



Eid ul Adhā

At the Khanaqah of Shaykh Ahmed Abdur Rashid

**Allahu Akbar kabira. Wa 'l hamdu li'llahi kathira.
Wa subhana 'llahi bukratan wa asila.**

Takbir 9 times

Wa azzin finnaasi bil Hajji ya'-tuuka rijaalanwwa alaa kuli Dhaamiriny-ya- tiina min-kulli fajjin `amiq: Li-yash-haduu manaafi-a' lahum wa yadhkurus-mallaahi fiii `Ayyaamim-Ma luumaatin `alaa inaa radhaqahum-mim bahiimatil-'an- 'aam: fakuluu 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 and the unfortunate. (22:27-28)

“Dhaalika wa mañy-yu`adh-dhim hurumaati-Llaahi fa-huwa khayrul-lahu ‘iñda Rabbihi”

**That is the order of Allah and whoever honors the sacred rite of Allah will find a better reward for him with his Lord.
(22:30)**

Wa bashshiri-l-mukhbitin (a) Al-ladheena idhaa dhukira-Llaahu wa jilat quluubuhum wa-s-saabireena 'alaa maa aṣaabahum wa-l-muqemee aṣ-salaati wa mimmaa razaq^anaahum yuñfiqun

And give good news to the humble- those who when Allah is mentioned their hearts tremble and those who are patient in what befalls them and who perform salat and who spend on others from what We have provided them. (22: 34-35)

Bismi-Llāhi-r-Rahmāni-r-Rahīm. You, my dear brothers and sisters, can imagine the thoughts going through my mind as I sat to compose this *khutbah* for the Eid ul Adha – so soon after surgery, so soon after one of our sisters had a profound accident that compounded her previous illness, and other challenges to our community over the past few months. These tests of faith, however, pale in comparison to the one of our forefather Sidna Ibrahim (ra), and his family, and his community. The lessons of tests and trials, of faith and personal sacrifice, of trust in Allah Swt and in the reality of life's vicissitudes are timeless, and part of the fabric of life and the passing of time.

We remember these stories. And as we tell the stories, each generation takes from them what they can. Some just hear stories and attribute them to allegories of culture. Others see lessons for day to day life and how life never is passive. Others take literally the story, to the extent that they see no parallel to today, and react only emotionally or mechanically, in terms of practice without reflection. First let me thank those of you, which is most of you, who gave me your blessings, and wrote letters to me, and called me, and from the far reaches of the world, those who will be seeing this, people who I hardly knew, people whose names are sort the “friends of the friends” on Facebook, who continually ask after my health and my well-being. I am so grateful for that, you cannot imagine what that level of *adab* and consideration means to me. Not just to me personally, but about the love shared between people who care about one another, and who oversee each other's faults, and carry no enmity in their hearts, because they know they have struggled themselves in their lives. I thank you all for that; it means a lot to me.

But my story won't be remembered for more than months, and that's good. But the story of Sidna Ibrahim has lasted over 5,000 years. For us, *inshā'a-Llāh*, the story of the sacrifice and the historical events leading up to the affirmation of the unique character of Sidna Ibrahim/Ishmael and Isaac (ra) is more than allegory or metaphor. It is opportunity to reflect on our own state of being and the state of our community, in light of the state of his community, and what he rejected, and what he accepted. After all, it was Sidna Ibrahim who created a new community of believers and focused their attention on the Ka'ba (the heart and core of belief), in one Truth, and one Lord, and one purpose, and in people's capacity to expand their knowledge and to forgive. If nothing else we should strive each year to affirm the blessing of trust, of mutual love (father/son/believers), of an open heart, and an open mind to interpret and affirm the purpose of life.

It has been a year of loss, for us, but also one of many gains. The reaffirmation of our community and its unique purpose is necessary and, *inshā'a-Llāh*, becoming once again, deeply set in hearts and minds. The expansion of our good works throughout the world, through a number of the people here (indeed,

everyone who is here participates in some way), and through the teachings of those who stand so much taller than me (or any of us) in piety and wisdom, it continues on, *alhamdulillah-Llāh*. We still have hopes and plans, and good things are happening for our children, in school, and in life. *Alhamdulillah-Llāh*, there is a marriage over the horizon, college over the horizon, young children growing up, new elements in school. So many good things are happening in activities. I hope and I pray that Allah keeps them focused on the *siratal mustaqim*, that people who live here, or people far from here who are part of the extended community, realize the real power and love in the hearts of the people here. I hope and pray that nothing makes them forget their *adab*, and their love for Allah Swt, and their duty as humane human beings.

Now is the time to turn our attention toward the Ka'ba, and toward the community, to the hearts of the individuals, the future of the life/work, and to root our lives in positive thought and actions, to seize each moment, to accept our unique abilities acquired over many decades of sincere love and deepening of practices, and care and concern for humanity. Now is the time to understand the blessing and the ease and the necessity and the joy of giving, of sacrifice of trusting, and of love. No one is exempt from the potential to have this. We exempt ourselves by our distraction/*gafla*, our desire, fears, worries, and criticisms. Now in the spirit of that trust, we must plumb the depths of forgiveness; for each of us has something to forgive and something to be forgiven for. Perhaps, it is an attitude, an action, a miss-statement a doubt, an action of the *nafsi ammāra*.

This is a time when as the Hajjis announce their presence: "*Labaik Labaik allahumma Labaika.*" We must announce our intentions and our presence here and now. Now is that time, to **daily** recommit ourselves to Allah Swt, to this path, to the *shuyukh*, to Allah; abandon fears and doubts and self-judgment, abandon prejudices and old biases, and forgive one another. Lift the weight from off your chest once and for all. Think about your thoughts, watch your minds, watch the machinations of the mind/emotions as if there was another "I" observing. See the organic reality of our body systems as reflected in a healthy manner of harmony for health. Project that to the community here, as a body of people: a symbiotic and harmonious relationship among all of us that manifests in a light-filled, harmonious community of believers. Does this sound clichéd, does this sound old and worn? Remember the goodness in the hearts of the believers: the Ibrahim, goodness and trust; the Ishmael and the Isaac of our core that creates our history, our future, our values in their own refinement and trust.

Today is a day, provided for us by Allah Swt to grasp the significance of both loss and gain. It is a day of 365 days that we should be in a state of remembrance, or at least associative thinking. It is a point where our hearts are uplifted by beauty, made compassionate at the sight of suffering, merciful to those in repentance (including our own self), uplifting to the poor, providers for the hungry, sacrificing for the good of the world, and all the people and living beings. Today is a day that is dedicated to gratitude and reverence, reflection and awe, confidence in our *dīn* and fear of our Lord. What is confidence? Look to our predecessor Sidna Ibrahim; look to his sons, Ishmael and Isaac, and their story, The Destroyer of Idols - The Story of The Prophet Ibrahim.

I want to begin to read to you some of the story of Sidna Ibrahim. It's quite long, and I will stop at a certain point, or jump around. We will get a copy of this to you. Read this story in the beautiful way it has

been presented by one of our predecessors. It's very long, but I wanted to include it in the *khutbah* today, because it transcends Islam, Christianity, and Judaism in the hearts of people.

When spring came, water flew in the Tigris and the Euphrates. People were delighted, so they held celebrations in the city of Ur and other cities of Babylon.

When spring came and level of water rose in rivers, the farmers were glad, for their crops would increase. The people of the city of Ur went to Zaqura, which was a pyramidal temple. They took with them gifts to offer them to the gods, especially the god, Mardukh.

The people of Babylon held celebrations outside their cities. They chose pretty places to dance, to eat, and to drink. When the celebrations were over, they came back to their the city and went to the temple. The temple was on the top of Zaqura in the city of Ur. There was a row of numerous gods made of stone.

The people of Babylon worshipped the sun, the moon, the stars, Venus, and the kings.

