Intro and wisdom to Hajj for People of Other Faiths

I wonder all the time about Hajj...

Many people do wonder about Hajj (pilgrimage). What exactly is it? What is the pilgrimage of Muslims, to the Ka`bah in Makkah?

Is it a religious rite, a trade fair, a political gathering or... all in one? How can such journey, known as one of the five pillars of Islam, be a manner of worship?

The Islamic Concept of Worship

Worship, according to Islam, is a means for purifying both man's soul and practical life. The basis of worship is the fact that human beings are creatures and thus bondservants of God, their Creator and their Lord, to Whom they are destined to return.

Thus, man's turning towards God, in intimate communion and reverence - in the spirit of devotion and humble submission - is termed worship.

Actually, worship is an indispensable part of all religions, including the idolatrous ones. It is motivated, however, in each religion by different objectives. It assumes different forms and is performed under a different set of rules.

In some religions, worship is a means to develop in man the attitude of asceticism and isolation from life. In these religions, worship seeks to develop a mentality, which eliminates the enjoyment of the pleasures of this world.

Instead, in Islam, the concept of worship is related primarily to its fundamental view. It is that the true foundations of a good [enjoyable] life are soundness of belief and thinking, purity of soul and righteousness of action.

The real purpose of Islam in declaring that worship embraces the totality of the life of Man, is to make the religious faith play a practical and effective role in shaping the human life. It should also develop in man an attitude of dignified patience and fortitude in the face of hardships and difficulties.

It should create in him/her the urge to strive for the prevalence of good and removal of evil. Accordingly, there are principal means in Islam that strengthen the person's

connection with God, one of which is Hajj.

Once during his/her lifetime, every Muslim who is physically and financially in a position to do so, is expected to journey to Makkah. This is where God's final revelation to mankind was first disclosed.

You are not obliged to go if you are not of sound mind, if you do not possess the necessary financial resources, or are under a certain age. Also, if you are a women who has no male relative to go with - as a chaperone and protector.

A basic purpose of pilgrimage is to heighten the pilgrim's devotion to God and his revealed will, but the practice has other benefits as well. It is, for example, a reminder of human equality.

Before reaching Makkah, pilgrims remove their normal attire, which carries the marks of social status, and put on two simple sheet-like garments. Thus everyone, on approaching Islam's earthly focus, wear the same thing. Distinction of rank and hierarchy is removed, and prince and pauper stand before God in their equal humanity.

Pilgrimage also provides a useful service for enhancing international relations. It brings together people from many countries, demonstrating thereby that they share a loyalty that transcends their loyalty to their own nationalities and ethnic origins. Pilgrims pick up information about other lands and peoples, and return home with a better understanding of one another.

The purposes for which God has enjoined Hajj are many, among which are the following:

- 1. It is the largest annual convention of faith, where Muslims meet to know one another, study their common affairs and promote their general welfare.
- 2. It is also the greatest regular peace conference known in the history of mankind. In the course of Hajj, peace is the dominant theme. It is peace with God, with one's soul and with one another. It is even peace with animals, birds and insects. To disturb the peace of anyone or any creature, in any way or form, is strictly prohibited.
- 3. It is a wholesome demonstration of the universality of Islam, where brotherhood and equality of Muslims are fulfilled. From every corner of the globe, Muslims begin the journey, from all paths of life, trades and classes, to

assemble at Makkah in response to the divine call.

They dress in the same simple way, observe the same regulations and utter the same supplications at the same time, in the same way, for the very same end. There is no royalty, but loyalty - of all - to God. There is no aristocracy, but humility and devotion.

- 4. Hajj confirms the commitment of Muslims towards God and their readiness to abandon their material interests, for the sake of His service.
- 5. It is also to commemorate the divine rituals, observed by Abraham and Ishmael (peace be upon them), whom are known to have built the Ka`bah for the practicing of monotheism and worshiping of God - the One and Only on earth.
- 6. It is a reminder of the grand assembly on the Day of Judgment, when people will stand equal before God, waiting for their final destiny, when no superiority of race or wealth can be claimed.

