by his son. How sure are we about anything in our lives, let alone a dream like that? [It would be] the thing that would be questioned and doubted and avoided the most. It's not like Allah comes into your dream and says, "Eat chicken soup three days a week" and you are a vegetarian. Even that would be a hard decision.

The choice of words in Arabic is crucial: *qurban*. No word in the Qur'an is chosen by accident, and nothing is left out that needs to be said. Because Ibrahim (*alahis salaam*) knew the dream was from Allah *Subhanallah wa'ta'ala*, he proceeded to try that sacrifice. Three things are accomplished at this event. Of course, we know that Allah saved his son and sent him a lamb to be sacrificed instead, and a dulled knife was presented also, just in case (just in case he didn't hear him call out to him, or "jump the knife," as we might say in English).

The sacred relationship between the father and the child was preserved. This is only symbolic. It is the sacred relationship between the mother and child, the father and the

daughter, between the parents and child. But think about what creates that relationship. It is based not only on blood but time spent. Especially in Islam, [it is] not based just on blood, [but on] the quality of the time, the investment of wisdom, the hope for future, and of course the exchange of affection. As a child is an expression of one's own self, yet both dependent and independent, so too humanity is created as an expression of Allah Swt and given a degree of independence while at the same time remaining totally dependent on the will, intention, and actions of our Creator. So we must add submission to Islam to the attributed lessons of Islam and everything.

Perhaps it is here we find the real birth of Islam as a *dīn* that exists in all of the Abrahamic traditions. I am not going to engage in historical commentary. But I think it is very important for us as Muslims, especially in the Tariqah, that we understand the subtleties of this meaning, this day, and this event. As Muslims, hopefully *mu'min*, we must find the Abrahmic and Ismailic place within our own self, within our hearts. To do that, we have to understand something which is perhaps a little disconcerting and perhaps seemingly fatalistic to some of us. That is, simply this: life is sacrifice. It is found at the core of love, at the core of obedience, at the core of trust, and at the core of *tasleem*...Islam....submission. As I mentioned earlier, it is also about constancy, perpetuity, sustainability.

In certain languages it is affirmed even in conversation between those who have duty, responsibility and a sense of the reality of relatedness/*nisbah*. In Farsi, for example people say in leaving one another, "*Qurbani shuma.*" It means, loosely, "I love you so much that I would sacrifice for you." Yet the word "*qurban*" also implies kinsman, kith and kin, which we hear a lot about in Qur'an. Allah Swt also tells us about our kith and kin. There are many, many references in Qur'an. All the meanings of Arabic and Farsi apply to the

story. Specific ones apply to specific aspects of the event. For example, there is *Zabh*: for the slaughtering of animals. This implies the slitting of the throat of the creature. This is the word basis for the story of Abraham and Ismail. He was supposed to do that.

Qurban: sacrifice, also to approach near. It occurs twice in the Qur'an, and is used to express the ordinary sacrifice. But it has to do, as I said, with kith and kin and coming near. You see these two elements in the story. Kith and kin, coming near, and sacrifice: one word is used for these three concepts. *Nahr*: to injure the jugular vein, to stab. And *Uzhiyah*, which does not occur in the Qur'an, but in the Hadith. It is used to express the time of the day when the sun has risen to a considerable height, as in the *salatu dhuhur*. *Had*, which occurs four times in Qur'an, refers to the sacrifice sent to the temple at Micah. There is a Hebrew word that is similar.

Later, in the Qur'an 27:85, the meaning is an offering or gift. *Minchah* is used in the Old Testament to mean a gift or tribute. *Mansak*: “**We have appointed every nation a rite.**” Every nation has its own rite of sacrifice, its way of giving to God. It is a way of sacrificing symbolically and really. It also means a place of devotion or sacrifice which draws man near to God, as in the purpose of the sacrifice on the day of the Eid ul Adhā. An active form of intention and purpose is described by these words—each of them a different word, each of them comprehensive and holistic.

Back to the story. The event of taking the knife and slaughtering is one word. The idea that it is a kinsman is another word. The word for the generalized concept of slaughtering for *halal* meat is another word. All of these things are important. If we are going to eat things that are *halal*, then we should expect that Allah *Subhanallah wa'ta'ala* is only going to accept a *halal* sacrifice; one that is motivated out of love and affection and obedience

and submission.