At that time, over four thousand years ago, Namrud bin Kan'an was the king. He imprisoned and killed people. He took whatever he wanted of their crops. So some people worshipped him because they were afraid of his power. In spring, people went to the temple carrying gifts such as goats and wheat. They offered them to their gods, so that they might be pleased with them and to bless them.

Some people were fortune-tellers and astrologers, so the king, himself, asked them for advice, and people gave them gifts, for they were afraid of them.

The Birth of Prophet Ibrahim

One day the fortune-tellers of the temple came to Namrud and said to him: "The stars have told us that a baby boy will be born. He will end your kingdom."

Namrud asked with anxiety: "When will he be born?" The fortune-tellers replied: "He will be born in this year." In that year Namrud ordered all the male babies to be killed. Prophet Ibrahim, Allah's friend, was born in that year.

His mother feared for his safety, so she took him and went to a cave. She put him in the cave and went home. No one knew what had happened. Namrud killed many male babies in that year. The mothers wept over their babies. Some babies were only a few months old; some were only a few days old; some were only a few hours old. Namrud was afraid of the foretold baby. The year passed, so Namrud became calm, for he had killed all the male babies.

Ibrahim was born in the city of Kawthariya, near Ur and Babylon. He grew up in the cave. Allah, our Lord, took care of him. He taught him how to suckle his fingers in order to survive. Namrud wanted to kill Ibrahim, but Allah wanted him to live. Allah wanted Ibrahim to guide the pagan people so that they would worship Him. Ibrahim (as) grew up in the cave. One day

his mother came to the cave. She embraced, kissed, and took him home. The soldiers of Namrud thought that Ibrahim was two or three years old. They did not realize that he was only a few months old, so did not take him away.

Idols

At that time, people worshipped idols. They worshipped Mardukh, the god of gods; Ay, the god of Justice and Law; Seen, the god of Heaven; Ishtar, and many others. Many people worshipped Venus, the moon, and the sun. At that time, no one worshipped Allah, the Glorified. The Prophet Ibrahim was born and grew up at that time.

Azar

Azar was an astrologer. He made idols that represented different gods. Namrud himself consulted him. Prophet Ibrahim lived in Azar's house, for Azar was his uncle. For this reason, The Prophet Ibrahim called Azar: "My father." When Ibrahim grew up into a young man, Allah, the Glorified, blessed him with great intelligence. As he had a clean and pure heart, he did not believe in idols nor did he prostrate himself to them. He was amazed to find the people worshipping the very idols that they had made with their own hands! He knew that Allah was greater than those idols.

When it got dark, Ibrahim went to the city to look for the truth. There was light only in the temple. The people who worshipped Venus looked at the sky humbly. They thought that Venus was their god, and that it supplied them with their livelihood, and gave them blessings. Ibrahim stood up with them looking at the sky. He was looking for the truth. He was searching for the true Creator of the world. In the meantime, the moon shone. It appeared in the sky sending its silvery light.

Prophet Ibrahim was a wise young man. He wanted the people to correct their corrupt beliefs. He wanted to say to them that Allah was greater than their idols; therefore, he said to them: "The moon is my Lord! The people who worshipped Venus turned to him and asked him: "Why have you chosen the moon as your Lord?" Ibrahim answered: "Venus has set, so it is not a true God; the true God should not set!" Time passed, and the moon passed through the sky until it disappeared. After an hour, the sun shone, so Ibrahim said: "That is my Lord! That is greater!" Some people believed in Ibrahim's words, and they said to each other: "Perhaps he is right, because the sun gives us light and warmth only." When the sun set and it got dark, Ibrahim looked at the sky and said: "I am going to refrain from worshipping the sun, for it sets, and the true God should not set! Now, I am going to worship Allah, Who has created Venus, the moon, the sun, the earth, and all of us."

The Believing Young Man

Ibrahim said: "I am not afraid of the idol gods nor am I afraid of Namrud." These words of his spread through the city, so all the people knew that he mocked their gods. When Ibrahim was 16 years of age, all the people of Babylon knew that he did not worship their gods, and that he mocked them.

One day, Azar, Ibrahim's uncle, saw Ibrahim making an idol more beautiful than those he made. In the beginning, he was glad, for he thought that Ibrahim would take care of the idols in the temple; but, at last, he was sad when he saw him breaking the idol into pieces. Azar was angry with Ibrahim, so he said to him: "Ibrahim, why have you broken the god into pieces? Are you not afraid of the anger of the gods?" Ibrahim politely answered: "Father, why do you worship what neither hears nor sees nor avails you in the least? Father, do not worship Satan. Surely, Satan is disobedient to the Most Merciful (Allah)."

Azar said angrily: "Do you dislike my gods, Ibrahim? If you do not desist, I will certainly revile you. Leave me for a time."

Ibrahim greeted Azar before leaving his house, saying: "Peace be on you. I will pray to my Lord to forgive you. Surely, He is ever Affectionate to me." Ibrahim prayed to his Lord to guide Azar into the light and faith. He separated himself from people to worship Allah, the One and Only. People went to their temples all the time. They bowed to idols and gave them gifts, but Ibrahim did not bend to idols nor did he give them gifts. All the people worshipped idols, the stars, the sun, and the moon. They also worshipped Namrud, the King. Thus, the Prophet Ibrahim thought of a way to guide them to worship Allah, the One and Only.

Spring

Spring came, so flowers opened, and the river was full of water. People rejoiced at spring; they celebrated the arrival of spring, fertility, and growth. At that time, people went outside the city to hold their celebrations. They ate, danced, and played. Then they returned to the city to give gifts to their gods and fortune-tellers. When people got ready to go outside the city, our Prophet Ibrahim did not go with them, so they asked him: "Ibrahim, why do you not go with us?" "I'm ill," replied the Prophet Ibrahim. The Prophet Ibrahim was sad for his people, for they did not know the right path. The Prophet Ibrahim was different from his people, for his clothes were clean, and he cut his nails and hair.

All the people, including Namrud and the fortune-tellers, went outside the city to celebrate spring. Prophet Ibrahim stayed in the city. He took an axe and went to the great temple. There were many idols in the temple. Some of them were small, some were big. There was a very big idol. People called the idol Mardukh, the god of gods. The temple was completely empty when the Prophet Ibrahim entered it. There was nothing inside it except idols and the bad smell of blood and meat. The Prophet Ibrahim looked at idols, and then he asked himself: "Why do my people worship idols that do not help them?" The idols were motionless at their places. They did not move or speak or do anything.

The Prophet Ibrahim asked the idols angrily: "Why don't you eat?" There was no answer except his words that echoed in the empty temple.

The Prophet Ibrahim wanted to destroy the idols to show the people that their idols were mere stones. So he drew his axe and began destroying the faces of the idol gods, and then he broke the idols into pieces. When he reached the biggest of the gods, he did not destroy it. He only hung his axe on its shoulder and left the temple. He looked at the sky and saw white pigeons flying peacefully in the sky. When the spring celebrations had ended, the people of Babylon came back to the city.

The dark night had covered the city, so it was time for the people to give their gods gifts. They went to the Great Temple in a long procession carrying torches, and gifts. The fortune-tellers led the procession. The fortune-tellers and the people were astonished to see their gods destroyed. The gods had been broken into pieces. All the gods had become ruins except the biggest one. The biggest of the gods had been motionless in its place for many years. However, it now carried an axe on one of its shoulders. No one walked towards the biggest of the gods to ask it what had happened. The biggest of the gods was also silent as usual, for it was a mere stone. Noise broke out when the fortune-tellers asked each other: "Who has destroyed our sacred gods?" One of them answered: "I always hear a young man called Ibrahim mock the gods. He says that they are useless. So I think that he has broken them." Accordingly, the fortune-tellers were very angry with Ibrahim.