A Self-discipline Program

A major purpose of Hajj, is to achieve self-discipline and maintain strong morals. Every single step and rite during the journey should direct the pilgrim towards such goals. The following examples can clarify how such simple steps can assist in the process of elevating the soul and purifying it.

Purity of Intention and Means

The pilgrim should meet his expenses by lawful means, for God would never accept otherwise. He/she should have his/her hands free of any worrisome and distracting business concerns.

His/her attention should be devoted exclusively to God, while his/her heart is directed in tranquility to the remembrance of God. In fact, devoting ones heart, can never be a hundred percent pure except if it is no longer occupied by material concerns, especially money.

This would definitely be more applicable when the person gets rid of any unlawful money, no matter how he/she needs it, for the sake of God. This is where sincere devotion shows.

Forsaking Evil Conduct

The pilgrim should renounce indecency, immorality and wrangling, as spoken of in the Qur'an. Indecency is a general term, covering all nonsense and foul behavior.

In fact, wrangling, excessive quarreling and argument, causing ill will, distract from the noble purpose of Hajj are incompatible with good Muslim character. One should, therefore, refrain from complaining about each other and even about animals as well.

One should take things gently; sheltering others and taking care of them along the way to the holy sanctuary. Good conduct is essential in Hajj. It goes - sometimes - as far as putting up with painful things, rather than trying to repel them.

Being Accepted

One indication that a pilgrimage has been accepted, it is said, is when a pilgrim abandons his/her sinful ways, exchanges his/her idle companions for righteous company and friends, then forsakes frivolity and heedlessness in favor of seriousness and vigilance.

In fact, his/her heart might be the person's true indicator. If it is no longer attached, unduly to worldly matters and has enjoyed the agonies of the journey without longing for material pleasures, then the pilgrim might have achieved his/her goal. He/she - then - has attained a heart longing for God and renouncing fake materialism of this world. Worth mentioning also is that Hajj is, in many ways, the central event of the year, perhaps of a whole lifetime. It is the act in which the unity of Muslims is most fully expressed.

This is in the sense that it is an example of all kinds of travel. It is also a market for exchanging news and ideas, brought from all over the Muslim world. Last, but not least, it symbolizes the unity of so many hearts seeking the pleasure of God.

Ibrahim and Isma`il: Model for Sacrifice *

By Dr. Munir El-Kassem** Dec. 26, 2005

Hajj and `Eid Al-Adha take us back in history to the time of a 97-year-old man being asked to take the life of a 13-year-old boy. Who is that man? And who is that boy? And who is the one who is making this request? If we know who the three points in this equation are, we would have a better perspective on life and on what life is all about.

The man who was asked at 97 years of age to take the life of a 13-year-old boy is none other than the close friend of Allah, the Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him), the father of the prophets and messengers. And the 13-year-old boy whose life Ibrahim was asked to take is none other than his own son. Ibrahim had waited for 83 years to see him walk around him, touch him, and give him the pleasure of being a father. All of us know what that means; all of us know what it really means for your son or daughter to come and show his or her love that he or she possesses for you.

But when the boy reached the age when he was able to run and play around his father, Ibrahim went to him and said, "My darling son, I saw in my dream that I was sacrificing you." We all know that the dreams of prophets and messengers are forms of revelation from Allah Almighty. So it was the truth.

Now, who was the one who made that request? It was none other than Allah. The One Who created life had asked Ibrahim to take the life of his son away. And we know that His decree was that Isma`il's life would not be taken away, but it was a lesson for humanity to understand what life is all about.

Allah wanted Ibrahim to teach humanity a lesson. Thus, brothers and sisters, we have to understand this lesson and reflect upon it. There are two things in life that Allah Almighty made beautiful in this life. These two things are mentioned in the Qur'an more than once: (Wealth and children are an ornament of the life of the world.) (Al-Kahf 18:46)

That is it! Wealth and children make life beautiful. Look what happened! Allah Almighty chose one individual to sacrifice one of these two things, and He did not ask any other human being to do the same. One individual was enough to sacrifice one of these two things, and that is his child, and He asked all of us to sacrifice the second one, wealth, so that by seeing how one man was able to do something which we cannot, we are able to sacrifice the second of the ornaments of life. Because Ibrahim passed the test, Allah Almighty called him an ummah (one man equal to a whole nation, a whole ummah).

