



In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

..... ***The HOPE Bulletin***

Hhealth, Ongoing Projects, Education



Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at-i Islam Lahore

Eid-ul-Adha

2008

INTRODUCTION

Akbar Abdullah, Editor

On behalf of *The HOPE Bulletin* team, I extend our sincere gratitude to all who have submitted greetings, messages, and photographs that have enabled us to put together this special *Eid-ul-Adha 2008* supplement.

HAZRAT AMEER'S EID-UL-ADHA MESSAGE

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

“And relate to them with truth the story of the two sons of Adam, when they offered an offering, but it was accepted from one of them and was not accepted from the other. He said: I will certainly kill thee. (The other) said: Allah accepts only from the dutiful.

If thou stretch out thy hand against me to kill me I shall not stretch out my hand against thee to kill thee. Surely I fear Allah, the Lord of the worlds:

I would rather that thou shouldst bear the sin against me and thine own sin, thus thou wouldst be of the companions of the Fire; and that is the recompense of the unjust.

At length his mind made it easy for him to kill his brother, so he killed him; so he became one of the losers.

Then Allah sent a crow scratching the ground to show him how to cover the dead body of his brother. He said: Woe is me! Am I not able to be as this crow and cover the dead body of my brother? So he became of those who regret” (Al-Ma'idah, 5:27-31).

Dear sisters and brothers, *Assalaam-o-Alaikum Wa Rakhmatullahi Wa Barakaato Hoo.*

I have selected these verses of the Holy Qur'an for my *Eid ul Adha* message, as they relate the story of the first sacrifice offered in human history. The story is that of the two sons of Adam, Abel and Cain, who respectively represent the virtue and evil amongst human beings. It is also the story of the first violent act and murder; a story which teaches forbearance and patience as virtues; jealousy, aggression, pride and ignoring of good advice, killing and harming fellow-beings as evil deeds.

In these days of tragic events in the world, this is a message of peace and non-violence in the face of aggression. Abel is not deterred from good when threatened by his brother, who is eventually killed and becomes the first martyr in history.

As we celebrate this festival to mark the sacrifice Hazrat Ibrahim (Abraham) offered without questioning when Allah ordained, we too must follow his example and bring our offerings with a sincere heart and do as Allah desires. This is the spirit of *Taqwah*.

The story of acceptance of the sacrifice made by one brother and not by the other demonstrates that Allah accepts the spirit of the sacrifice and not the outward appearance of that action. Allah does not accept the *zaahir* aspect but the *baatin* of all spiritual acts as stated in the following verse of the Holy Qur'an:

“Not their flesh, nor their blood, reaches Allah, but to Him is acceptable the observance of duty on your part. Thus has He made the subservient to you, that you may magnify Allah for guiding you aright. And give good news to those who do good (to others)” (Al Hajj, 22:37).

Many may pretend to be pious and make sacrifices to be seen by the world but Allah knows what is concealed in the hearts and accepts only from the observers of duty (*muttaqeen*) as exemplified by the sacrifice of Abel.

Dear sisters and brothers, today we have a chance to pledge that we will submit to the will of Allah as demonstrated in the lives of Hazrat Ibrahim, Hazrat Ismael and Hazrat Hajirah, may Allah shower peace on all of them. It is also a chance to share the family values of togetherness in faith and sacrifice as demonstrated by them. Hazrat Ibrahim obeyed the command of Allah without hesitation; Hazrat Ismael, a young boy, submitted to the will of Allah without questioning, and Hazrat Hajirah, who had spent a life of sacrifice in the desert with an infant son, finally submitted to the will of Allah to sacrifice him.

If today we learn to obey Allah in all His commands and submit to His will, we would then achieve the spirit of the day and be really happy, which is the essence and literal meaning of the word ‘*Eid*’.

I pray that Allah help us to become His true servants and to submit to His will. *Aameen*.

FIJI







GERMANY

Manfred Yahya, Berlin

My very dear Ameer, my dear brothers and sisters,
liebe Brüder und Schwestern.

I wish you all and your families a very spiritually and fulfilling *Id-ul-Adha* 2008. May Allah bless you all.
Ameen.

Ich wünsche Euch allen und Euren Familien ein gesegnetes und erfülltes Opferfest 2008. Möge Allah Euch alle segnen. Amin.