The Trial

Namrud came to the temple because something dangerous had happened. He feared for his throne, so he ordered Ibrahim to be arrested. He ordered him to be tried in the temple. The judge sat beside Namrud in the temple, which was full of people. The soldiers brought the young man, Ibrahim. They made him stop before Namrud and the judge. The trial started with the judge's questions.

The judge asked Ibrahim: "We know that you mock our gods. We also know that you don't celebrate the arrival of spring as the people of Babylon do." Now, tell us who has broken our gods. Have you broken them, Ibrahim?" Ibrahim replied calmly: "No, the biggest one has broken them. Ask it, if it can speak."

All the people looked at the biggest of the gods, which was carrying an axe on one of its shoulders. They knew that it did not speak. The judge asked Ibrahim: "You know that the gods cannot speak, and that they cannot answer." Thus, Ibrahim asked: "So why do you worship what you have made with your own hands?" Why do you worship idols that do not harm nor avail anyone nor speak nor receive your gifts?" All the people bowed their heads. The judge also bowed his head. They asked each other: "Ibrahim's right. Gods shouldn't be made of stone. Why do we worship idols that have neither soul nor life?"

The fortune-tellers were angry with Ibrahim. They did not want people to follow the right path, for their power would come to an end. Thus, they shouted: "Don't forgive Ibrahim, for he's destroyed the sacred gods! Don't forgive him; he's destroyed our gods that give us blessings and fertility!" Namrud supported the fortune-tellers. He remembered their previous prophecy: "A person will be born, and he will destroy your kingdom." Thus, he said with anger: "Ibrahim has committed a crime! Judge you must punish him!" All the people stood up for Namrud and supported him. Then Namrud said: "We must protect our sacred gods! We must punish Ibrahim by throwing him into the fire!" Very few people felt sad for Ibrahim. Among them were Sarah, Ibrahim's cousin, and Lot. Sarah was a wise young lady. She believed Ibrahim's words. Lot was also a wise man. He believed in Allah, the One and Only, and the message of the Prophet Ibrahim. The Prophet Ibrahim was imprisoned until the people gathered a lot of wood and made a big fire to throw him into it.

At that time Namrud wanted to discuss with Ibrahim about Allah, the One and Only. Ibrahim came to Namrud's palace. He stopped before him. He neither bowed nor prostrated to him. The Prophet Ibrahim was afraid of no one except Allah. He worshipped nobody except Allah, the Glorified. Namrud asked Ibrahim "Ibrahim who is the God you worship?" The Prophet Ibrahim replied: "I worship Allah Who gives life to the dead and brings death to the living." Again with haughtiness, Namrud said: "I also enliven people and make them die!" He clapped his hand and commanded his guards: "Bring me two prisoners! One who has been sentenced to imprisonment and the other has been sentenced to death."

The guards brought him two chained prisoners. Namrud commanded the swordsman: "Cut off the head of this prisoner. Then release the one who has sentenced to death." Namrud turned to Ibrahim and asked him: "Did you see what I did. I brought death to the prisoner who was only sentenced to imprisonment, and gave life to the one sentenced to death." The Prophet Ibrahim refrained from discussing with Namrud on such a matter, for what Namrud had done was incorrect. For this reason he asked him: "I worship my Lord, for He makes the sun rise in the East. Can you make it rise in the West?"

Namrud was astonished at Abraham's question, for no one had asked him such question before. However, Namrud kept silent. He was unable to answer.

The Four Birds

Once again, Namrud discussed with Ibrahim on the matter of life and death. He said to him: "I can give life to people and bring death to them. However, your Lord is unable to do that. You only claim that." Again the guards brought Ibrahim out of prison. They made him stop before Namrud, who asked him: "Don't you say that your Lord gives life to people and brings death to them die? Come on, show me that!" The Prophet Ibrahim looked at the sky and said: "My Lord's power is over all things!"

Then Ibrahim raised his hands towards the sky and said: "My Lord, show me how You give life to the dead." Allah, our Lord, asked: "What! Do you not believe?" The Prophet Ibrahim replied: "Yes, but in order that my heart may be at ease." Then Allah, the Most High, ordered Ibrahim to take four birds, slaughter them, and then put parts of their bodies on four mountains. No one was able to give life to the four dead birds except Allah, Who created all things and gives life to man, animals, and plants. The Prophet Ibrahim stood on one of the mountains and shouted at the top of his voice: "Slaughtered birds, come to me with the permission of Allah!" Then a wonderful thing happened. The heads of the birds returned to their bodies. Then their wings and their souls came back. The birds' hearts began beating. Their wings began flapping. Then the birds flew high in the sky. They quickly sat at the feet of the Prophet Ibrahim, and he prostrated to Allah, the Almighty Creator. However, Namrud disbelieved in this sign and commanded his guards to take Ibrahim to prison.

The Great Fire

The people of Babylon had a lot of oil, tar, and sulfur. They therefore decided to make the greatest fire in their country in order to punish the Prophet Ibrahim, who destroyed their gods. Thus, they gathered wood outside the city for over a month and poured tar and oil on it. The day of carrying out the punishment of Ibrahim came, so the people of Babylon went to see his punishment.

Namrud's soldiers brought the Prophet Ibrahim, and then the fortune-tellers came and made a great fire. The wood burnt quickly, because it had been soaked with oil and tar. The flames of the fire were tens of meters high. The people of Babylon retreated so that the fire would not burn them. As for the Prophet Ibrahim, he looked calmly at the fire, for he believed in Allah and was not afraid of anybody or anything except Him. Ibrahim's hands were tied. The fortune-tellers thought that he would be afraid of the fire, and that he would apologize to them for destroying their gods. However, Ibrahim was waiting calmly for his fate.

Then a problem arose, for no one was able to approach that great and furious fire. The fortune-tellers asked each other: "How can we throw Ibrahim into the fire?" So they held a meeting and thought about a way to solve the problem. One of them suggested a satanic idea: "We must put Ibrahim in a catapult." The fortune-teller drew a picture of the catapult on the ground. The picture was satanic, for the catapult would be able to throw Ibrahim in the fire from far away. The workers started building the catapult. Once it was ready, the soldiers brought Ibrahim and put him in it, but he was still very calm. The people were looking at the young man, Ibrahim. They were astonished at his patience and firmness.

At that critical moment an angel came to Ibrahim and asked him: "Do you need any help?" Namrud's soldiers brought the Prophet Ibrahim, and then the fortune-tellers came and made a great fire. Ibrahim thought of nothing except Allah, the Glorified. He only asked Him for help. He asked Allah, the Great and Almighty, to fulfill his need when he said to the angel: "I

don't need anyone except Allah. I won't ask anybody to meet my need except Him." Ibrahim was loyal to Allah and believed in Him. So Allah, the Most High, examined his faith and loyalty. The soldiers drew back the ropes of the catapult. All of a sudden, Ibrahim was flying into the air and moving to the center of that great fire. As Allah the Glorified, created fire and gave it the ability to bum, He was able to take that ability away from it. Thus, He, the Glorified, ordered the fire: "O Fire! Be comfort and peace for Ibrahim."

The flames went on roaring but amazingly they did not bum Ibrahim. The fire did not harm Ibrahim. It only burnt the ropes with which the soldiers had tied him. The area on which Ibrahim fell became a beautiful garden of flowers, but the fire surrounded the garden. The flames of the fire went on burning in space, but they were comfort and peace for Ibrahim. Allah, the Glorified, tested Ibrahim. He knew his loyalty. So He honored him, saved him from the fire, and supported him against his enemies.

Namrud waited for the fire to die out. He wanted to know the fate of Ibrahim in order to celebrate his victory over him. The fire was very great, so it went on burning for days and nights. Then it gradually abated and died out. Namrud went to the fire to see what had happened to Ibrahim. He wanted to know whether Ibrahim had turned into ashes or not. Namrud and the people of Babylon were astonished at seeing Ibrahim alive. They understood that the Lord of Ibrahim was Powerful, Great, and Almighty. So they left Ibrahim to lead a peaceful life.