One individual became an ummah. Why? Because Ibrahim passed the test of a whole ummah. He was asked to sacrifice one of the two things that are ornaments of life, and all of us have been asked to sacrifice the second. So because of that, he indeed, is an ummah in the same way that we are an ummah. He truly deserves that title:

(Lo! Abraham was an ummah, obedient to Allah.) (An-Nahl 16:120)

This is the spirit of `Eid Al-Adha. We have to sacrifice, brothers and sisters, when we are called upon to sacrifice what we really like to keep:

(Ye will not attain unto *Birr* (piety and perfect goodness) until ye spend of that which ye love.) (Aal `Imran 3:92)

If you have a lot of money and you take a thousand dollars and give it, this would not be *birr. Birr* is to have two dollars and to give one of the dollars away although you need the two dollars and would like to keep them for essentials. This is a sacrifice. Sacrifice is to do something that is difficult to do. This is sacrifice. It is not a sacrifice to do an easy thing and then to appear at the surface as if you did a lot. No, only Allah Almighty knows what sacrifice is all about. So, brothers and sisters, after we finish this *salah*, 2 let's go and consider what we really need to sacrifice. Each one of us has an Isma`il in his or her life that needs to be sacrificed—each one of us!

* Based on a <u>Friday sermon</u> delivered by Dr. Munir El-Kassem on January 21, 2005 at the Islamic Centre of Southwest Ontario, Ontario, Canada.

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Az-Zabih (the Sacrifice): Was it Isma`il or Is-haq?

Islam is a complete and perfect course of guidance that delivers the whole humanity to the best way chosen for them by their Creator, Glory be to Him.

"Almighty Allah says: "So We gave him tidings of a gentle son. And when (his son) was old enough to walk with him, (Abraham) said: O my dear son, I have seen in a dream that I must sacrifice thee. So look, what thinkest thou? He said: O my father! Do that which thou art commanded. Allah willing, thou shalt find me of the steadfast. Then, when they had both surrendered (to Allah), and he had flung him down upon his face. We called unto him: O Abraham: Thou hast already fulfilled the vision. Lo! thus do We reward the good. Lo! that verily was a clear test. Then We ransomed him with a tremendous victim. And We left for him among the later folk (the salutation): Peace be unto Abraham! Thus do We reward the good. Lo! he is one of Our believing slaves. And We gave him tidings of the birth of Isaac, a Prophet of the righteous. And We blessed him and Isaac. And of their seed are some who do good, and some who plainly wrong themselves." (As-Saffat: 101-113)

Also, in his *Mustadrak*, Al-Hakim quotes Mu`awiyah ibn Abi Sufyan as saying: "We were with the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) when a Bedouin came to him and said: 'O Messenger of Allah! I left behind me a barren and drought-stricken country. My property has vanished and my children are at loss. Bestow on me some of your favors, o son of the two human male sacrifices *Az-Zabihayn* (Isma`il and `Abdullah).' The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) smiled and did not rebuke him or deny the description." The majority of Muslim scholars are of the view that *Az-Zabih* was Isma`il. They backed their view with following evidence:

1- When Ibrahim (Abraham, peace be upon him) was saved from the fire, he migrated from Iraq to the Levant and said: " Lo! I am going unto my Lord Who will guide me" (As-Saffat: 99)

When he grew old, he implored Allah for a son and thus Almighty Allah gave him glad tidings of a gentle son. The mother of that son was his Egyptian wife Hajar. When jealousy crept to the heart of his first wife Sarah, Allah commanded him to take Hajar and her son to Makkah. There he was subject to a test whereby Almighty Allah commanded him to slaughter his only son; Isma`il (Ishmael). As for Is-haq (Isaac), he was born many years later and Ibrahim had been given glad tidings of his birth after the incident of sacrifice. It goes without saying that the subject of true test should be the first and the only son who then occupied a center place in his father's heart, not the second one.

