

# Hajj and Eid of Adha (Sacrifice Feast)

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Hajj season is close and some have the decision to go to see the House of God and some are here to say goodbye. So, I point some matters which I remember:

Sharia orders of Hajj are written in the books of jurisprudence. You may refer to jurist's books and find the answers to the questions. But besides the sharia orders, each action of Hajj has special meanings too. Of course, it is not possible that the reality of these actions is brought into the words, and it must be shown within the act and comprehended by heart. Doing parts of actions must be granted a special feeling to human, and another part which is the memory of those whom we like them, like Abraham (AS), Ishmael (AS), and Hajar etc ... must remind us their spiritual meanings; because, these acts not only have apparent form, but also includes a mystical (theosophical) meaning. For instance *Harvalah* (semi runs walking) is Hajar's state memorandum that when saw the thirstiness of her child, ran a part between *Safa* and *Marveh* mountains for 7 times in this way. Or killing a sheep is a memorandum of Abraham who wanted to sacrifice Ishmael and a sheep came from God to him and he sacrificed the sheep. This kind of actions remembers the reminiscence. But, each has a meaning which Imam Sajjad has illustrated the meaning of each in a very long *Hadith* (narration). And Naserkhosro who was one of Ishmaelia Shiite and a mystic poet and wrote nothing but mystical poems, has told it as a poem<sup>2</sup>.

Naserkhosro lived in a wealthy and royal family who was an orgy, and naturally attracted to the palaces of kings where were full of the binge, but in the palace, jurisprudents and religious men also were associated. When they saw that Naserkhosro is talent and virtuosic man, reminded him that: "here is not your place and you must go to find the spirituality". Because of repeating this matter, at last he left the palace, and went through for seeking sciences and religion and principles of jurisprudence and got to a high level of this knowledge. But, learning these sciences also did not water his inner thirst. Then he dreamed that he must go to Mecca, so went and gravitated to Ishmaelia<sup>3</sup> sect. Naserkhosro has turned the *Hadith* of Imam Sajjad to a detailed mystic balladry, and says: A convoy of Hajjis entered back to the city. At that time Hajjis used to move as convoys, now also they move in convoys

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<sup>1</sup> Texts of two orations of His Honorable Haj Dr. Nour Ali Tabandeh Majzoubalishah on 14 February 1999 and 28 March 1999 for Hajj time and Ghorban Eid granted in Tehran and then were written down. It has been tried to keep the speech form of the orations as much as possible (Iran Mysticism). These pages are translation of the cited paper, published in Erfan Iran (Iran Mysticism), No. 2, PP. 6-29, Haqiqat publications, winter 2000.

<sup>2</sup> Of course, he has illustrated his life way in a very detailed balladry.

<sup>3</sup> Ismailia sect knows themselves the followers of Ismail, son of Imam Sadigh (AS), who was so loved from Imam Sadigh and as it has been written in the books he was like Bayazid Bastami and had the representation right from him. As Marouf Karkhi had the representativeness permission from Imam Reza, Ismail also had the permission from Imam Sadigh. Some historians have written that Imam Sadigh told that Ismail is my successor; but when he died, Imam Sadigh kept his body and people came to visit him in groups, and he prayed for his corpse and opened his face to be seen by people that he is dead. Anyway, after his death, some people said that he is not dead because he is the seventh, and seven is the number of perfection, and he is the seventh Imam and is alive and has children; and the Imam Sadigh is not allowed to assign another person as his successor, because he has done it as the order of God and change is not acceptable. However, Ismail determined some representatives who had mystic ways and Naserkhosro also was in one of those orders.

but those times for the safety and not being attacked by thieves, they moved to Mecca and returned in-group. Thus, Hajjis of some close cities gathered and if the numbers were enough, a convoy would be ready and move.

Naserkhosro continues in balladry that: the Hajjis convoy entered and I went to welcome them. In the past, when a convoy came back from Hajj, all people would go to welcoming whether or not he had a passenger in convoy.

- I had a friend in the convoy,
- a lovely, generous and pure friend.
  
- I asked him to tell me how you got arrived,
- from this travel, full of discomfort and scare.
  
- I got happy that you did pilgrimage,
- because, there is no one as you in this territory.
  
- Tell me how you did care about,
- the reverence of his Excellency.