The Migration

After some years, The Prophet Ibrahim married his believing cousin, Sarah. Sarah was a rich young lady; she owned land and cattle, so she gave everything to her husband Ibrahim. The Prophet Ibrahim worked on his farms and grazed cattle. Allah blessed him, so his land bloomed, and his cattle increased. The Prophet Ibrahim was generous; he entertained his guests and loved the poor. In this manner, he lived among his people, so he was able to summon them to worship Allah and to refrain from worshipping idols.

The fortune-tellers hated the Prophet Ibrahim. Namrud feared for his kingdom. He therefore decided to banish him from Babylon and to confiscate his property, saying it belonged to Babylon. The Prophet Ibrahim said to Namrud: "If you want to take my property, then return the years I've spent in this country." The complaint was submitted to the judge of Babylon. The judge decided that Ibrahim should give all his property to the King of Babylon. In turn the King should return to Ibrahim the years he spent in their land. So Namrud permitted the Prophet Ibrahim to take his belongings and to emigrate. On leaving Babylon, The Prophet Ibrahim said: "I'm going to my Lord, Who will guide me. Ibrahim went to another land. There he summoned people to worship Allah and to refrain from worshipping idols.

Harr

The Prophet Ibrahim, his wife Sarah, and Lot arrived in the kingdom of the Egyptians. The Prophet Ibrahim had to pay 10% of his property to the King of Egypt. After paying this, al-Ashir permitted him to enter Egypt. Al-Ashir saw the beauty of Sarah and wanted to take her to the King. The Prophet Ibrahim was angry at al-Ashir, so he said to him: "I'll give you all my belongings but I won't allow you to take Sarah." The Prophet Ibrahim said to Al-Ashir: "I'll fight against you in order to protect my wife!" Al-Ashir informed the King of Egypt of this. Therefore, the King of Egypt summoned Sarah and Ibrahim. When the King of Egypt saw Sarah, he wanted to touch her. The Prophet Ibrahim was alone and very sad at this. He turned his face away in order that he would not see someone touching his wife.

The Prophet Ibrahim asked Allah to protect Sarah from the wicked King. Allah, the Glorified accepted his prayer. He supported His Prophet Ibrahim and paralyzed the King's hand. The King of Egypt was unable to touch Sarah. He knew that the Lord of Ibrahim prevented him from doing that. Thus, he asked Ibrahim: "Has your Lord prevented me from doing this?" Ibrahim replied: "Yes. Indeed my Lord is Merciful." The King of Egypt explained: "Your Lord is Merciful. You are also merciful, so ask your Lord to heal my hand, and I'll never do anything like that again." The Prophet Ibrahim asked Allah to heal the King's hand and He, the Glorified, healed his hand. The King of Egypt looked at Ibrahim and his wife with respect, and then he gave Sarah a young lady to serve her. The young lady's name was Hajjar

Palestine

Ibrahim went to the land of Palestine. When he arrived at the coast of the Dead Sea, he left his cousin Lot at the land of Sadum to summon its people to believe in Allah and to do good. As for Ibrahim, he went to the city of al Khalil in Palestine. The Prophet Ibrahim lived in that city for many years.

Isma'il

Allah, the Exalted, did not give Ibrahim a child. As Sarah, Ibrahim's wife, was a barren woman, she decided to give her slave girl to Ibrahim to marry and to bear him children. The Prophet Ibrahim was seventy years of age; nevertheless he married Hajjar, and she bore him Isma'il. Allah, the Most High, ordered the Prophet Ibrahim to take Hajjar and Isma'il to the land of Hijaz (Saudi Arabia). The Prophet Ibrahim obeyed Allah's order. He took his wife Hajjar and Isma'il and headed for the south.

He traveled barren, wide deserts. He always looked at the sky, but the angel told him that he had not reached the land of Hijaz yet. After many long days and nights, the Prophet Ibrahim arrived in a barren land. The land was a dry valley. It had neither trees nor water. It was full of sand and stones. Waste mountains surrounded the valley. The angel came down to the

Prophet Ibrahim and said to him: "You have arrived in the Sacred Land. You should leave Hajjar and Isma'il here."

Return to Palestine.

The Prophet Ibrahim knew nothing except obedience to Allah. The sight of Hajjar and Isma'il all alone in that wild place was moving. Ibrahim saw off his wife. Then he kissed his baby Isma'il and went away. Hajjar asked her husband: "Why do you leave us in this wild place?" The Prophet Ibrahim answered with sadness, "Surely, Allah has ordered me to do this." Hajjar believed in Allah and the message of her husband, so she said in confidence: "As Allah has ordered you to do this, He will not forget us!" The Prophet Ibrahim went away. He went back to Palestine. As for Hajjar and her baby Isma'il, they were alone in that wild valley.

Is'haq

The Prophet Ibrahim became an old man, and his wife Sarah became an old woman.

The Prophet Ibrahim did not have food for himself. As he loved guests, he served them himself and offered them delicious food. One day three guests came to Ibrahim and greeted him politely. The Prophet Ibrahim went quickly to his cattle and brought back a fat ram. He slaughtered the ram and made a good meal for his guests. Now, a wonderful thing happened. The Prophet Ibrahim saw that his guests did not eat the food.

When the guests understood that The Prophet Ibrahim became worried, they said to him: "Ibrahim, don't worry. We are Allah's messengers to the land of Sadum. We are His angels. He has sent us to punish the people of Sadum." The Prophet Ibrahim felt tranquility. However, he thought about the fate of the people of Sadum. So he disputed with the angels, saying: "Lot is in the land of Sadum." The angels explained: "We know the people of Sadum. Allah has ordered us to destroy this village and its people, except Lot and his daughters."

The Prophet Ibrahim wanted to guide his people to the right path, so he asked the angels to delay their punishment, but they insisted on carrying out Allah's order, for they were His messengers. The people of Sadum were unbelievers and behaved badly. They attacked travelers and they hurt their Prophet, Lot (A.S.). Therefore, the angels said to Ibrahim: "Ibrahim, turn away from this. The order of your Lord has come."

The Prophet Ibrahim asked himself. "Why have the angels come here?" The angels gave good news to The Prophet Ibrahim. They said to him: "Your old wife, Sarah, will bear you a son." Sarah heard the good news of the angels, so she wondered at that and said: "Shall I bear a son when I am such an old woman and when my husband is such an old man? Most surely this is a wonderful thing." The angel said: "Do you wonder at Allah's order? The mercy of Allah and His blessings are on you, O people of the house. Surely He is Praised, Glorious."

Sarah and The Prophet Ibrahim rejoiced at the good news of the angels. However, The Prophet Ibrahim was sad for the people of Lot. He wanted to turn away Allah's wrath from them, but the angels told him that Allah's wrath would befall them, for they were bad and stubborn people. Moreover, they hurt their Prophet Lot. The angels left the house of The Prophet Ibrahim and went away to carry out their task in the land of Sadum.

Building The House

The Prophet Ibrahim went to the land of Hijaz to visit his son Isma'il. Isma'il was a young man now, and he lived with the Arab tribe of Juhum in the land of Hijaz. There the Prophet Ibrahim and Isma'il built the Sacred House of Allah to be the mark of Allah's Oneness in the world. Thus, the Ka'ba was the first house to be built for people according to Allah's order. In it there are clear signs such as the standing place of Ibrahim. Whoever enters it is safe. The Prophet Ibrahim and Isma'il finished building the House, and then they said: "Our Lord, accept (this) from us. Surely, You are the Most Hearing, the Most Knowledgeable."