2- Ibrahim experienced a series of tests most of which relate to Hajar and her son who were placed in a remote barren valley. Ibrahim left them to Allah's care and went back to the Levant. Frequent visits were not sufficient to stop Ibrahim's genuine fear for his wife and her baby. The situation was compounded by the vision Ibrahim had that he was slaughtering his dear son, which means that he would definitely be filled of worry about the would-be state of Hajar. Would he leave her alone in the deserted valley? The details of the incident clearly shows that it was Isma`il who was to be sacrificed.

It is reported that when Ibrahim took his son to slaughter him, Satan encountered him many times trying to divert him from his task. Ibrahim cast him many times with pebbles. This is actually what Muslim pilgrims do in their Hajj when they cast the pebbles (*Al-Jamarat*).

3- When Ibrahim was given glad tidings with the coming of Is-haq, he was also informed that Is-haq would grow, marry and have a child named Ya`qub (Jacob). Allah says: **"We gave her good tidings (of the birth) of Isaac, and, after Isaac, of Jacob."** (Hud: 71) Is it logic for Ibrahim to attempt to slaughter his son after being given glad tidings that the son would grow up and have children? How come they claim that it was Is-haq that was to be slaughtered? This is ridiculous, for if it was Is-haq to be slaughtered, who would then beget Ya`qub, to bring to reality the glad tiding given to Ibrahim before?

In giving him glad tidings about the birth of Isma`il, Ibrahim was told that Isma`il would be "gentle and persevering" while in case of Is-haq, he was described as being "learned". Isma`il's description perfectly matches the unquestioning obedience he gave his father.

4- The People of the Book say: "Allah commanded Ibrahim to sacrifice his sole son." At that time, Ibrahim had no other sons except Isma`il, for in their Sacred Books it is stated that Ibrahim was given Isma`il when he was 86 years of age while he was given Is-haq when he was 99 years of age.

5- The great scholars among the pious ancestors (may Allah be pleased with them) say that *Az-Zabih* was Isma`il. `Umar ibn `Abdul-`Aziz is reported as having called a Jew who had embraced Islam, interrogating him on the issue. The Jew replied that it was Isma`il who was to be sacrificed. Also, Al-Asma` asked Abu `Amr ibn Al-`Ala' about *Az-Zabih* and he said: "Where is your mind? Is-haq never came to Makkah. It was Isma`il who was in Makkah and built the House (The Holy Mosque) with his father."

"The truth about this matter can be found in History. The Jews themselves do not deny the fact that the first son of Ibrahim (Abraham) was Isma`il (Ishmael), and History tells us that Ibrahim was tried by Allah to sacrifice his son next to the Ka`bah, and history tells us the IS-HAQ (Isaac) has never been next to the Ka`bah in Makkah, he was born in Palestine, and Isma`il was raised in Makkah.

The trial came to Ibrahim in Makkah (or at that time it was just the Ka`bah), so there is no reason for the Jews who always distort the truth to claim that it was Is-haq who was going to be sacrificed and not Isma`il."

All the above-mentioned facts indicate that it was Isma`il who was about to be slaughtered by his father, Ibrahim, and all these facts also support the Hadith of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) that reads: **"I am the son of** *Az-Zabihayn* (the two who were to be sacrificed)"

Allah Almighty knows best.

`Eid

Eid al Adha 2025

Eid al Adha 2025 will be celebrated on Friday, 6^{TH} JUNE 2025.

Eid ul Adha is a festival celebrated among Muslims all over the world in remembrance of the sacrifice that Prophet Ibrahim (AS) made out of his strong faith in Allah (SWT). Ibrahim (AS) showed a willingness to sacrifice his son Ismail (AS) but his son was replaced with a lamb by Allah (SWT). Allah (SWT) was so pleased with Ibrahim's (AS) submission to Him that He made this demonstration of sacrifice and faith a permanent part of a Muslim's life.

Hence, every year on the **10th of Dhul Hijjah**, Muslims all over the world celebrate **Eid ul Adha**. On this day, Muslims slaughter a lamb, sheep, goat or a camel to honor the sacrifice of Ibrahim (AS). A sense of generosity and gratitude colors this festival.