He says: I had a friend in the returned convoy and started speaking with him and greetings. Naserkhosro continues the balladry as question and answer, and says that I asked him “did you understand the meaning of this action which you did? He replied no!”. “I asked about the meaning of another act? Replied no!” Therefore, “I asked the meaning of all the actions one by one and he replies no!”

- When you started to do *Ihram* (sanction),
- what did you intend in that sanction?
  
- Did you prohibit the all,
- whatever other than the *Qadim* God?
  
- Said: No!
  
- I asked him:
  
- Did you say *Labbaik* (my life),
- because of knowledge and of showing grandiose?
  
- Did you hear the voice of *Haq* and His answer?
- Did you respond and the Moses responded?
  
- Said: No!
  
- I asked him:
  
- When you got *Arafat*,
- did you stand and receive the welcoming?

- Did you know *Haq* and negate yourself?
- Did you receive the breeze of episteme?

- Said: No!

- I said him:

- When you were going toward the *Haram*,
- was it similar to the people of *Kahf* and *Raqim*,

- Were you safe from the sedition of yourself?
- and from the sorrow of work and huge of hell?

- Said: No!

- I said him:

- Similar to stone shoot of *Jamarah*,
- did you shoot on the damned devil?

- Did you leave all from yourself,
- all the bad customs and deeds?

- Said: No!

- I said him:

- When you sacrificed the sheep
- for the sake of the poor and orphan,

- Did you see your closeness and then do,
- the killing and sacrificing your evil self?

- Said: No!

- I said him:

- When you got aware
- of the position of Abraham,

- Did you surrender self of yourself in the hands of *Haq*,
- from honesty and belief and certainty?

- Said: No!

- I said him:

- At the time of circumambulation,
- that you ran through *Harvalah* bathed in sweat (*Zalim*).

- From the circumambulation of all angles,
- did you remind in circumambulation of the great empyrean?

- Said: No!

- I said him:

- When you did “*Saay*” (try),
- from *Sapha* toward *Marvah* in the division,
- Did you see in your “*Sapha*”, the two worlds?
- Did your heart become free from hell and paradise?

- Said: No!

- I said him:

- When you returned back,
- Did you remain sad from the separation of *Kaaba*?
- Did you bury yourself in the grave?
- As at this time, you are rotten?

- He said:

- About these subjects whatever you said,
- I didn’t know the right and wrong.

At last, I told him: my friend you did not do the Hajj.

- I said: Oh’ friend!

- You didn’t do Hajj,
- You didn’t stay at the position of effacement.
- You have just gone to visit Mecca and returned back,
- Just you have bought the discomfort of the desert by paying silver coins.

Means that you have paid money and purchased difficulty and gone to see Mecca and come back. Because, in those times going to Mecca had so many troubles. You have also gone and bought trouble with money. You have paid and gained pain. Then says: if you would decide to go to Hajj again, act as I taught you. Go as I told you.

- If you wanted to do the Hajj from now,
- do it as the way I taught you<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Naserkhosro Poems book (in Persian), edited by Mojtaba Minavi and Mehdi Mohaqiq. Tehran, 1989, pp. 300-301.

The first act of Hajj is *Ihram* Soak and wearing *Ihram* cloth; because Hajj is God's invitation, means that God has invited a man to his home. There is a story that a man went to Mecca by tandem, in the way he saw a man who was going on foot, and told him to come and get on. That man said: no, it is better to go Hajj on foot. It was clear that he was not rich. The riding man said: "You are wrong and my Hajj is more accepted because I am an invited guest and God has invited me but you are coming uninvitedly. It means that the financial ability itself is also an invitation. God's invitation is the mean. When somebody is invited to somewhere, what does he do? In common life also when you want to go beside a great person or somewhere inside many people, first you wash and you clean your body. Of course, we always wash our hands and face, but even if this cleanness is to obey the orders, it will be as worship. If you wash your hands and face or all your body without intention, it is not a soak. You must intend to obey the orders to be accepted as soak (*ghusl*) or ablution (Wozou -ritual washing of body).

Here, God is the host of the entire world that has invited you to His House and you are going to meet this host. When such an invitation comes to us, we have to be clean. After being clean, all our intelligence and sense should be in the path of this invitation to be accepted; God Willing. If we were accepted by the host, so got all satisfaction; but if we were not accepted by him, we have wasted and voided the invitation. In this travel, we must prohibit everything to ourselves except the will of the Host. It means that we must make *Ihram*. *Ihram* is to make everything prohibited. When (in the balladry) asked from that man: did you prohibit everything to yourself when you made *Ihram*? The man replied: "No, I was thinking of my wife, child and business there".