Allah, the Most High, chose a barren land for building His House. When the House had been built, Allah, the Glorified, sent the Black Stone from the heavenly garden to the Kaaba, which has been the symbol of Allah's oneness since then.

The Final Test

The Prophet Ibrahim and his son Isma'il performed the hajj. When The Prophet Ibrahim was running between the al Safa and al Marwa Mountains, he remembered the sufferings of his wife Hajjar, who was running between the two mountains looking for water for her baby Isma'il. He also remembered how water miraculously gushed out from the ground for his son.

When he remembered all those sufferings, he felt sad. Besides, he remembered the dream he saw a few days ago. He saw himself slaying his son and offering him as sacrifice to Allah, the Glorified. As the dreams of Prophets were true, Ibrahim decided to sacrifice his son Isma'il to be a clear proof for his strong faith in Allah. However, was Isma'il ready to sacrifice himself for Allah? This made the Prophet Ibrahim sad. When Isma'il saw his father sad, he asked him: "Father, why are you sad?" Ibrahim turned to his obedient, pious, and good son, and said to him: "I'm sad because I saw in a dream that I behead you. You know the meaning of that." "Yes," replied Ibrahim. Ibrahim had no time to think, for Allah had ordered him to sacrifice his son Isma'il. Allah, the Glorified, wanted to test Ibrahim again. He wanted to know the extent of Ibrahim's loyalty and submission to Him.

The believing young man Isma'il said: "Father, do it. As long as Allah wants it, I'll bear the pain of being slain." The Prophet Ibrahim loved his son Isma'il very much. However, he loved Allah even more. He loved his obedient, believing son Isma'il. However, he believed in Allah

even more. The Prophet Ibrahim kissed his son Isma'il. He had prepared a knife. Isma'il submitted to Allah's orders. He was so brave that he was ready to sacrifice himself for Allah. Only one thing worried Isma'il. He thought that the pain of being slain would make him struggle and resist. He thought that such struggle and resistance would hurt his father, who was an old man with a kind heart. Thus, Isma'il said to his father: "Father, tie my hands and legs strongly! Slay me quickly!" The Prophet Ibrahim wept for his son. He kissed him as if to say the final farewell to him.

Isma'il was ready to be killed at that moment. The Prophet Ibrahim held the knife. Isma'il raked his head towards the sky, so his white neck appeared in the rays of the sun. At that critical moment, a wonderful thing happened. Ibrahim heard a heavenly call saying: "Ibrahim, your dream was true. Allah orders you to slay a ram instead of Isma'il." The Prophet Ibrahim saw the ram descending from the mountain. He sacrificed the ram. Then he and his son Isma'il completed the hajj. It was The Prophet Ibrahim who taught us to do all these things. He also taught us to believe in the Oneness of Allah.

Now, Jews, Christians, and Muslims believe in Allah. This is one of the favors of the Prophet Ibrahim. Allah, the Glorified, chose the Prophet Ibrahim as a prophet, messenger, and an imam. The Prophet Moses (AS) was from the progeny of Is'haq, son of Ibrahim (AS). The Prophet Isa (Jesus Christ), son of Mary (AS) was from the progeny of Is'haq (AS). The Prophet Mohammed (p.b.u.h) was from the progeny of Isma'il, son of Ibrahim. The Imams, from the members of the House (ahl al-Bayt), also belonged to the progeny of Isma'il, (AS). For this reason we sometimes say: "O Allah bless Mohammed and the family of Mohammed as YOU blessed Ibrahim and the family of Ibrahim. Surely Your Praised, Glorious.

The Friend Of Allah

Allah, the Glorified, had known that Ibrahim was loyal, obedient, and submissive to His orders. He had also known that Ibrahim was not afraid of anybody except Him. So he chose him as a friend.

I'll let you read the rest, from the four birds and the fire. Many of the children haven't heard it this way, and I suspect, many of the adults haven't heard it this way. Try to understand how such a large city of people, and community of believers can become aware, and make changes that are necessary for the fulfillment not only of their life and life's purpose, but also for the benefit of others around them, as we see. After a long period of time, from the time of Sidna Ibrahim to the time of the Prophet Mohammed (sal), not only did the story continue, but the lesson has continued. Not only have there been tests and trials, but indeed, in this period of time we all have benefited from the reality of change for the good.

Today is a day when we can remember all that Allah Swt has provided for us through our life, evaluate how we responded to, in the moment, the bounties and favors of Allah Swt; [evaluate] our worthiness, most importantly, in light of this Eid ul Adhaa; [evaluate] how we will be, and how we are after we have

acquired and used His Rizq, how we will feel at its loss. How will we respond to the regret and ill fortune over its end and disappearance? How we will deal with the persistent and longing anticipation for these provisions and needs? As Sufis we must remember what Shah Wali-ul-lah raa said: *“The state of mind produced by the effects of righteous deeds and acts is the main object of Sufism—the inward aspect of the dīn.”* Faith is not a matter of words. We must realize the Divine Presence, the Goodness of Allah Swt. When we do that, the veils fall from our eyes, and the falsities and the fleeting aspect of the Present cease to enslave us. We see the Last Day as if it were today and we live today as if we will live forever, in service to, in submission to Allah.

We see that Allah is working in His creation, and in us, and in His angels. His Messengers and His Message are not distant, but are in our day to day experience, and command; hence the fear and hesitation of Sidna Ibrahim (ra). The evolution of the soul as it relates to the body lies in the good works and deeds. It is for that reason why the Sufis have placed equal emphasis on the performance of what is commanded in the Qur’an, and the actions we make in our day to day life. For the mature, for the intelligent, for the trusting and trustworthy, there is no station in which a person can dispense with the *adab* of the *dīn* by making what is prohibited permissible, or making illegal what Allah Swt has made legal. So it is that in Sufism, we build up the outer and the inner life. We act maturely. We take responsibility. We forgive, and we ask for forgiveness. We have good *adab*, *inshā’a-Llāh*. No group can decide that women and girls are inferior, or don’t deserve education. No group can take the property or life of another in the name of religion.

Today is a day when as Allah Swt says in the Qur’an: **“Those of faith are overflowing in their love for Allah.”** (2:10) That means that one expresses the deep love that lies in the deepest recesses of the heart in outward acts, so that ones mental and emotional state is known to the world. In pronouncing the word *“Labbai-ka* (Here I am at Your service, O Lord),” one fans the flames of love burning in his/her heart. A taste of that moment should suffice for a lifetime, but what is the preparation if it isn’t the tests, the joys, the limitations, and the totality of life itself? It is not the selfishness that makes us forget. I have spent many years describing the Hajj and its meaning; but today, time is short and memories need to be stirred as well as hearts revived as to the efficacy of the community of believers, here and now.

The uniqueness of our life, the honor of our life, the almost incomprehensible reasons why we chose this life, and spend our life in pursuit of Allah’s truth, in *tazkiyat* (purification) and in service, to children in need, to the aged, to those who are ill, to the poor and the needy, to the young innovators all over the world, to women who are trying to make peace, and to young girls who are trying to escape from the prejudices of their society; from children who are dying of dysentery, to people with cancer of the eyes; from people with Hepatitis C and HIV/AIDS, to young policy-makers who are trying to create democracy in Libya and Tunisia, and Egypt, who are trying to make a firm change in Morocco; for young girls who are trying to make progress in the world through technology. There are endless stories of endless people, all of whom deserve our gratitude and our thanks. But the gratitude and thanks of course goes to Allah Swt giving us this ability. To the young children who come here to the Global Youth Village, and later go on to uphold the principles they learned here, they don’t see our faults, or mine. They don’t hear

the negative things. They see the hope in the future, and Allah forgives us, because He's given us these good works.