Best Wishes and *Wasalam* from Germany
Herzliche Grüße und Wasalam aus Deutschland.

your br. Manfred Yahya
Euer Bruder Manfred Yahya

INDIA

Shagufta, Urfan & Gibraan Tareen

Wish you all a very happy *Eid*. May Allah the Almighty shower His choicest blessing on you all and may all your wishes come true.

Please remember us in your prayers always. Thanks.

NEW ZEALAND

Abid Raza



Dear Hazrat Ameer Sahib,
Assalam wai alekum (WRWB).

Please convey our *Eid* greetings from myself, my family and the NZ *jamaat*.

Our prayers and best wishes for the Eid ul Adha.

Allah Hafiz.

PAKISTAN

Amir Aziz, General Secretary

Dear brothers and sisters, *Assalamu Alaikum.*

Happy *Eid* to you all.

We all members of AAIIIL pray to Allah Almighty that may this day bring all blessings and bounties for you, for your family, for each and every member of *Jammat*, and for all Muslims around the world.

This *Eid* day teaches us the lesson of great sacrifice of Hazrat Ibrahim (Abraham). We all have to show our obedience and humility to our Creator in all matters.

Saeed Ahmad and Farhat Saeed

Dear All,
A.A.

Wish all of you *Eid Mubarak*, happiness and blessings of Allah SWT.

THAILAND

Shaukat A. Ali, Regional Coordinator, Asia & Pacific Region

Bismillahi-r-Rahmani-r-Rahim.
(In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.)

Dear sisters and brothers, *Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatullahe wa Barakatuhu*.

Alhamdulillah, Allah *swt* has once again given us the opportunity to celebrate *Eid-ul Adha* and to make sacrifices. The significance of *Eid-ul Adha* and the associated sacrifice can be seen from various verses of the Holy Quran and I begin with Chapter 22 - *Al-Hajj*: (The Pilgrimage):

‘Not their flesh, nor their blood, reaches Allah, but to Him is acceptable observance of duty on your part. Thus has He made them subservient to you, that you may magnify Allah for guiding you aright. And give good news to those who do good (to others)’ (22:37).

There are some three million Muslims performing *Hajj* at the moment and our prayers are with them for the acceptance of their worship and sacrifices as well as their safety and security. May Allah facilitate their *Hajj* and remove all obstacles for members of the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat Islam (Lahore) to perform *Hajj* without any hindrance – *aameen*. I also hope the *Hajjis* will return with a pure heart and be true bearers of witness.

In the verse quoted above, a couple of significant points to note are the “*observance of duty (to Allah) on your part*”, and, “*do good (to others)*”. We must always bear in mind that among the many duties imposed on us is the duty to fellow human beings. While on the one hand we are told to observe our duty to Allah, on the other, we are being reminded to do good to others. We are also told that the flesh of the sacrificed animal does not reach Allah; but it is given to the poor and needy as well as to relatives, neighbours and friends. Therefore while we pray and remember our Creator and Sustainer all the time at the spiritual level, on the practical and material side we feed, among others, the poor and needy (verse 22:36) with the meat of the sacrificed animal.

At the time of *Eid-ul Adha* we always remember the agreement to perform a great sacrifice by Hazrat Ibrahim (Abraham), Hazrat Ishmael and Hazrat Hajirah, may peace and blessings of Allah be on them, “in observance of duty” as commanded by Allah.

Further on in the same Chapter we are told:

“And strive hard for Allah with due striving. He has chosen you and has not laid upon you any hardship in religion — the faith of your father Abraham. He named you Muslims before and in this (The Holy Quran), that the Messenger may be a bearer of witness to you, and you may be bearers of witness to the people; so keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate and hold fast to Allah. He is your Protector; excellent the Protector and excellent the Helper!” (22:78).

Elsewhere in the Holy Quran we are told:

“And thus We have made you an exalted nation that you may be the bearers of witness to the people and (that) the Messenger may be a bearer of witness to you” (2:143).

The word “*Shahid*”, apart from the familiar translation “*bearer of witness*”, also signifies *one possessing much knowledge*, and it also means *an Imam* or *a leader*. Thus it signifies that just as the Holy Prophet, Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, delivered the message of truth to the Muslims and was their purifier and leader, the role of the Muslim community is to deliver the message of truth to the whole of humanity and to be its purifiers and leaders.