Think about sacrifices today that people are forced to give in the world today, not requested by Allah Swt directly to them, but by people's misuse of their ability to make decisions, their greed, their power-hungry mentality—*fitna*; not motivated out of love and affection. Such greed is not acceptable to Allah Swt. Such disobedience is not acceptable to Allah Swt. When, given out of love and submission, then the kinsmen draw near. Who is the nearest of kinsmen? Your own children, your own family. Here is also told to us a way of approaching Allah *Subhanallah wa'ta'ala* through our relationship with those who are nearest and dearest to us. After all, how can we worship Allah Swt fully and completely if we don't appreciate the beautiful, greatest gift Allah Swt gives to us?

Perhaps as an interesting side note: **22:18** it is part of the preparation for the sacrifice that the sheep or goat is raised in the home, in most cases. In doing this the children/family develop love and affection for the sweet animal. The children caress it, water and feed it, play with it for a year, perhaps, knowing that one day it will be slaughtered and the next day, it will be their dinner. We are to experience that affection of parent and child, also. It's not tradition that you just go out and pay someone to slaughter it. It's not tradition that you go to the market and buy one already slaughtered. But you raise it in your family, as near to you—like your own kith and kin, like your pet. How many of you have pets? Do you love your pets? Do you feel bad when your pet dies? What's your pet's name? Do you want to eat it tonight? Do we want to kill and eat BonBon tonight? We have affectionate love. Try to capture the feeling, even a tiny ember of the feeling Sidna Ibrahim (as) had for his child when asked to do this. It is not like he was asked to kill his pet.

As Muslims we understand that everyone is our brother or sister. So now our family is extended; and we understand the relationship between ourselves and the Prophet Mohammed (sal) is another aspect of our kinship and relationship. Then we understand that the relationship between ourselves and our *shaykh* and our *shuyukh* is another family relationship. When we look at nature and the lives of animals, all life is a process of striving for strength, submitting to the elements, putting energy into creating the next generation, and the fruit of life. Everywhere we see it. Why then, do we find it so difficult to understand our place in this process of sacrificing our individual selfish nature to the very, very same objective?

Is it because we cannot go beyond our love and affection for our self, our attachment to our self? Certainly the contemplating of the quality of consciousness, that unique, self-centered characteristic of human beings begins to clarify our answer to our own question. Yet, however, it does not explain the inner urge in all good and normal human beings to create something better: better opportunities, better work, better insights, a better physical surrounding for ourselves or for our offspring for future generations to come. When that breeze blows across humanity, humanity gets very hopeful. Change! We heard a lot about change this year. Change would not be important to us if everything was wonderful. Change is very important because everything is miserable.

A person who comes and says, “Change, my brothers and sisters,” and who treats us like kith and kin, who says “You who are poor, and you who are rich, you are one family. You have responsibilities for each other. You who are ill, you who are well, you have responsibilities for each other. You are charged with helping

people become well, you are charged with making it possible for everyone 25:58, not just some. We grasp, and take a breath of that breeze. Like I used to sit with my Shaykh, Hazrat Azad Rasool. We would be sitting in 112 degree weather on hot concrete, waiting. I would wait for a breeze to come, just the flapping of the wings of a hundred birds who were eating the sweets around the tombs that would create a small breeze, and we would grasp at that breeze.

The only explanation for our attitude lies in accepting the positive and inspiring aspect of sacrifice itself. That is, the love of our kith and our kin, our fellow beings in our love for Allah *Subhanallah wa' ta'ala*, and in empowering and preparing others for life and worship of Allah *Subhanallah wa'ta'ala*. It is accepting this immediate and complete relationship with our own destiny, with our Creator that frees us and liberates our minds and hearts from the illusion of selfishness and self-importance. [It is] accepting what Allah has given us, and where Allah has put us, and not putting a time frame on it, because the clock runs strange things out. Sometimes on the clock things happen that are not in the order we think they should happen. Like parents are not supposed to outlive their children.