All the answers lie in hours of *dars* and examples of service. So we need to pause, to reflect, to stop cheating ourselves from the time allotted to us to attend to, to listen, to watch, to reflect, and to re-adjust—*mahasabah, muraqabah, mushahada, mutawajjuh*. Our trust in Allah Swt is paramount. The other day I was speaking to the new group of Legislative Fellows, most of whom are interested in creating democratic changes in their government. I said something that made even the one person who wasn't paying attention lift his head. I said, "Give up the idea that politics is a career. It is not a life's work. Your life's work is to help human beings, and if Allah Swt puts you in the realm of politics to do that, remember: your life's work is to help human beings." I'm saying that with vaster meaning to it.

Really understand what you are doing, and where it is best done. Making money is not the purpose of life. Having status is not the purpose of life. Doing good for yourself and others is the purpose of life. Not as an excuse to make money or have power. This is the reality: to be humble and grateful. Allah gave us so much to do from this place, and I don't think the vastness of it has been really grasped by everyone here. I know it is appreciated. That same day, I got a text message. Here it is. One of the young ladies in the program was drawing while I was speaking. She drew this picture of me talking. The text message reads, "Nasira drew this of you, tears in her eyes, *mā'sha-Llāh*." She is a very interesting person, doing very interesting good works. Just a few words from an ignorant old man who is enthusiastic about helping people, and who probably should have spent a lot more time helping himself be a better person. Nonetheless, this is how it has come down.

Our trust in Allah is paramount, but it is far beyond words and prayers and supplications. It has to pervade our mind, heart and soul to the degree that we 'plan not to plan'. It is no less than the Will of Allah Swt that we accept our destiny and our *tariqat*, and we truly become Muslims – ones who practice diligent *taslīm*, surrender, submission and service to Allah Swt, and plead for forgiveness. Only in that will we find peace, and only in that will we find security here and, most important, in the Hereafter. This example of trust lies in the story of Sidna Ibrahim and his son Ishmael (some say Isaac). The willingness to sacrifice the core worldly gift of Allah Swt to the giver is the symbolic response to the true believer.

Allah's presence, will, purpose, actions, methods remain today a mystery. What we can do? We can make our actions, our methods, our self, our sacrifice and trust in Allah meaningful. In our stead, a pure innocence, an appropriate and respectful way of living is a goal. A Shar'iah and Hadith based attitude will see us through the tests and trials, the learning and the moments of forgetting. What comes from Allah Swt (the request for the *qurban*, the sheep to replace the boy) is different than what comes from us and what we attribute to Allah Swt. Allah is not a provider of wishes; Allah is a provider of opportunities to remain steadfast and trusting, submitted and even confused at times...but submitted, none the less.

Likaylaa ta'saw 'alaa maa fa-atakum wa laa tafrahuu bimaa aataakum wa-Llaahu laa yuhibbu kulla mukhtaalin fa-khuur

In order that you may not despair over matters that pass you by, nor exult over favors bestowed upon you..” (57:23)

The Prophet (sal) said, when a child of one of his daughters passed away, “Tell her that what was taken away belongs to Allah, as does all that He gives.”

What comes from Allah’s Will and what leaves us from His Will was either our destined provision or not. It is much more easy to tell, if you really wish to know, by knowing your own *nafs ammāra* and *nafs lawwama*. The whole model of understanding what transpires in this life is in understanding your own *nafs ammāra* and *nafs lawwama*, two things that most people don’t want to contemplate, and then honestly questioning oneself, “Is what I have lost, lost by the will of myself or others? Or was it never meant to be my destined provision and only temporarily with me, as I was its caretaker?” If it is gone by its will (i.e. not by the will of Allah Swt), then it is against the will of Allah; and the loss, the provision and one’s access to its treasure house is closed. In other words, what returns to other than Allah Swt is due to our own choice and not Allah’s. That is, it lies in the realm of using the blessing of consciousness and choice for other than fulfilling the meaning and reason for our existence, for other than the favor and *irada*/will of Allah Swt. Consequently, we are lead astray, despite our own opinions or even our own practices; hence, the choices of Sidna Ibrahim. First is his hesitation based upon his love for his son, as well as his belief that he was a tested and tried believer...yet Ismael admonishes him:

**Qala yaa-‘abati-f-‘al ma tu’mar: Satajidunii ‘in shaa’a-llahu mina-s-sabirin.
“O My father, do what you are ordered. By the Will of Allah Swt, you shall find me steadfastly patient.” (37:102)**

We all have our nexus, our trials and tests. We all have to deal with the reasoning vs the faithful adherence; the impatience and distrusts that arise like a fog in our minds and hearts, instead of the clarifying rarified air of *sabr* and *tawwakul*. This and every Eid ul Adhā is then a sanctified crossroads wherein we can repent, and have our sins erased, and come out of the Arafat of our soul pure again, hopefully able this time to make the right choices, have the deep abiding trust, set aside our *tadbir* for that of Allah’s remembrance.

Wa mina-n-naasi mañy-ya‘budu-Llaaha ‘alaa ĥarfiñ fa’in aṣaabahu khayrun iṭmaanna bihi wa’in aṣabat’hu fitnatun iñqalaba ‘alaa wa ja’hihi khasira-d-dunyaa wa-l-‘akhirata dhaalika huwa-l-khusraanu-l-mubeen

“...and among men is he who serves Allah swt , as it were, on the edge. If any good befalls him, he is well content with it, but if a trial befalls him or here, he turns his face away, losing both this world and the hereafter. That is indeed the clear loss.” (22:11)

The whole of Hajj, the metaphor, the *alam* of the Day of Judgment is one we must really pay close attention to—if we are Muslims, indeed if we are believers of the Abrahamic tradition (Jew, Christian, Muslim, or Zoroastrian)—to the test of faith, the affirmation of the Real, and Allah’s plan over our own plan and expectation. Seeking ease is different than seeking truth; and accepting ease as a *na’ima* of Allah Swt and avoiding hardship (impossible for the Hajji) is different than enduring it and making it also a *na’ima* of Allah Swt, so we can remember whose plan we are a part of, whose will governs. The trial for the Hajjis is at the least loss of comfort and familiar environment, friends, family, rhythms of worldly life. For Sidna Ibrahim, it was loss of his dear son. For us it is the unexpected, unplanned-for illnesses, losses, trials that come with a life we planned or plan. It is the disappointments, the mis-statements, the mis-made appointments. And Allah says: **“Did you think I would try you and test you but one time only?”** Imam al Ghazali said, *“My life has been a series of sins! And my only explanation is a long sigh! Though a sinner and confirmed culprit, I have no refuge except Thy Benevolence, O Preserver of Truth!”*

Lest we judge others, the unruly ways of life, and things we have chosen to do that we repent of, we have to remember what Imam al Ghazali said. His repentance came “as a long sigh.” These are forms which the tests come to us in this world. Don’t hold on to the old. Let go of it. All of us have to learn that lesson. Don’t hold on to the past—only the past that was decreed by Allah, not from man but from Shaytan, by the will of Allah Swt, the permission of Allah Swt. If we understand, as I have explained to you in detail in the past months, in terms of practices and in terms of community, these tests are for us to refocus and recapture the intention of this community, of our life. They are to remember what our role is, and to try to do our best as father and mother, as son, as daughter, as aunty and as uncle, as husband and as wife, as brother and as sister. Each has its duties. Some are pleasant, and some are not pleasant at times. Some come with ease, and some come with difficulty. Some are sacrifices to our own desires, our pleasures, our needs, and what we like, and some are not. Some are just great gifts we can give to each other.

Just remember, the *ta’if* of Shaitan exists so we grasp the importance of those ‘touches’ and their purpose. What causes us to remember and sustain our relationship with Allah Swt is by His will and our right choices. Sustaining our love, our patience, our trust, and trustworthiness, our submission will bring us eternal peace...yes here and in the Hereafter. We are, my dear ones, the *qurban*. We are the sacrifice. The sacrifice is the way we live our life, as a *qurban*... an offering, a mediator, a way of approach...a life that brings us near to Allah Swt...*aqrabun*...nearest of kin. Who is that? Allah says : **“It is not blood that is his desire.”** Yes of course that means the act of sacrificing a sheep, but it is also the fact that it is not blood that creates our relationship with Allah, and it is not blood that unites us with Allah Swt, but only love and submission.