In view of the prevailing conditions in the world, it is our obligation to disseminate the “message of truth” as widely as possible. We must always remember that the aim of Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam is to take the pure and pristine message of the Holy Quran to the farthest corners of the world.

It may be very difficult to emulate the sacrifice which Hazrat Ibrahim and his small family, peace and blessings of Allah be on them, agreed to execute in acceptance of Allah's command; and the Holy Quran says:

“The nearest of people to Abraham are surely those who follow him and this Prophet (Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be on them), and those who believe. And Allah is the Friend of the believers” (3:68).

And in another verse:

“And who is better in religion than he who submits himself entirely to Allah while doing good (to others) and follows the faith of Abraham, the upright one? And Allah took Abraham for a friend” (4:125).

As I mentioned with my message for *Eid-ul Fitr*, there are about 200 verses in the Holy Quran which tell us to do good to others. Therefore remembrance of Allah (prayers) and doing of good should be an everyday affair. We are told in another verse:

“Say: My prayer and my sacrifice and my life and my death are surely for Allah, the Lord of the worlds” (6:162).

Dear sisters and brothers, the *Mujaddid* (Reformer) of the Fourteenth Century of *Hijrah*, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, had established the motto for the Ahmadiyya Movement “to hold the religion above the world” and we should act on it as well as assist in achieving our aim, that is, to carry the message of the Holy Quran to others.

In view of the above, and the fact that the Holy Quran provides a complete code of life, we should form the habit of reading the Holy Book everyday and sharing the messages with others. I am sure we can all spare a few minutes to read at least a section or two every day.

You will note that any issue that comes up today, the Holy Quran has related us either historical anecdote or both historical story and guidance which helps us address the issue. It may seem incredible that the Holy Quran, which was revealed fourteen hundred years ago, has provided us solutions to the problems we are facing in the 21st Century. These are provided clearly and in great detail on some issues, which we are currently facing, thereby strengthening our faith that it is based on Divine revelation and the fact that it is the last of the revealed Books, which will continue to provide answers to our questions till the end of the world.

May Compassionate and Merciful Allah guide and grant us the wisdom to serve Him and fellow human beings – *aameen. Eid Mubarak.*

UNITED KINGDOM

Dr. Jawad Ahmad

PROPHET ABRAHAM – A LIFE OF SUPREME DEDICATION, SUBMISSION AND SACRIFICE

“My Lord, grant me a doer of good deeds. So we gave him the good news of a forbearing son. But when the son became of age to work with his father, he said: O my son, I have seen a dream that I should sacrifice you, so consider what you see. He said: O my father, do as you are commanded. If Allah please, you will find me patient. So when they both submitted and Abraham had thrown him down upon his forehead, We called out to him, saying, O Abraham, you have indeed fulfilled the

vision. Thus do We reward the doer of goods. Surely this is a manifest trial. And We ransomed him with a great sacrifice. And We granted him among the later generations (salutations). Peace be to Abraham. Thus do We reward the doers of good” (37:100-110).

Eid al-Adha is the second important festival of Muslims after *Eid al-Fitr*. One unique aspect of the annual pilgrimage called *Hajj*, or the minor pilgrimage called *‘Umra*, is that in this high point of worship, no memorable event relating to the life of the Founder of Islam, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, has been included in the ritual of *Hajj*. The sacrifice of an animal offered is a tribute to the spirit of sacrifice shown by Prophet Abraham when he was ready to sacrifice his son Ishmael in obedience to the Divine command. The circuits around the Ka’bah are made as a tribute to Abraham and Ishmael for re-building the Ka’bah. The *sa’i* (running) between the two hillocks of *Safa* and *Marwa* is a tribute to the patience and fortitude shown by Lady Hagar (Hajira), the mother of Ishmael. The throwing of pebbles at Satan is a tribute to the resistance offered by Prophet Abraham to the attempts of Satan to dissuade him from sacrificing his son, while he was taking him to the place of sacrifice. By enjoining *Hajj*, Almighty Allah has given ever-lasting recognition to Prophet Abraham’s struggle against polytheism, his profound devotion to worshipping Allah, and his unqualified submission to the Divine commands.

If we study the Bible and the Qur’an, we come across some amazing performances done by Prophet Abraham. For instance the Holy Qur’an says:

“And when his Lord tried Abraham with certain commands he fulfilled them. Then Allah said: Surely I will make you, O Abraham, a leader of men” (2:124).