In other words, our life is always an interface with sacrifice—potential or immediate—sacrifice for the good, for the good of following generations, sacrifice for something greater than what we have. Consciousness allows us to improve the circumstances of this world for a more qualified and creative progeny; one that helps them be clearer about their purpose and role than we are. But that won't happen when we teach them greed and power hungriness. That won't happen when we teach them not to value time, and not to value relationships. [It will

happen] only when that consciousness is part of worship, part of obedience, submission, trust, and selflessness. All of those are hard for most human beings, except if we are really Muslims, *mu'min*, and in Tariqah. We can all identify with the difficulty of those characteristics. Our life is about living for the future. It is not about living for ourselves. Our self-interest is valid insofar as we continue striving to maximize our potential and our creativity for the purpose of sustaining life for future generations.

I know it sounds very cyclic. It does not sound very interesting. But, the qualities of obedience, and the qualities of submission vis-a-vis Ibrahim (*alai-hi-s-salam*) and the Prophet Mohammed (*Salle-Allahu 'alaihi wa sallam*) are the models for our relationship with Allah *Subhanallah wa'ta'ala* and with our guides, without whom we cannot find our way. It is difficult for us to decondition ourselves from our ideas and fantasies about life; thinking in very materialistic, personal, career-oriented ways that somehow Allah's plan for us is other than perpetuating and striving toward knowledge, other than sustaining of our community, other than focusing on our faith and the worship of Him in our actions and hearts. But, indeed, that is what it is about. And anything else that fits it is fine, as long as it fits it, and the "it" doesn't fit that. That is what we have been told it is about since the beginning of time.

Each generation has the opportunity to live in harmony with creation, to build upon the previous generation's work, to meet the tests that come, that finally, if passed, liberate us from the sense of distance and loneliness from the Creator, despite the fact that **"wheresoever you turn, there is the face of Allah."** But we don't see. Yet each generation tends to miss that opportunity by transferring the ultimate goal

to something worldly and temporary. We are very good at that. That is not to say Allah *Subhanallah wa'ta'ala* did not provide us with the appreciation of His Creation – hardly. That is not to say Allah did not give us the joy of work – of course He did; or the sweetness of love and affection – of course He did; or the ability to feel fulfilled – of course, that is our capacity. Quite the contrary: all are part of the ‘consciousness’ that separates human beings from the rest of creation, and which enables us to improve upon the conditions of ourselves and others, to work to sustain life, growth, and wisdom, and to pursue nearness to Allah *Subhanallah wa'ta'ala*. After all, trees cannot get up and move. Birds have very regular migration patterns, but we have this ability to make changes. It is our blessing, and when it is misused it is our curse.

Every one of those benefits: the sweetness of love, the feeling of fulfillment, the joy of work have tests and trials that come along with them—sacrifices, if you will. Each demands an attitude of submission, of trust, of faith, and of obedience. To live and struggle or to thrive in the conditions and situations we are placed in, or which we have chosen apparently for ourselves is the basis of all our trials and tests. Think about our brothers and sisters and the children in so many countries in the world today as well as the millions out of work and in deep debt in the USA. Yet what is the liberating truth that creates humility, human concern, equity, community responsibility that lies in each individual discovering the essential truth and power of submission, trust, and faith? To discover the way, to thrive in the midst of difficulty – this is the potential of the human being. Or should we put ourselves on the list of extinct or near-extinct animals?

It is the greatest sign of progress and truly a blessing to thrive in the conditions and

situations in which we are placed. This is reason and opportunity of every test and every trial. There is nothing else, just as a tree must survive and sustain and bear fruit if it can for future generations where it stands, no matter what comes to it, no matter what the weather is, no matter what happens. Cold, wind, lightening, thunder and human encroachment, it cannot get out of the way. That is obvious. But it gives us, human beings, just the ability to move, and we try to conquer or at the least avoid what is unpleasant and what is a trial for us. We move just to get out of the way of things that bother us. Our first choice is to avoid the trial, but tests and trials are inevitable, and sacrifices are demanded

Again let me present the good thesis that we are born to sacrifice with our God-given life so that we may fulfill our pledge, our word to Allah *Subhanallah wa'ta'ala* to sustain and preserve His creation, and to do it in such a way that it becomes a clear opportunity for each one of us to come near to Allah after all, and feel the love for Allah, and to get over the loneliness of separation. Reflect on the reality of our existence. We are created from nothing. Allah Swt gives us life and all the *rizq*; yet asks only one thing from us: to be **“thankful servants.”**

Suhaib ibn Sinan narrated that the Prophet, peace be upon him, said: "How remarkable is the case of the believer! There is good for him in everything, but this is not the case for anyone except for the believer. When the believer receives any good, he is thankful to Allah, and gets a reward. And when some misfortune befalls him, he endures it patiently, for which he is (also) rewarded."

