“A-úthu billáhi minash shaytánir rajeem. Bismilláhir rahmánir raheem

Al hamdu lillahi nahmaduhu wanasta’eenahu, wanastagh-firuhu, wanatoobu ilayhi, wana’oothu Billaahi min shuroori an-fusinaa, wamin sayyi aati a’maalinaa. May- Yahdillahu fa huwal muhtad, wa may- yudlill falan tajidaa lahu waliyan murshida. Wa ash-hadu an Laa ilaaha ill-Alláh, wahdahoo laa shareeka lah, wa ash-hadu anna Muhammadan ‘abduhoo warasooluh”

All Praise is due to Alláh, We praise Him and we seek help from Him. We ask forgiveness from Him. We repent to Him; and we seek refuge in Him from our own evils and our own bad deeds. Anyone who is guided by Alláh, he is indeed guided; and anyone who has been left astray, will find no one to guide him. I bear witness that there is no god but Alláh, the Only One without any partner; and I bear witness that Muhammad, sws, is His servant, and His messenger.

Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem! Ya Ay-yuhal-latheena ‘aamanut taqul-laaha, haqqa tuqaatihee wala tamu tun-na, il-la wa antum Muslimoon.”

O You who believe, – Fear Allah, as He should be feared, and die not except as Muslims.

Ya Ay-yuhal-latheena ‘aamanut taqul-laaha, wa qooloo qawlan sadeedaa. Yuslih-lakum a’maalakum wa yaghfir lakum thunoobakum, wamay yu-til-laaha warasoolah, faqad faaza fawzan atheemaa.”

O You who believe, – Be aware of Allah, and speak a straightforward word. He will forgive your sins and repair your deeds. And whoever takes Allah and His Prophet as a guide, has already achieved a mighty victory.

In the opening verse of Sura An-Nisaa’, Allah says:

O mankind! Show reverence towards your Guardian-Lord Who created you from a single person, created, of like nature, his mate and from the two of them scattered (like seeds) countless men and women;― Be conscious of Allah, through Whom ye demand your mutual (rights) and (show reverence towards) the wombs (that bore you): for surely, Allah ever watches over you.`

My Dear Brothers,

As the Hajj season approaches, let us consider the story of Prophet Abraham, his wife Hagar and their son, Ismail (may Allah send peace and blessings on them). This amazing family left us a great legacy that is the foundation of the Hajj. Their story is relevant for all Muslims for all times, and there’s a particular resonance for us today, as we shall see.

Nabi Ibrahim’s father was a devout *mushrik,* an idol worshipper. Despite all his son’s efforts, the father adamantly refused to stop worshipping idols.  When he died he was still in denial of Allah. Nabi Ibrahim, the Friend of Allah, the quintessential monotheist, the Patriarch of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, could not save his father. We, too, must accept that we have no real power to influence others, not even our own parents, to accept Islam. Allah chooses to guide whom He pleases.



*“May- Yahdillahu fa huwal muhtad, wa may- yudlill falan tajidaa lahu waliyan murshida.” [sura al-Kahf 18:17]*

*“Anyone who is guided by Alláh, he is truly guided; and anyone who has been left astray, will find no one to guide him.”*

Our duty is only to share what Allah teaches, without pressure, without clever tricks. Allah is not in need of any of His creatures. We need Him.

Prophet Ibrahim destroyed the idols that his people worshipped, except for one. When the people asked him who did it, he pointed to the remaining idol. They told him the idol couldn’t have done it, so he asked them how is it that they worship something that can neither harm them nor help them! It couldn’t even defend itself from being destroyed! But such is the arrogance of misguided people, that logic and wisdom is wasted on them. Instead of using their God-given reason and logic, they resorted to violence. They tried to burn Prophet Abraham to death. He, on the other hand, was completely calm and unafraid, relying on Allah, and reposing his trust in Allah at all times. Allah commanded the fire to be cool, and thus Ibrahim *alayhis salaam*, survived.

When He and his wife, Hagar arrived in the desolate valley of Bakka, she repeated asked him why they had come there. He said nothing. Then, when she asked, is it Allah’s wish? He confirmed that it was indeed so. She immediately accepted this, without complaining. Both husband and wife knew that no matter how dire the situation, they were always safe in Allah’s hands.

*“Biyadikal khair, innaka ala kulli shay-in qadeer.”*

*“In His Hand is all Good. Allah has power over all things.” [Sura 3:26]*

Later, left alone with a hungry and thirsty infant child, she rushed from hilltop to hilltop in search of water, between*Al Safa* and *Al Marwah*. We commemorate this event during the Hajj, in *Rami and Sa’i*. She ran in desperation, she made the effort, and her effort and her pleading for help from Allah was well rewarded. The water came, in limitless abundance, like Allah’s mercy pouring out to his devoted servants. The Archangel Gabriel, *Jibreel alayhis salaam*, caused the well of Zamzam to gush pure, clean water from below baby Ismail’s feet, and for thousands of years, day in, day out, 24/7, it still flows today, refreshing and purifying millions of pilgrims. Let us think of Zamzam as Allah’s mercy overflowing, waiting to quench our spiritual thirst, our quest for meaning, our quest for nearness to Allah.

