

Sisters and brothers Eid Mubark

On the 9th of Muhram, in the mountain of Arafat the last Aya of the Quraan was revealed announcing the completion of the message of the prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

Almaida 5/3

“On this day the unbelievers have abandoned all hope of vanquishing your religion. Therefore fear them not but fear me. This day I have perfected your religion for you and completed my favor to you. And I have chosen Islam to be your faith.”

This is indeed a call for celebration, no other religion has such a declaration that the religion has been completed, let alone being known to the exact date and known event. Eid Al-Adha is the celebration of the end of the pilgrimage to Mecca. A small minority of Muslims make HAJ every year but all Muslims of over one billion people would celebrate the day as one of the two Muslims’ Holidays. We celebrate the complete religion Allah gave us. We celebrate the first house of worship built by Ibrahim and Ismail (PBUT). We celebrate the submission of the two prophets to the will of the creator by sacrificing a lamb or a similar animal. We celebrate the sanctity of human’s life as Allah doesn’t allow humans to be sacrificed, we celebrate Hager running back and forth looking for water for her son Ismail, we celebrate the human’s triumph against the deception and misguidance of Satan, we celebrate the unity of God and the unity of the religion of God.

Celebration is encompassing; no one should be left behind, the prophet (PBUH) has instructed us to have everyone at the Eid’s prayer men women and children. But celebration is not complete without learning. The instructions in the Qur’aan are always followed by an explanation of the reason behind such instructions. Let us look at a couple of examples.

First Al-Ankabut 29/45” The instruction is” *to be steadfast in prayer*” followed immediately by an explanation *“Indeed regular prayer fends off lewdness and evil.”* Our second example is fasting Al-Bakara 2/183 *“O’ believers, fasting is decreed for you as it was decreed for those before you”* this is the instruction to fast and the explanation is *“Perhaps you gain TAQUA”* i.e. God’s consciousness or piety

Qur’aan gives us detailed lessons and precise explanation, all we have to do is to read, understand, obey and above all apply what we learned.

What can we learn from this celebration of Eid Al-Adha? After all the duty of Haj is required only once in a life time.

To learn about this let us review some of the lessons in Surat Al-Haj

Haj 22/26” *As we indicated to Ibrahim the exact site of the “Sacred Mosque,” we said “worship none beside me, Keep my house a sanctuary for those who stand upright kneel or prostrate in prayer”*

The passage doesn’t mention the story of Ibrahim at all; the context here is the sanctity of the house vise-a-vie who is worshiped in the place, here is an insistence on monotheism. This is an important feature of all religions as we see places of worship turned into shrines for saints and kings or a tourist attraction for its architecture or other features. The sacred Mosque is consecrated solely for one purpose and one purpose only that is the worship of Allah. After a long journey the pilgrim reaches Mecca, what would he find? A simple cube empty from inside, as Ali Sharati said the Kaaba indeed is not why the

pilgrim made his tough journey; Kaaba is not but a direction for prayer, the journey is to Allah, the place is sacred not as a place but as a symbol of the obedience to the order of the Lord. There might be a lot more beautiful buildings and charming places on earth one likes to visit, every place on earth indicates the greatness of the creator, but there is only one place for the Muslim to make a journey to Allah, that place is Mecca.

The call to pilgrimage according to the next verse was not made by Muhammad (PBUH) but it was made by Ibrahim(PBUH) “ 22/27” *“And call mankind to pilgrimage’ they will come to you on foot and on the back of swift camels from every distant quarter”* Several points in here; the unity of the religion of Allah is emphasized by the fact that making the call to pilgrimage comes from the father of all the prophets not from Muhammad (PBUH). This call is not to the believers but it is addressed to all mankind, this theme we find in the whole Sura , the theme of one humanity one God and two camps those who believe in him and those who don’t. Aya 17 actually counts different religions and leave it to Allah to judge between them in the Day of Judgment. While the English translation mentions the word camel this word is not used in the original Arabic text, the word used is “Damer” indicating the trip has made the mounted ride lean and tiered, outlining the length and the difficulty in the journey, and this could be understood to mean any mean of riding.

And as we saw in the instructions for prayer and for fasting the explanation for the benefit of this form of worship follows immediately Haj 22/28
“So they will witness many benefits made available to them, and to pronounce in the appointed days the name of Allah over the livestock available to them to sacrifice and to feed, Eat from it and give to the unfortunate poor.”