[It is] to accept His lordship, [and that we are] created for Jannah not Jahanam.

Allah Swt sent 124,000 *anbiyā* to guide us and direct us to and on the *sirat'ul mustqīm*. Created from Adam, but still we run toward the fire. Our challenge is to stay with the way of the *anbiyā*, to sail the Ocean of Peace and Love. The Prophets gave the formula for each nation. The way of the Prophet Muhammed (sal) was the message of gratitude/*shukr*. We need to be grateful that we came at the time of the Prophet Muhammad (sal). We have been given the example, but do we follow that example? Does our life fit the model, our intention, even? All around us we hear complaining, criticism. We ask ourselves, “What has happened to this world?” It comes from our own lips, “My God, how did this all happen?”

There are those who rather die than live. What an aberration that is. No one is listening to the Prophet (sal), or to the *awliyā*. We complain, but look at those who have real pain and suffering, loss and disenfranchisement, those who are paying with their lives for the greed and power madness of others, as in Zimbabwe, Congo, and Sudan, Iraq and Iran, and other places in the world—economically, in war and genocides. Today we have to celebrate, but it is difficult when we look at the world. It's difficult to celebrate as Muslims when we look at the state of Muslims: families without means or jobs, whole communities gone broke or almost literally destroyed in our own country. Who is tasting the sweetness of Allah's Creation and Mercy today? Who is tasting the sweetness of the Eid ul Adhā?

You remember my story about celebrating this Eid in Dier Assad in Israel? Dr. Amoun's family had a sheep they brought up from being a lamb. The children played with it, loved it. On the day of the Eid ul Qurban, one son sat with the sheep, petted it, kissed it and then took it to his father for the slaughter, and took

part in the slaughter. I thought at that time, “How odd this is? There seems to be no remorse, no hesitation, no tears from the child.” It took me years to grasp the sweetness of that moment, the sacrifices we make for love, the love of Ishmael and his admonition to Sidna Ibrahim. Allahu Akbar! What is the *rahmat* in this act of sacrifice? It lies in the submission of Ismail to Sidna Ibrahim (as) and Sidna Ibrahim’s submission to Allah Swt. Who is the most merciful? You are the most merciful at the core of your being, because you have the *rahmat* of Allah Swt; we all have the *rahmat* of Allah Swt. But we cannot be the most merciful without the Most Merciful.

Think of the Hajj and the obvious and given reason for throwing the stones at the Pillars in Mina...throwing our shaytan back at Shaytan,. “Ya Shaytan, take this arrogance and jealousy, and anger, and greed back. I am now *abdulallah*. I am here to tell you this. “O Allah! I hasten to you. All praises and grace is Yours. The sovereignty is Yours. You have no partner from then to this day.” Allah Swt made us higher than the Angels to achieve this. We are fulfilling our purpose by choice. We are turning toward Allah. Today we should ask ourselves, “What kind of life am I presenting to my sons or daughters, those who are here, or those who are arriving on the train coming into the station?”

What direction are we pushing them? What values are we presenting to them from the treasury of the Creator. If truly there is a sacrifice and a migration from the darkness to light, from repentance and forgiveness, then as the Prophet (sal) said in his last *khutbah* to the Sahabi, “Now His Mercy has reached to you; no one will reach to your station. Did I give you the message? Be witness that I did my part.” This is the message we have to give today: live today and maintain tomorrow and

tomorrow and tomorrow. What are we willing to give? If we are dying of thirst and in the desert, Harun Rashid said, “*Would give half his wealth?*” What are we running after? Follow in the footsteps of the Prophet (sal). Be serious about every aspect of life.