When Allah ordered Nabi Ibrahim to sacrifice what he loved most, both he and Ismail knew what that meant. Neither father nor son had the slightest hesitation. They fully understood what *‘sami’na wa ata’na’*means ‘we hear, and we obey.’ No questions, no lame excuses. Just do it!

At the crucial moment when the sharp-bladed knife touched the jugular vein, Allah caused another miracle: A ram, a sheep, appeared where Ismail patiently awaited his fate. Ismail’s life was spared. Prophet Abraham’s trial was over. Allah wanted to show us, and all generations to come until the end of time, what it means to love Allah, what it means to obey his every command.

Today we still remember that willingness to make the ultimate sacrifice. Our *Qurbani*might be a small symbolic gesture, but the lesson is timeless, and awesome.

As the Holy Quran reminds us, it is not the meat that reaches Allah, it is the *taqwa,*the piety, the awe-inspired reverence, filled with love, fear and hope.

How many of us will be ready to make this kind of sacrifice? How many of us will be willing to devote our most beloved to Allah? Our wealth, our families, our possessions seem so important to us. But where does Allah fit into our scheme of priorities? Do we really love Allah as much as we should? Is our greatest love reserved for Allah, or do we have more love for what He has created? Here’s some food for thought, my dear brothers.

*“Innas salaatee wanusukee wamahiyaaya, wama ma’tee lil-Laahi Rabbil Aalalmeen. La shareekala wabithaalika umirtu, wa ana aw-walil Muslimeen”*

*“Surely, my prayer, my sacrifice, my life and my death is for Allah, Lord of all the Worlds. No partner has He, and I am first among the Muslims” [Sura 6:162]*

This beautiful declaration was one of Nabi Ibrahim’s wonderful gifts to us. Every time we recite this prayer, we re-dedicate our lives to Allah’s service. We remind our forgetful and infinitely distractible human nature, where our true priorities lie.

Let us remember with gratitude the awesome debt we owe Nabi Ibrahim and his family. We acknowledge this debt every time we pray, asking Allah to send peace and blessings on Nabi Muhammad and his family, just as he sent peace and blessings on Nabi Ibrahim and his family:

*“Innalláha wa malaaikata yusallúna alan nabi. Yá ay yuhal latheena ámanu sallú alayhi wasalli mú tas leema. Allahumma salli alá Muhammad, wa ala áli Muhammad, kama salayta ala Ibrahim, wa ala ali Ibrahim. Allahumma barik ala Muhammad, kama barakta ala Ibrahim, wa ala ali ibrahim. Fil ála meen, innaka hameedun majeed.”*

*Second Khutbah:*

*“Soob’ hanallahi wal hamdu lillah, wala hawla wala quwwata illah billah yu althi yual theem”*

Glory to Allah!  Praise to Allah! There is no power and no strength except from Allah!

My dear brothers,

The Holy Quran reminds us to follow Prophet Abraham, who associated no partners with Allah, and whose way is described as the *haneef* way. What is the *haneef way?* *Haneef*means, to turn away from idol worship, to make no associations with Allah, to incline towards goodness, to be orthodox, to be a primordially upright person. This is the way of Nabi Ibrahim, and all those who worshipped Allah, even during the time of ignorance, the time of Jahiliyya.

Let us, during these momentous days of*Dhul Hijja,* remember Prophet Abraham, remember who he was and what he lived and died for. His great legacy is still with us today: Love Allah more than anyone or anything else, be willing to sacrifice anything in Allah’s cause, and strive your whole life to be a primordially upright person. Try to be a loyal friend, a loving wife or husband, an exemplary parent, a loving son or daughter, a helpful neighbour and a good, law abiding citizen. This is the haneef way,the way of Prophet Abraham and his family, the *millata Ibraheema.*

Brothers, to conclude our khutbah:

*InnaAllaha, Yamuru bil adel, wal ihsaan, wa eetaa-i zil qurba; wa yanha anil fuhshaa-i, wal munkari walbaghi; ya-idzukhum lallakum tathak-karoon. (Sura 16:90),*

*“Surely Allah commands justice, good deeds and generosity to others and to relatives; and He forbids all shameful deeds, and injustice and rebellion: He instructs you, so that you may be reminded.”*

*Fadth kuroonee adth kurkum, wash kuroolee walaa tak furoon [2:152].*

*“and remember Me: I will remember you. Be grateful to Me, and do not reject faith.”*

*wala thikrul-Laahi akbar, Wal-Laahu ya’lamu maa tasna’oon.” [29:45].*

*“and without doubt, Remembrance of Allah is the Greatest Thing in life, and Allah knows the deeds that you do.”*

Aqeemus salaah!