The Bible says something somewhat similar to what is mentioned in the Qur’an but it also contains some prophecies which have been fulfilled by the advent of Holy Prophet Muhammad (*saw*) and his followers:

“And I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, and you shall be a blessing. And I will bless them that bless you, and curse him that curse you, and in you shall all families of the earth be blessed” (Genesis 17: 2, 3).

Please note the words, “I will bless them, that bless you.” Here the word “them” stands for Muslims and the word “you” stands for Prophet Abraham.

Jews and Christians both regard Prophet Abraham as the Great Patriarch. But the question arises as to who fulfils the prophecies conveyed to Abraham by Allah and commemorates the sacrifices made and trials faced and constantly invoke salutations and blessings as promised to him by Allah. No doubt the Jews believe Prophet Moses to be the last of the prophets and exalt and glorify him alone and disbelieve in other prophets who came after him. Similarly, the Christians believe that Prophet Jesus died on the Cross atoning for the sins of believers and regard him as the son of God and establish his glory by raising him to the position of a partner in the Godship of Allah. But it is only the followers of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (*saw*) who not only believe in Prophet Abraham as the “Father of Prophets,” as numerous prophets were raised among the Children of Israel, but invoke salutations and blessings to exalt and glorify him along with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, who came in fulfilment of his intense supplications made to Allah while rebuilding the Ka’bah. That is why at the end of each cycle of an individual or congregational Muslim prayer the following salutations are recited:

“O Lord! Exalt Muhammad and the true followers of Muhammad as You exalted Abraham and true followers of Abraham. And You are Mighty and highly praised. O Lord! Bless Muhammad and the true followers of Muhammad as You blessed Abraham and the true followers of Abraham. Certainly You are praised and Mighty.”

And the Holy Prophet Muhammad (*saw*) has said that any supplication made after reciting the salutations is most likely to receive divine acceptance.

The Holy Qur'an records the supplications of Prophet Abraham in the following words:

“And when Abraham said: My Lord, make this city secure, and save me and my sons from worshipping idols. Our Lord! I have settled a part of my offspring in a valley unproductive of fruit near Your Sacred House, our Lord, that they may keep up prayer; so make the hearts of some people yearn towards them, and provide them with fruits; haply they may be grateful” (14:35, 37).

We must not forget that in order to earn everlasting blessings of Allah by Prophet Abraham and his immediate family, they went through series of trials in which they remained steadfast and carried out what was commanded to them with utmost submission. We find the details in the Qur'an in the following words:

“And when his Lord tried Abraham with certain commands, he fulfilled them... And we enjoined Abraham and Ishmael, saying: Purify My house for those who visit it and those who abide in it for devotion and those who bow down and those who prostrate themselves” (2:125).

History tells us that Prophet Abraham, under divine command, left his native town with his wife Hajrah and the sibling Ishmael, and after trudging through rugged and sandy routes reached the barren city of Makkah. He then left both wife and the child in the deserted vicinity of the Kab'ah, the first House of Allah, and returned home.

But that was not the end of trials. Another bigger and more difficult trial was yet to come. When the firstborn child grew up into a righteous and sturdy young man, Prophet Abraham saw in a dream that he was sacrificing his son. The very next morning he consulted his young son about the command given to him in the dream. The obedient son without any hesitation replied: “My dear father, do as has been commanded to you.”

Brothers and sisters, we all know that a dream or a vision always contains an inner message and needs interpretation. The Qur'an has mentioned several such dreams and visions and has also mentioned what ultimately their factual interpretations turned out to be. Let me quote some of them mentioned in the Qur'an:

1. “Prophet Joseph saw in a dream that eleven stars and the sun and the moon were making obeisance to him” (12:4).
2. “The king of Egypt saw seven fat kine which seven lean ones devoured. And seven green ears and seven others dry” (12:43).
3. “Two youths entered the prison along with Prophet Joseph. One of them said: I saw myself pressing wine. The other said: I saw myself carrying bread on my head, of which birds were eating” (12:36).
4. “Moses saw in a vision while travelling with his family through the valley of Tur: He perceived a fire on the side of the mountain. He said to his family: Wait, I see a fire. May be I will bring to you from it some news or a brand of fire, so that you may warm yourselves” (28:29, 31).