As I mentioned the other night in a *dars*, there is another way to look at conscious action, action that reflects the Reality of the Divine Presence, the inner purpose of Hajj; to shed the apparent realities of this world and stand before Allah Swt in the garb of eternity, in repentance and in remembrance; totally absorbed and allowing one’s heart, soul, body to affirm its presence in the Presence by praising Allah Swt.

Hadhrat Sahal narrates: The Holy Prophet (SAW) said that when a pilgrim recites talbiyah "ALLAH humma labbaik" (O ALLAH! I am present), during the pilgrimage to Makkah, all the stones, trees and pebbles of earth around him, join him, till the chain extends from the East to the West. (Tirmizi and Ibn-e-Majah).

This *hadith* confirms that the stones and the minerals and apparently non-living things do possess consciousness through which they listen to the *talbiyah* of a pilgrim and join in.

Hadhrat Abu Hurairah narrates: The Holy Prophet (SAW) said that when a person picks up pebbles from the Ka’bah, they implore him in the name of ALLAH to let them remain there. (Abu Dawood).

This Hadith also confirms that the pebbles do have consciousness and

understanding.

Hadhrat Ans narrates: The Holy Prophet (SAW) said that mount Uhad loves us as we love it. (Bukhari and Tirmizi).

The word love in this *hadith* proves that the stones do have consciousness and feeling. The mutual love means real love. So, the stones, minerals and the trees are created to sing His praise and are fulfilling the purpose of their creation, but the human being created for His cognition is neglectful. Realizing his responsibility, if a person strives to attain Divine Nearness and Pleasure, he would lead a comfortable and purposeful life here and in the Hereafter. The only instrument to this attainment is frequent *dhikr* Allah, the frequent remembrance of Allah. In the case of the time of Hajj, [it is] the remembrance and praise of the Hajji or pilgrim, and the essential and everlasting praise of the almost eternal entity on this earth. What comes closest to eternal on this earth but stones? The Hajji and the stones meet in common purpose. By the agency of the hand of the believer who lifts them, the songs of praise of the rocks are cast at the *shaytan*. Due to its nature of being stone, one can surmise that it too, under the identity assign to its symbolism, is also praising Allah Swt.

In our community, we are not insulated or isolated from the tests or trials, nor from the conditioning, nor from the apprehension concerning “sacrifice.” But it must be clear that Allah’s intention is not our suffering or loss, but the opportunity those things give us: to excel in our duty and exemplify our purpose in this perfectly balanced and potentially harmonious Creation and expression of the Divine intent; to develop skill that can be useful; to refine our submission; to create safety and

security for the future. In other words, simply and clearly stated, I hope, we must live for the future by worshiping Allah consciously and purposefully, constantly and consistently, and by focusing our efforts on the next generations. It is our duty to sustain the clarity and purpose of the truth of Al Haqq. This is the Islam of personal life. This is the Islam of the Ummah. This is the Islam of humanity, by whatever name they call themselves—the Ahl al Kitab.

[We must] put our energy into our fruit-like tree, preparing the environment properly, and clarifying the roles of seeker and Guide, of the worshiper and the Worshiped, as His greatest creation: the human being. Each one of us can bear fruit in some way or another by our works, acts, deeds, thoughts, children, friendships, everything. Everything is the way to bear fruit for future generations, if we have the right intent. If we can understand this, we can find the humility needed for the tests and trials of life (because surely they come), and the joys and the accomplishments which we are permitted to have, out of the Mercy of Allah *Subhanallah wa'ta'ala* (and they will come). We can, even from here appreciate the time and purpose of Arafat, even from this distance, taking the time to sit here, or recite Qur'an, make extra *rakahs*, read the Qur'an and find the time for *muraqabah*. At the same time, this is when and where we speak to Allah *Subhanallah wa'ta'ala*,

“O Allah Subhanallah wa ta'ala, verily this house is Your house; the sanctuary is Your sanctuary; the safety Your safety; and this is the station of him who took refuge in You from the fire.”

That is about life. When we pass the door and reach the corner by the opening of

the Hijr, we say: **“O Allah *Subhanallah wa'ta'ala*, I take refuge in You from doubt, from ascribing partners to You, from discord, hypocrisy, evil traits, and from bad turns of fortune in money, spouse, and children.”** This is where we seek to experience His intimacy.