The trial is what confuses us, as Ibrahim was confused. It is what bewilders us; but what sets us straight on the path of eternal peace and contentment is what makes us in awe and reverence of Allah Swt, His presence...*khawf, kashiya*. Our true freedom is independence from all but Allah Swt, for as we are guided: **“Whoever does not find Allah does not find anything, and whoever finds Him does not lose anything.”** Sidna Ibrahim found Allah Swt once again, not in a distant place, but in his own heart and soul, in his conscience. Not for the first time or the second, but in what seems to be a final test, through trust and submission, but also a strength in the truth uttered by his own son, his potential object of sacrifice.

The message of Hajj, the message of the Eid ul Adhā is a message of full reliance upon Allah Swt, not fully on anything or anyone.

We will leave from here today, and there will be challenges. There will be concerns and worries. There will be healings and worries about healings. But we must be determined to be *abda-Llāh*, not in servitude toward that which made us glad when we possessed it, or sad when we lost it. The Prophet sal said: ***“Perish the slave of the dirham, perish the slave of the dinar, perish the slave of fine clothing. May the one who is pricked by a thorn and does not remove it perish and fall on his face.”***

This is a day for real love, real remembrance, real submission, real trust, real obedience. Look at what you possess or think you possess or control, and affirm your willingness to give it up, to offer it to Allah Swt. If there is anyone you wish to speak to, to ask forgiveness from, or give forgiveness to, take them aside and say it. This is the day for that. If you seek recognition, let it be from Allah Swt and his Messenger, and His *awliya-Llāh* in the form of their love and reciprocation. A weight will be lifted off your chest. Do not sell your nobility at the corner market to the buyers and collectors of worldly objects and limited spiritual means. This is a day for nobility, for the slaves to affirm that nobility. Can we compare our nobility or our slavery to that of Sidna Ibrahim? Listen to who it was who Allah Swt tried and tested. Read the story I did not finish today—the product of His love, the forbearer of His message.

Make no mistake. The story of Sidna Ibrahim and the sacrifice is a graphic and clear story about the Will of Allah Swt to provide opportunity to us as he provided to Adam (as), and Ibrahim (as), and Musa (as), and Isa (as). The struggle with the temptation of Shaytan encouraging the sacrifice, as it appears in all Abrahamic traditions, is one of the *ta'if* of Shaytan. His inability to grab and guide Ibrahim is a testimony to the strength of *iman*, which is required of an individual to remain committed to the path of truth, the essential *dīn*, to selflessness and trust. He was overcome with doubt. He had a moral dilemma when he heard this command to sacrifice his son. How else would a father, a noble father feel? He was a man of deep piety and conviction...and up to this point, proven *iman*. It is impossible to conceive that he would just acquiesce to the command, resign to it, and move on. So this struggle is also part of the plan of Allah Swt to show those who came later, who tell the story 5,000 years later. They don't just see a story of success, but a story of moral change and ethic. The wording of the command shows that God expected it to be a heart rendering decision. In this way Abraham had to dive deeply into the essence of his heart and soul. We have to remember this type of faith and trust, and these kinds of provisions.

We must realize the enormity of the trial of faith of Ibrahim. (as) For Allah Swt put him to not one but three tests. The first manifested as giving him a son and testing his relationship with Sarah; second: the test of trusting in the perpetuity of that gift; and third: seeking to reconcile the promise of a son through which there would be a world of descendents. **“And from their seed are some who excel in goodness, and some who clearly oppress themselves and others.”** If he was to die how would there be descendants? Here is the test of moral and spiritual character. Not to acquiesce without question but to struggle with submission and obedience, the faith in the ultimate Rahmat of Allah Swt.

The application of this teaching of the *shuyukh* to our life is what is strategically important, for it exists in the harsh reality of *zaman* and *maqam*, time and place. Wasting time, and being in either an external place and / or and internal place that is not within the guidance of Allah Swt is only our choice. It is where we justify this and justify that. We have all the reasons why we do what we do, and say what we say, and act the way we act, or be where we are. This will result in squandering the *Rizq* of Allah Swt. When we ask of people, ask them to give simply. Assist them in any way. Don't take. Give opportunity. Surround yourself with a circle of people who are good people, albeit they are flawed. Not with those who will contribute ill to you, but only with those who will contribute to your well-being here, or most importantly, in the Hereafter. Not the ones you can just laugh with, or play with, or go to some kind of game with, sit at a restaurant with or a coffee shop with. Surround yourself with good people. People who do good, who speak of the good they do, and who are humble. I don't care what their name is, what their religion is, don't care about their race or gender. Make sure they are good people; otherwise, you are depleting instead of adding.

As hard as it is to accept at times, especially times when we are trying to plan for our self, the fact is that 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 singularly most effective basis of all our trials and tests, and whether or not we succeed or fail. It is not difficulty or discomfort that determines the depth of our strength or character. If they truly lead us to patience, submission, trust, and faith, and understanding, we can even spiritually thrive in the midst of difficulty. For surely even in the most blessed of times, there is a potential for difficulty. We try to keep everything positive. We try to keep everything going just the way we want it, just the way it's "supposed to be" in the land of fantasy and hope. The truth is the lessons we learn from the conflict, if we are firmly based in our *dīn* and our Tasawwuf, will have meaning to us. This is the basis for every test and every trial. It is nothing else.

It is like a tree that must survive and sustain and bear fruit for future generations where it stands, no matter what comes to it: cold, wind, lightening, thunder. It cannot get out of the way of the bulldozer. That is obvious. But give us (human beings) the ability to move, and we try to conquer the world, or at the least avoid what is unpleasant and what is a trial for us. We are great runners. Our first choice is to avoid the trial; but the best attitude is to be grateful, seek harmony, affirm the positive, and to help the family and the community of believers, and serve the people who seek your help. Help others to help themselves, and assist one another materially, and spiritually, and emotionally, and intellectually. Look at the cup half full.

But again let me present the good thesis that we are born to sacrifice. To draw near to Allah swt, to mediate our fears and our worries, with our God-given life so that we may fulfill our pledge, our word to Allah Swt 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, and feel the love for Allah, and to get over the loneliness of separation. It is for future generations to thrive and be fulfilled in their responsibility to preserve and sustain the creation, and do exactly the same thing. Only, they do it better, because their tools are better, because if we do it well, we give them better tools. This necessitates a very realistic and positive view concerning tests and trials, and about the opportunities in our lives to experience the many

ways of worshiping our Creator and Sustainer, the many ways of fulfillment or doing.

In our community, we learned this year that we are not insulated or isolated from the tests or trials, not from the conditioning, nor from the apprehension concerning “sacrifice,” not from loss or illness or fear. It is clear, that if we take the time to review and be grateful for all that has been bestowed upon us, all the support we have for our community, our prayers, our global work, the incredible sacrifices that members of the community have made for other, with just a simple kind word: “I hope you are feeling better. How are you today? I’ve been thinking about you,” [we will] not [have] to fear illness and run away from it. Of course, we don’t like it, but not to think that a kind word to someone who is ill will bring illness or pain to you. Allah’s intention is not our suffering or loss, but the opportunity those things give us to excel in our duty to Him, to learn from our experiences. [They are there] not only to develop skills that can be useful in *dunya*, but to refine our submission, to find the safety and security within our-self in our relationship with the Inner Truth, Allah Swt, for the future and Eternity.