Let me quote now the interpretations of these dreams and visions mentioned in the Qur'an:

Firstly, regarding Prophet Joseph's dream: His eleven brothers tried to get rid of him by throwing him into an old well. But by the help of Allah, after passing through years of slavery and for some years enjoying the comforts of a royal palace, he landed into years of imprisonment. But finally he was honoured by the king and was assigned a high position in the treasury. Then he welcomed his parents with full honour. The eleven brothers who hatched several conspiracies against him and his real brother, Bin Yameen, pleaded guilty and

fell in prostration before him for forgiveness. “And Prophet Joseph said: O my father, this is the significance of my vision of old – and my Lord has made it true” (12:98-100).

Secondly, about the King’s dream. Prophet Joseph’s interpretation was: “You shall sow for seven years as usual, then that which you reap, leave it in its ear, except a little which you eat. Then after that will come seven years of hardship, which will eat away all you have beforehand stored for them, except a little which you have preserved. Then after that will come a year in which people will have rain in which they will press grapes” (12:45-49).

Thirdly, regarding dreams of fellow prisoners. Prophet Joseph said: “O my two fellow-prisoners, as for one of you, he will serve wine for his lord to drink. That is, he will be released. And as for the other, he will be crucified, so that the birds will eat from his head” (12:41, 42).

Fourthly, regarding vision of Prophet Moses, when he reached the distant place where he was shown some fire, he received the divine message: “Surely I am thy Lord, so take off thy shoes. Surely you are in the sacred valley of Tuwa. And I have chosen you, so listen to what is revealed. Surely I have chosen you, so listen to what is revealed: Surely I am Allah, there is no God but I, so serve Me, and keep up prayer for My remembrance” (20:12-14).

I have just quoted four instances from the Holy Qur’an. Now I will mention some visions or dreams of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (*saw*) quoted in the *Sahih al-Bukhari* in order to further explain to you that these always need interpretation or explanation. Most of the time Allah, during the dream or a vision, inspires in the heart of the recipient the meaning as well. But sometimes if it relates to some future event and Allah wants to reveal its factual meaning at some future time, then even a prophet or an inspired servant of Allah does not know what is meant by it and he commits errors in interpreting it.

1. It relates to the migration of the Holy Prophet of Muhammad (*saw*) to Madina. Abu Musa related it from the Holy Prophet (*saw*) that he saw in a dream that he was migrating from Makkah to a land where there were plenty of palm trees. He thought that it meant either the city of Yamama or Hijr. But it turned out to be Madina (*Bukhari* 63:45).

2. Once the Holy Prophet (*saw*) saw in a dream that he had two golden bracelets in his hands. He became worried about them. He was inspired in the dream to blow over them. When he blew over them, they disappeared. He was made to understand that it meant that two false prophets would appear after his death. And it turned out to be true. Later on one was Aswad Ansi and the other was Musailma Kazzaab (*Bukhari* 61: 25)

3. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (*saw*) saw in a dream that he wielded his sword once and the front portion of its blade broke away. It hinted to the injuries which were received by the Muslims during the Battle of Uhud. Again when he wielded it second time, it resumed its normal shape. It hinted to the final victory Muslims achieved when the fleeing groups of Muslims suddenly gathered around the Holy Prophet Muhammad (*saw*) to protect him. This sudden return of the Muslims to the battlefield and rallying around the Holy Prophet (*saw*) and offering unprecedented sacrifices and putting up unified defence against the enemy attack struck awe and bewilderment in the hearts of the enemy and in desperation they abandoned the battlefield. In the same dream he saw some cows. It hinted at that some of the Muslims would be martyred in the Battle and it did happen so (*Bukhari* 61: 25).

Brothers and sisters, the purpose of this rather long discussion about dreams and visions is to emphasise the point that dreams and visions are always subject to interpretation as these are intended to refer to some events yet to come and that can only be done in a symbolic way.

Brothers and sisters, in all these cases you will notice that the first thought which came to the person who saw the dream or vision was to find what could be its interpretation. But in the case of Prophet Abraham and

his son, both of them straightaway became ready to fulfil the dream literally, as if it was a command. And it is this extreme sense of obedience to carry on the commandment of Allah and his supreme submission to the extent of sacrificing his dearest son, Ishmael, that deserves highest appreciation. And so Allah highly appreciated this act of Prophet Abraham in these memorable words in the Qur'an:

“O Abraham! Surely you have indeed fulfilled the vision. Thus do We reward the doers of good” (37:105).