“O Allah Subhanallah wa ta'ala, shade me in Your shade on a day when there is no shade but Yours. Give me to drink from the cup of Your prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu alahi wa ali wa salim), a whole drink after which I will never thirst again.

Accept the Hajj of all our Muslim brothers and sisters who are given the grace of Your Presence in Your Exalted House. Give us the Grace to one day be able to come visit You. O Allah Subhanallah wa ta'ala, there is no one worthy of love, worship and surrender but You. Allow us to love You, worship You and submit to Your Presence and to Your Wish and Your Will. Ameen! Ameen ! Ameen!”

In Makkah, the Hajjis face in one direction from every direction, a circle of faithful humanity in submission directed to a monolithic three dimensional symbol of created space, embedded with a stone from the farthest reaches of the Universes, just as the direction of Sidna Ibrahim's (*alai-hi-s-salam*) life was totally focused on Allah *Subhanallah wa'ta'ala* and submitted to Allah Swt. In Suratu-l-An'am he said, **“For me I have set my face, firmly and truly, towards Him who created the heavens and the earth, and never shall I make partners with Allah.”** (6:79) **“Behold! His Lord said to him ‘Bow (your will) to Me.’ He said,**

‘I bow to the Lord and Cherisher of the Universe.’” (Al Baqarah 2 :131)

Those who remain firm and are patient (and indeed, only those) who strive hard to receive the guidance and the reward; those who, after going through several trials, tests and untold number of sacrifices, persevere and maintain their commitment, forswear judgmentalness and doubt, are the ones, the few who come to understand life and its meaning and purpose. They are the people who are among the happy and peaceful and fulfilled. It is His guidance and knowledge we really seek, and it comes from our success in keeping our word, our pledge to Him, to our Guide, and to our inner being.

“And those who strive in our Cause We will certainly guide them to Our paths.” (Al Ankaabut 29:69) Simple and profound, he tells us in Qur’an. The Prophets Ibrahim and Mohammed (sal) proclaimed: **“Truly, my prayer and my sacrifice, my life and my death, are all for Allah, the Cherisher of the Worlds.” (Al An’am 6 :162)**

Our own ultimate salvation or peace lies in giving our life meaning within the context of Islam. That means guaranteeing the most basic human needs for everyone; worshiping, and serving. Furthermore, every action of a real Muslim bestows benefits upon individuals, here and in the hereafter. Sacrifice does not mean we have to be in poverty. It is not one of ignorance or stifling creativity. Rather, it is a life of encouragement and partnership, and mutual work and success within the context of Islam.

For us, our community, as we enter our 35th complete year, it is an opportunity for

reaffirmation and renewal; moving away from selfishness and personal agendas, an opportunity to teach our children the depths of Islam and Tassawuf; of celebrating our lives together, changing our ways, creating new venues of support, and building our future before it is too late. It is up to each of us to find the value of such a safe and secure environment, and at the same time repair the cracks in the foundation that have come over the years; even if it means moving the road a little so that the water doesn't erode the foundation of our buildings; rebuilding our infrastructure; reaffirming our faith and our trust in the Path; and most of all our personal obligations to Allah *Subhanallah wa'ta'ala* and our *bai'at*.

We must redefine in our hearts and minds such terms as sacrifice, submission, and trust until they reflect in some small way the sacrifice, submission and trust of our father Ibrahim (*alahis salaam*) and our Prophet Mohammed (may the blessings of Peace of Allah be upon them both.) *Insh'allah*, we can reach to that point and wake up and realize that life is not about accumulating, it is about sacrificing; and we can re-define sacrifice without that aura of pain and loss over it.

Hasbuna l lahu wani'ma-l-wakil. Ni'ma-l-mawla wani'ma-n-nasir. Wa'ufawidu 'amri ila-l-lahi' inna --laha basirun bil-ibad. 'Inna waliyyiya-l-lahu-l-ladi nazzala-l-kitaba wanhuwa yatawalla-s-salihin'

Allah (Subhanallah wa ta'ala) is our sufficiency, and good is the trustee, the best to protect and the best to help. My own affairs I commit to Allah (Subhanallah wa ta'ala), for Allah (Subhanallah wa ta'ala) ever watches over His Servants. For my Protector is

Allah (Subhanallah wa ta'ala), Who revealed the Book, and He will befriend the righteous.