This festival is meant to make a Muslim more virtuous in his or her deeds. It should not be meant only to offer sacrifices; rather it is meant to learn hidden lessons of freedom from selfish desires and to elevate a Muslim from anything that hinders his ability to fulfill his responsibilities as a Muslim. Allah says in the Quran: **"Their meat will not reach Allah, nor will their blood, but what reaches Him is piety from you. Thus have We subjected them to you that you may glorify Allah for that [to] which He has guided you; and give good tidings to the doers of good."** (Surah Hajj:37)

Frequently asked questions

- Q When is Eid al Adha in 2025?
- Q Why do Muslims celebrate Eid ul Adha?

Q What is the story behind Eid al Adha?

Q <u>What is the purpose of Eid al Adha?</u>, Q <u>How do we know when Eid al Adha is?</u> Q <u>What happens at</u> <u>the festival of Eid al Adha?</u>

https://www.islamicfinder.org/special-islamic-days/eid-al-adha-2025/

The Observance of Eid ul Adha

Let's explore the highlights of Eid ul Adha. Lifestyle Rida Ghaffar Monday August 27, 2018 Eid ul Adha is the second largest religious festival for Muslims worldwide. This occasion is also referred to as the "Festival of Sacrifice". It is fervently celebrated and marks the remembrance of Hazrat Ibrahim's (AS) willingness to sacrifice Hazrat Ismail (AS) as an act of obedience to the command that had been made by Allah (SWT). As Eid ul Adha falls on the 10th of <u>Dhul Hijjah</u>, this year the tentative dates are accounted as the 21st or the 22nd of August 2018, depending on the region.

<u>That they may witness benefits for themselves and mention the name of</u> <u>Allah on known days over what He has provided for them of [sacrificial]</u> <u>animals. So eat of them and feed the miserable and poor. (22:28)</u>

Eid is just around the corner and the shopping sprees for its preparations have begun by fellow Muslims across the globe. From the purchase of sacrificial animals such as goats, cows, lambs and camels to new outfits for this happy occasion. Apart from the embarkment of several Eid preparations, the extensive Ibadaah by Muslims is not behind at all. Muslims all over the world drape this cape of protection around themselves by immersing themselves into constant dhikr around this time.

And do not eat of that upon which the name of Allah has not been mentioned, for indeed, it is grave disobedience. And indeed do the devils inspire their allies [among men] to dispute with you. And if you were to obey them, indeed, you would be associators [of others with Him]. (6:121)

The day of Eid begins with the Eid prayer, offered on the morning of 10th Dhul Hijjah after the sun rises completely; before the time for the Zuhr prayer starts. This prayer consists of two rakats and is performed with complete devotion worldwide.

<u>After offering the Eid prayer</u>, Muslims are meant to sacrifice the animals and divide out the meat amongst people. As far as the meat distribution of the slaughtered animals is concerned; the meat division is split into three parts; poor, relatives and friends, and family respectively.

In regards to the sacrifices offered, the term Dhabiha is used to reflect the act of <u>slaughtering</u> the animals in the Halal way; pronouncing Tasmiyah (The name of Allah (SWT)) and Takbir; "Bismillah Allahu Akbar". The knife to be used in the slaughter must be razor sharp; straight and smooth. Moreover, the blood should be drained completely before the removal of the animal's head. In Islam, flowing blood is considered to be

impure and highly prohibited for food consumption. The reason behind this is that blood is a good medium for germs, bacteria, toxins, etc. Therefore, Dhabiha is to be done such that the meat is purified and suitable for consumption. Furthermore, the blood should ideally be drained in the corner area of the garden, so that the blood is absorbed by the land rather than being drained directly in gutters. For instance, a devastating sight of blood flooded across the streets of Dhaka was witnessed back in 2016.

Narrated Anas bin Malik: The Prophet said, "Whoever slaughtered the sacrifice before the prayer, he just slaughtered it for himself, and whoever slaughtered it after the prayer, he slaughtered it at the right time and followed the tradition of the Muslims."

We hope that this Eid will bring immense joy for each Muslim individual and confer ease as they carry out their respective sacrifices. We wholeheartedly wish our fellow Muslim brothers and sisters a very happy Eid! For more information on Eid ul Adha, click here.