In other words, simply and clearly stated, I hope, we must live for the future by worshiping and interfacing with the Attributes that Allah has consciously and purposefully given to us. It is that we remember to remember. By focusing our efforts on achieving this state and *maqam*, we are affirming peace for our loved ones in the next generations, and for our selves in the Hereafter. It is our duty to sustain the clarity and purpose of the Truth, al- Haqq. This is the Islam of personal life, not politicized Islam. This is the Islam of the Ummah. This is the Islam of the Sahabah. How we live and surround our struggles with good intentions and manifest our good efforts in this world is the key to our life beyond. Success is sincere effort, putting our energy into our fruit like the tree, preparing the environment properly, clarifying the roles of seeker and Guide, of the worshiper and the Worshiped, being responsible and humbled by being the last of His creation, and the first in the heart of the Almighty.

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. This is our sacrifice, step by step on the *sayr ul suluk*. Hazrat wrote before his death, “*Suluk / the path requires perseverance and different daily recitations to accomplish then spiritual stations in an infinite spiritual journey – sayr-i-Llah, sayr-fi-Llah, sayr-ma’-Llah, adaniyya.*”

Qad aflaha-l-mu’minuun. Alladheena hum fee salaatihim khaashi^uun.

Wa-lladheena hum ^{ani}-llaghwi mu^{ri}duun.

“Successful indeed are the believers, those who offer their *salah* with all solemnity and full submissiveness.” (Al-Mu'minun 23:1-2)

We ask Allah to bless His Messenger, the Best of Creation, with a blessing which will raise him in the Praiseworthy Station He has promised him, and rebound back on us with an opening for the whole Ummah. We ask Allah to bless the Khulafa Rashidun, Sayyidina Abu Bakr as-Siddiq, Sayyidina 'Umar ibn al-Khattab, Sayyidina 'Uthman ibn 'Affan and Sayyidina 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, and the family and wives and all the Companions of the Prophet. We ask Allah to bless our *shuyukh* and their *khalifa*, and our *amirs*, and all our men, women, and children. Give us success in establishing His *dīn* in ourselves and around us, calling others to it, and making that the highest priority of our lives. We ask Allah to bless those on Hajj and all the Muslims, especially those who are fighting to preserve themselves and their *dīn*. We ask Allah to give victory to His *dīn*. By the *baraka* of this day, we ask Allah to forgive us and have mercy on us, and on all the Muslims, and to give us a seal which will ensure our entry to the Garden, and grant us the vision of His Face. *Amin*.

Second Khutba **7 Takbir**

A principle benefit at the Eid ul Hajj/Eid ul Adhā is the promise of purification and renewal by Allah Swt to those who came to Hajj, and to those of us who honor the essence of the sacrifice of Sidna Ibrahim. For us, it is of extreme relevance as we look to the future of our community and our *khanaqah*, as we look to the future of our work and service to Allah Swt. Part of the submission to the will of Allah , to the affirmation of our willingness to follow His plan and submit in trust to His guidance is to understand our responsibilities, our duties, and to design our part in the design of Allah Swt, to be in absolute consonance.

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 affair 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.

We have heard from within our hearts a call that must be attended to. It is a call to worship, if we are really worthy of it. To be accepted, we must say from our hearts, "I exalt you Lord, I do not associate any one with you My Lord. Subhanallah, the praise is to You, and the blessings are from You, and You are the Master of the Universe. O my Lord! You are the One."

'Inna hadhihi 'ummatukum 'ummatanw-wahidatanw-wa 'ana rabbukum fa-'budun.

Verily this Brotherhood of yours is a single brotherhood, and I am you Lord and Cherisher: therefore Serve Me. (21:92)

Let us pray, here in this community, as we understand what this day and this time and place really is, reaffirming and reasserting our purpose, not letting it dissipate as one generation grows older, and as the next generation grows up, and as the following generation grows up. We must remember that our *tadbir* must be in line with Allah's. We must work at this *tadhakkur*, not just say it is all in Allah's hands. No, it is Allah's plan to put some of it IN OUR HANDS, in our hearts, in our decisions, in our submission – not within our desires, but in lieu of our desires.

We can try to understand why He gives us what He gives us, and why He takes from us what He takes from us, what the tools are He has given us and how we use them. In the end we need to submit, but not after we have decided what it is we want, when and how; but submit from the core of our faith's guidance. Remember the *shar'ā*, embrace the *tariqa*, repent and restructure, renew, return to the root of our very existence and trust in Allah Swt. It's such an obvious metaphor: it's from the root that the tree grows and bears fruit. When you pull yourself up and you move, the plant has to struggle. If there's something you want that you don't have, if there is something you need that hasn't been provided, then look to yourself. See the decisions you made, and understand where all this began to make sense to you. Realize that very few people ever, ever hear the words that unfortunately you hear all the time over all these 35- 40 years – never hear them, never think about these changes, never think about the values we speak about all the time. Think about that! We have yet to refurbish that which needs to be refurbished. We have to build all that needs to be built in the outer. And we have yet to build inside of ourselves all that needs to be built.

I ask you to take a moment before we make our final *du'ā* and really, honestly ask yourself: how many times have you been healed of some illness here? How much have your children gained here? How much have you gained from the company you keep, and from the place, and the beauty of the place? How many miracles have you seen? How many hearts have been opened? How have you learned to deal with difficulties, and what kind of support do you have, when you need support here? Who are your true friends in life? How does your planning really, really reflect the *Tadbir* of Allah and not your *tadbir*? What has Allah Swt provided as your *rizq* and how have you used it, even though painful times? You will have to look back and take account. We all do. Don't exult yourself and diminish Allah Swt. Don't compare yourself with Allah Swt or 'negotiate' with Allah. Stay in the center and be at peace. Nothing could be more independent than to choose the way Allah chose for you. That is an incredibly courageous choice, not to give in to society and its whims, and the machinations of the people around us.

(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 salaam. (Abu Hurairah / Muslim)

O my Lord, perfect for me my Religion, complete Thy Favours 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.

'Aa manar-Rasuulu bi maaa 'un-zila 'ilay-hi mir-Rabbihi wal-Mu'minuun. Kullun 'aa-mana billaahi wa ma laaa- ikati-hii wa kutubihii wa rusulih. Laa nufarriqu bay-na ahadim-mir-ruulih. Wa qaaluu sami-naa wa 'ata-naa: Gufraanaka Rabbanaa wa 'ilaykal-masiir. (2:285)

The Apostle believeth in what hath been revealed to him from his Lord, as do the men of faith. Each on (of them) believeth in Allah (Subhanallah wa ta'ala), His angels, His books, and His apostles. "We make no distinction (they say) between one and another of His apostles." And they say; "We hear, and we obey: (We seek) Thy forgiveness. Our Lord, and to Thee is the end of all journeys."

Laa yukalli fullaahu maf-san 'illaa wus-'ahaa. Laha maa kasabat wa 'alay-haa mak-tasabat. Rabbanaa laa tu-'aa-khiznaaa 'in-nasiinaaa 'aw 'akhta'-naa. Rabbanaa wa laaa tahmil 'alaynaaa 'is-ran-kamaa hamal-ta-huu 'alal-laziina min-qab-linaa, Rabbanaa wa laa tuhammilnaa maa laa taaqata lanaa bih. Wa'fu 'annaa, wag-fir lanaa, war-ham-naa. Anta Mawlaanaa fan-surnaa 'alal-qaw-mil-Kaafi-riin. (2:286)

On no soul doth Allah (Subhanallah wa ta'ala) place a burden greater than it can bear. It gets every good that it earns and it suffers every ill that it earns. (Pray): Our Lord! Condemn us not if we forget or fall into error; our Lord! Lay not on us a burden like that which Thou didst lay on those before us; Our lord! Lay not on us a gurdan greater than we have strength to bear. Blot out our sins, and grant us forgiveness, Have mercy

on us. Thou art our Protector; Help us against those Who stand against Faith.