Rabbi 'akmil li dini, wa'atmim 'alayya ni'mataka, wa-j-'alni 'abdan sakuran, abdan karima.

O my Lord, perfect for me my religion, complete Thy favors upon me, and make me a devotee most grateful, a devotee most generous.

Asalāmu aleikum.

SECOND KHUTBA

7 Takbīr

(O Muslims)! You will never enter Paradise unless you are believers. And you will never achieve genuine belief unless you love (and respect) each other. Shall I not tell you the way you can create love amongst yourselves? (That way lies in) frequently greeting each other with *salām*. (Abu Hurairah / Muslim.)

O my Lord, perfect for me my Religion, complete Thy Favors upon me, and make me a devotee most grateful, a devotee most generous.

**Allah (Subhanallah wa ta'ala)u laaa 'ilaaha 'illa Huu.
Al-Hayyul-Qayyum. Laa ta'-khuzuhuu sinatunw-wa laa nawm.
Lahuu maa fis-samaawaati wa maa fil-'arz.
Man-zallazii yashfa-'u 'indahuuu 'illaa bi-'iznih?
Ya'-lamu maa bayna 'aydiihim wa maa khalfahum.
Wa laa yuhiituna bi-shay-'im-min 'ilmihiii 'illaa bimaa shaaaa'.
Wa si-'a Kursiyyu-hus-Samaawaati wal-arz;
wa laa ya-uuduhuu hifzu- humaa
wa Huwal 'Aliyyul-Aziim.**

My dear brothers and sisters, in this final *khutbah* we want to pray for all those people who are in Hajj, all those people who went and came back, and those who went and did not. We remember our brother Daoud at this time, and the sacrifice Allah Swt asked him and his family to make for his benefit in the hereafter and for our understanding of Islam. We ask for His mercy upon Grandma Minkie, who is on the train on her way to the embrace of Allah, and to send blessings upon her family, especially Musa and Rabia, and those who have become her kith and kin here, who have taken not just time but love and energy and made her comfortable at a time when most people have discomfort. *Bismillah ar Rahman ar Rahim.*

(Duas)

O Allah, we ask You at this time to send Your blessings upon the leaders of this country also, and upon the leaders of all the countries, but especially the new leader of this country. *Insh'allah*, that he be able to bring his deep and profound faith in You and his sense of future for all humanity as a reality. We ask you Allah Swt to bring Your blessing upon the legislators that they

learn the true value of their faith they proclaim in working together for humanity. Send Your mercy and *rizq* upon those who are in need, whose homes were taken away from them, whose jobs are lost, who have no way of paying for their health, and for those who are forced to live a life they never thought they would ever have to live. Protect us Allah so that we may continue to serve You and serve them. Make order easy for us and [put] serenity in our hearts and our bodies, and peace and well being in our worldly lives.

O Allah, make our faces to shine with Your light and attributes, and make us laugh and rejoice on the day of Resurrection. Make us Your friends, and make Your hand to be spread open upon us, upon our families, and upon our children, and those who are with us and by Your mercy. Be our companion in our travels, our guardian in our families, and efface the faces of our enemies, and freeze them in their places so they are unable to come against us, O most Gracious Responder.

O Allah, truly we praise You and we seek Your help. Keep us in companionship with the messengers and angels, and those Allah spoke of in the clear book: **“Truly Allah and His angels send prayers upon the Prophet. So you who have attained to faith, send prayers upon him and surrender in utter submission.”**

O Allah Swt, send Your blessings upon our rightly guided leaders, deputies, Abu Bakr n Siddiq and Uthman, Imam Ali, Hasan and Hussein and Fatima,

and upon all your followers, and the followers of your followers, and companions of the Companions to this very day.

We ask You, O Allah Swt to help us find refuge in You, in Your names, in Your qualities; You Who are universally merciful and singularly compassionate, Originator of the heavens and the earth, Possessor of majesty and bounty; the Sympathizer and Satisfier of all desires. O Allah, waft upon us the beauty of Your mercy and make us content with the fragrance of none but You. Preserve me as You preserve us in remembrance, because truly, Allah Swt, You are the power over all things.

Duās. Amin. Eid Mubāarak.