The ward benefits was left here unidentified, probably it was left to us to think of the benefits of such journey as they are too many to count, but it helps to give some examples;

I wonder if it is a dress rehearsal for the Day of Judgment. Very crowded hot place; People are gathered from all over the earth, men and women of different colors, different languages and different ages. Everyone looks exactly like everyone else has very little of the earthly material, no poor or rich every one is equal in the eye of the Lord, there one feels it in his heart; feels his need to Allah, Even the little things one takes for granted is magnified in here, Aya 29 alludes to this point gently it points out that at the end of the rituals after making the animal sacrifice the pilgrim is allowed to wash and bath
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Which means to remove their own body dirt; If fasting is a reminder of the importance of food to sustain us, here is a reminder that the simple acts of bathing , shaving and cutting nails are bounties given by Allah and can be taken away by him.

“Benefits”, a lot of scholars agree that these are not only spiritual benefits but could include a lot of societal financial and diplomatic benefits.

Haj 37” *Not the meat nor the blood of sacrificed animals will reach Allah, but it is your piety will reach him , Thus he subjected them to you service, so that you may give glory to Allah for guiding you”*

A lot of emphasis is given here to the animal sacrifice as it is the case throughout the discussion about the pilgrimage. The ward ”BAHEEMATU AL’ANAAM”

is repeated in these verses probably to indicate that Allah chose humans to be the “KHALIFA” on earth because of the power of thinking which was given only to our species, herein Allah has made these “nonthinking” living things as an instrument for the service of man so to sustain the life on earth, nonetheless slaughtering these animals is called a sacrifice as to say taking a life away even of those “nonthinking animals” is not to be taken lightly but to be regarded as a sacrifice permitted for a certain purpose by the creator of these animals, hence killing for the purpose of killing is not permitted under any circumstances, the giver of life is the one who allowed this sacrifice to happen. The sanctity of life is the whole mark of the message of Al-Adha, the lesson of the story of Ibrahim and Ismail (PBU BOTH) is to be understood as a prohibition on human killing specifically if the killing is done in the name of God. This message of the importance of protecting human’s life comes through very strong especially if we continue reading the passages that follows.

If the message of Al-Adha is the prohibition on killing as I have explained so far, there is no wonder that the first passage in the Quraan to allow Muslims to bear arms comes immediately here after completing the discussion of the animal sacrifice. It says

Haj 22/38-39”

Allah defends the believers, Allah loveth not the unfaithful the ungrateful. Permission to bear arms is hereby given to those who are attacked, because they have been unjustly wronged, Allah has the power to grant them victory”

Self defense and the right to take up arms was declared by Islam centuries before the Bill of rights and before the international Law has uttered anything about humans’ life and humans’ rights. The Quraan takes this a little further in the following verse to emphasize again the unity of the religion of Allah. Even when talking here about carrying arms and fighting injustices attention is paid to protect the innocence and to protect houses of worship listen to this Aya continues the discussion about those who were attacked:

Haj 22/40”

Those who were driven unjustly from their homes only because they said “ our Lord is Allah” Had Allah had not checked some people by the power of some others, there would have been destruction of monasteries, churches, synagogues and mosques in which The name of Allah is praised. Allah will make victorious those who help the cause of Allah. Allah indeed is powerful and mighty”

This is a declaration of the sacred position of the places of worship, regardless of what religion they belong to. It is a pause in the middle of declaration of war, war of defense not a war of aggression, still the role of negotiation the role of reconciliation is indicated by the soft tone of defense and protection.

In the time of war it is more important for us to listen to the message we carry as Muslims; yes we have to know that it is not lawful to throw a bomb in a synagogue and it is prohibited for Muslims to kill a noncombatant civilian regardless of what others do. It is important for us to know that the complete religion is not complete without us carrying the message as it is intended to be carried.

The Message of Eid Al-Adha, probably the multiple messages are: the unity of Allah the unity of the religion of Allah and the unity of the Human race. The sacredness of the Ancient House “ the sacred mosque, “ the sacredness of life in general and human life in particular, permission is given to sacrifice the life of animals to serve man, but it is nonetheless is a sacrifice. Permission is given to bear arms for self defense but not for aggression. Finally this Eid, this day is a cause of a great joy and thanksgiving as this day marks the completion of the religion of Islam, no other religion can claim such a declaration from the creator of heaven and earth from the Lord of the universe.

We Ask Allah to grant us his forgiveness to guide us to his straight path, to teach us the knowledge which will benefit us and to make us use the knowledge we acquired. We ask Allah to make the Quraan our guide, and open our hearts to listen to his words. O’ Allah help us to remember you all the time of our day , help us to be thankful to you for all your bounties you have granted us, and give us the strength to strive in worshiping you the way you are deserving of worship. O’ Allah could we reach a point of IMAN similar to that of RABIA AL ADWAYEE when she said Allahuma I don’t worship you in the hope of your heaven or for the fear of your hell fire but I worship you because you are my Lord and you are deserving of my worship. O’ Allah makes us worship you the way of the free man not the way of the slave worried about the whip in his master’s hand. O’ Allah help us reach the degree of Ihsan so we may worship you as we are looking at you, if we don’t see you we know that you see us.