Here again you will find that even Allah has regarded it as a vision and not as a commandment and that is why Allah honours him elsewhere in the Qur'an with the title of *Haneef*, that is, the most upright person:

“And he was a most submissive and upright person” (3:66).

A little further on Allah also appreciates followers of Prophet Muhammad (*saw*) for following and believing in Prophet Abraham's messages in the words:

“The nearest of people to Abraham are surely those who follow him and this Prophet [i.e. the Holy Prophet Muhammad] and those who believe. And Allah is the Friend of those who believe” (3:67).

The sacred House of Allah, the Ka'bah, rebuilt by Prophet Abraham (*as*), forms the focal point in a Muslim's daily and voluntary prayers as well as during the performance of *Hajj*. Apparently it is a simple cubic structure but it has a tremendous spiritual heritage and historical background attached to it. That is why it has assumed so much importance and veneration. It is symbol of the Unity of Allah – a living monument reminding people that Allah is All-powerful, Who can preserve anything which stands for its Unity in spite of all human efforts to destroy it. History tells us that from Prophet Adam to Prophet Muhammad (*saw*), they put their lives at stake and bore extreme hardships along with their devout followers to uphold the Unity of Allah. At times Allah singularly guarded the sanctity and safety of the Ka'bah, the first house built for His worship. And this reminds us of the attack of Abraha, a Christian Governor of Yemen, at the Ka'bah, with a mighty army and elephants to destroy it but it was miraculously repulsed by the pebbles of tiny birds.

About five years ago I went to perform 'Umra along with my family. While sitting in one of the verandas of the Sacred *Masjid*, I looked at the simple structure of the Ka'bah and tried to imagine thousands of years back, when this place was not so embellished, yet people from distant lands, travelling for months, had come to visit this shrine to pay their respect to this symbol of the Unity of Allah, and which has also retained the memory of its early settlers – Prophet Abraham, his wife Hajara, and his son Ishmael.

Over the years the deserted place is now blooming with millions of pilgrims of all nationalities and colours from all over the world. And the once barren place is now booming with every conceivable item produced anywhere in the world. Just imagine how supreme must be the sacrifices and the supplications impregnated with fervent humiliation that Allah responded to it with tremendous bounties, blessings and affluence. Allah also raised a great Prophet to perpetuate not only the memory of those who rebuilt it and offered supreme sacrifices but, through that Prophet, established the Ka'bah as the greatest and most vibrant centre of spiritual elevation and purification. It also instils firm faith in the hearts of its devotees that all those who worship Allah and submit supplications in all sincerity and devotion to Him and serve His creatures will be granted not only a gracious acceptance but everlasting blessings.

At this point I would like to quote a Christian writer, Chris Horrie, who, in his book, *What is Islam?* (published by Virgin Books, London, England), pays tribute to the historic role played by the Ka'bah in establishing the concept of *tauhid* (Oneness of the Divine Being) and in the struggle against polytheism in the following words:

“The Ka’bah is a cube-shaped stone building, believed to have been built at the beginning of time by Adam for the exclusive worship of Allah. The fate of the shrine is symbolically linked to Islam’s battle against mankind’s repeated reversion from true religion of Allah-worship into paganism” (p. 38).

Recently I was reading a beautiful monthly magazine, *EMEL* [emelmagazine.com], published from London, whose talented and devoted editor, a British Muslim, Mrs. Sarah Joseph, who was awarded the OBE by the Queen, has given a fascinating account and inspiring spiritual insight into what she felt while looking at the simple cubic structure of Ka’bah. She writes in her editorial note:

“As I slowly walked round, I could hear the hushed whispers of a thousand prayers in a hundred different tongues. Each was calling upon their Lord, praising Him and asking Him to respond to the call of their hearts. Beads of sweat ran into tears of worshippers as they brought to God their troubles and their deepest wishes. I came with my prayers, my searching, my needs; and with the strongest belief that He would hear me and He will answer...

After the seven rotations of the Ka’bah, we moved to pray behind the footprints of prophet Ibrahim who had, with his son Ishmail, rebuilt the ancient ruins left by Adam and dedicated then again to the One True God...