Break barriers this Eid!

Get to know how you can contribute and be a part of something big. Rida Ghaffar Tuesday August 28, 2018

Millions of Muslims around the world perform the ritual of sacrifice on the occasion of <u>Eid ul Adha</u>. At this time of the year, numerous less privileged individuals eagerly wait for meat distribution of sacrificed animals. This is the time when they feel they have actually fed themselves and provided their families a proper meal. The sacrifice is considered as an essential part of the whole Muslim community and its well-being on a spiritual level.

The act of dabiha refers to the <u>slaughtering</u> of sacrificial animals; such as camels, lambs, goats and cows, in a Halal way according to Islam. This act is performed in almost every other Muslim household on the joyful festival of Eid. However, many individuals are deprived of the basic privileges and are unable to buy the animals, let alone sacrifice them. Such people do not have the reach of entertaining themselves with the sacrifice yet Allah (SWT) has not hindered them from being a part of the occasion of Eid and celebrate it with their family. As we all know, fresh meat is a rarity when considered at a global level, for millions of people; especially those on the run from conflicts and disasters. But can these

people be assisted? Yes, there are various ways and that is where the privileged step in and lend a hand for those in need.

Eid ul Adha is right on top of our heads and this is exactly the time to take action for the needy. There are a great number of organizations working on such initiatives to bring a smile on the faces of the unprivileged.

We should help our fellow Muslims cherish this beautiful religious festival by donating our share, which we know is for nothing but a good cause. We encourage all the individuals to step up and contribute, becoming a part of something big and better.

The Quran states: "Their meat will not reach Allah, nor will their blood, but what reaches Him is piety from you. Thus have We subjected them to you that you may glorify Allah for that [to] which He has guided you; and give good tidings to the doers of good." (22:37)

4 ways you can make the most out of Eid this year

Learn how you can make this Eid the best one yet. *Lifestyle Mohammad Ahmed Shiwani Tuesday July 03, 2018*

<u>Eid</u> is the foremost day of celebration for Muslims across the globe. It is the day that Muslims congregate to celebrate the special day together and thank Allah (SWT) for all that He bestows upon His creations. <u>Eid-ul-Fitr</u> has been prescribed upon Muslims for them to realize the different ways through which Allah (SWT) continuously blesses His creations. Here are the four ways through which we can make the most of the blessed day.

1. Engage in Sunnah Activities

Allah (SWT) greatly appreciates those that follow the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), for He has immense love for His most premier of creations. The easy route to attain His pleasure, therefore, is to follow the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) on the day of <u>Eid</u> and please the Almighty (SWT) by expressing love for His Habib. Sunnah activities on Eid include eating something sweet before Eid prayer, wearing clean clothes and using perfume. While there are other beautiful Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), the aforementioned are the easiest. Can it become easier to attain the pleasure of Allah (SWT)?

2. Amend broken relations

Eid is a day of congregation and of expressing love and gratitude to your relatives and loved ones. Allah (SWT) is All-Forgiving and loves those who forgive, and so we must take Eid as the opportunity to amend broken relations, forgive and forget, ask for forgiveness, and spread love and compassion, just like we have been prescribed to do so in the Quran and by our beloved Prophet (PBUH).

3. Thank Allah (SWT)

Eid is a manifestation of the compassion, love, mercy, and blessings of Allah (SWT) and so we must thank Him for all that He has given to his creations. Allah (SWT) continues to show us different signs of His love for us, and so we must use the day prescribed to celebrate, to thank Allah (SWT) for continuously blessing us even though we continue to invite His displeasure.

4. Help the less fortunate

In continuation with expressing gratitude, we must also acknowledge how fortunate we are as compared to those that Allah (SWT) has given harder challenges to. We must also acknowledge that we are responsible for them, and that the Muslim Ummah is a single unit that must take care of its brothers and sisters. In that, an ideal way to express gratitude to Allah (SWT) is by acknowledging that we are thankful for His blessings, and doing so by giving to the less fortunate.

May this Eid be the most fulfilling and gratifying one. Ta-Qabbala Allaah Minna Wa-Minkum, <u>Eid Mubarak</u>!