My thoughts turned to the connection with history and then our own place in it. As I followed ritually in the footsteps of the prophets, one is forced to ask questions; What am I doing to follow the example of the prophets, to act upon the messages of the prophets, to aspire towards the goals of the prophets...

I sat on the steps looking at the Ka’bah. Its beauty lies within its simplicity and I think the same can be said of the whole of Islam...

We had participated in the rites as ancient as humanity itself, yet it was absolutely current in our experience. The rites were ancient, but their purposes were timeless; as is the call to self-surrender oneself unto God. And so I prayed: “Make our faith a living faith, not something inherited or passively acquired, but lived and felt in the reality of today. As Makkah overflows with history, may our hearts overflow with faith to be experienced in this life and in the life hereafter” (November 2008 issue).

Thus the Ka’bah is a living monument to the monotheistic concept and the festival of *‘Id al-Adha* is a reminder to man to work continuously for the inner and outer purification of his person through spiritual discipline and training, so that he should be able to lead a virtuous life. Further, he is to derive strength to empathise with others and serve them.

The rituals observed during pilgrimage furnish us with living proof of the fact that hardships undergone and sacrifices made for noble and virtuous ideals and for setting a noble example are always rewarded by God, the High. The greater the sacrifice, the greater and more abiding shall be the recompense.

Apparently sacrifice of an animal brings end to the spiritual journey of *Hajj*. But do we think that sacrifice of an animal is just symbolic or does it carry a positive message for every Muslim? Abdus Sattar Edhi of Karachi, Pakistan is a world-renowned name for his humanitarian services. Tehmina Durrani of Pakistan, a woman with a penetrating pen and an observant eye, has compiled autobiography of this simple but courageous lover of humanity. In the book entitled *A Mirror to the Blind*, she translates Abdus Sattar Edhi’s inner feelings while performing *Hajj* about the significance of sacrifice in these words:

“In keeping with Prophet Abraham’s submission to Divine command to slaughter his son Ishmael, on the day after *Hajj*, Muslims all over the world celebrate *Eid*, highlighting Allah’s mercy towards

that supreme sacrifice by replacing Ishmael with a sheep. It is a sacrifice not of a goat, or a cow or a camel but of need, love, desire, habit, greed and a thousand other obstacles in the way of submitting to truth. It represents the death of ego, whereas Muslims merely slaughter an animal” (A. Sattar Edhi Foundation, Mithadar, Karachi, Pakistan, 2001, p. 137).

One important lesson we can learn from the shining example of this noble family is how culture and collectiveness as individuals and as members of a family can provide tremendous impetus to achieve high objectives in life. Each member of this righteous family exhibited commendable sense of politeness, mutual respect, unity of purpose and firm conviction in the divine support. For instance father addresses his son: *Yaa bunayya*, which means: O my dear son, and the son replies: *Yaa abatee*: O my dear father. Again when Prophet Abraham was leaving his wife Lady Hagar in that deserted place, she in desperation asked: Who will look after us in this wilderness? And the reply was: I entrust you to the care of Allah. And the wife said: Then He will never forsake us.

Brothers and sisters! Here one can observe how individual character as well as collective coherence not only fosters strength among the family members but provides immeasurable impetus to achieve great objectives. This is what every family needs, this is what every community needs and this is what the whole Muslim *Umma* needs today. And in fact the great objective of the mammoth gathering planned by Allah in that barren and vast stretch of land at Arafat, clad in one dress, reciting one set of praises to the Almighty Allah, is to seek forgiveness for their sins and beseech His mercy to make them submissive and righteous, and above all to foster bonds of brotherhood and commitment to act righteousness and to set example of righteousness for others.

Let us, brothers and sisters, pray and make a solemn promise today on this auspicious occasion that we will try our best to sacrifice our undue desires, selfish anger, greed, exploiting others for one’s own benefit and denying help and happiness to those who deserve it and submit sincerely to the commandments of Allah and the practice of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (*saw*). And let us also make a solemn commitment to fulfil the objectives of sacrifice symbolised in the Festival of Sacrifices. In short the message of *Eid al-Adha* is to purify our inner selves, elevate our spiritualism, foster love and respect and extend selfless sacrifice to uphold the cause of Islam and for the sympathy of fellow human beings. *Amen*.

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Ahmad Nawaz & Tallat Jabeen Nawaz

Wishing you and your loved ones a very blessed *Eid*.

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