Thank God, going to Mecca and Hajj has a special feeling and sense, which me myself in three times travels that I got honoured to go to Hajj, have almost felt this feeling that person forgets everything except God and thinks nothing important in the world than doing these acts.

God says in Quran: "**We have granted munificence to the children of Adam**"<sup>5</sup>. Munificence is different from erudition; munificence means something that is related to the mettle. Granted the munificence means that: We created human beings with inner honour. But in other places, God says "**We have bestowed**"<sup>6</sup> which means: something that God gives extra to some human beings, gives to some and does not give to some other, but the grant is something in the mettle and gifts of a man. In Quran God says: "**He has subjected to you, as from Him, all that is in the heavens and on earth**"<sup>7</sup>, or in the other verse: "**He subjected to you the sun and the moon**"<sup>8</sup>, so the dignity of humanity is so great, as in another verse, it says: "**We have indeed created man in the best of moulds, then do We abase him (to be) the lowest of the low,- except such as believe and do righteous deeds**"<sup>9</sup>.

But, for not being proud of this munificence, and not to be full of insolence because of

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<sup>5</sup> Holy Quran, Surah: Asra, Verse: 70. لَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ

<sup>6</sup> Holy Quran, Surah: Asra, Verse: 21. فَضَلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ

<sup>7</sup> Holy Quran, Surah: Jashiah, Verse: 13. سَخَّرَ لَكُمْ مَّا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ

<sup>8</sup> Holy Quran, Surah: Abraham, Verse: 33. سَخَّرَ لَكُمْ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ

<sup>9</sup> Holy Quran, Surah: Tin, Verses: 4-6. لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَاهُ أَسْفَلَ سَافِلِينَ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ

humankind great dignity, (in Mecca) God says that you the human being and all the creatures and animal, are safe here in this safe area and are equal for me. You human, you do not have right to cut out a grass or even a thistle, because they all have a herbal life. You have not right to kill an animal because it has life and its life is sweet for itself. About this, my honourable father Hazrat Salehalishah narrated who had gone to Hajj in a very hot weather season. He said: in *Ihram* I was going to Mecca, in that Hot air, I felt a fire-line on my foot, bringing up my cloth I saw a louse walking on my foot, I returned and sat in a way that my foot was under the sunlight, then brought up the cloth and said to that louse “O’ the animal! Here, God has created us in one manner and He looks at us equally, so if the sun is shining on me, it is better it shines on you too”. When the sun shined on it for some time, it fell down, because it was so hot.

For us to not being proud, God says: you should not kill any alive here, not to kill any animal even this much small, should not cut off any grass because it has a life and is reputable. This is a symbol of *Mahshar* desert that one day We will call you there. Look, all are wearing white, like *Kafan* (textile used to cover the dead corpse), this is the same situation we will see in *Mahshar*, this is a symbol and sign to know how *Mahshar* is.

During *Ihram* time, speaking roughly, taboo swears, lie, all are forbidden and each one is due to *Kaffare* (Penalty). Males after *Ihram* must not stand in the shadow, of course always emergency brings the exception and lets people do the contrary, but anyway males must not have umbrella on head and this is a jest that you must not put any shadow except God’s on your head even if the heat of sun is burning you, still you must know yourself under the God’s shelter.

And you must say *Labbaik*; means: my dear, my dear, my lord my dear, prays and gifts are Yours, and Kingdom belongs to You, there is no one like You, O my dear.<sup>10</sup> *Labbaik* means “my dear”; for example, when your child calls you and you answer “yes my dear” or when your father calls you, you say again “yes my dear”.

So, with all the troubles you go and say my dear and the more you say *Labbaik* it would be better. There is not any number and limit for saying *Labbaik*, until you see *Kaaba*. When you see the *Kaaba* then you must stop *Labbaik* and keep quiet because it is supposed that the Host of the House is everywhere and is presented anywhere. Of course, because we have a materialistic body so we must see the house, but in that close feeling we must see the house-owner too. And when we see him and feel His existence, have to be silent and listen and concentrate all our attentions. There is a story in Mathnavi about the matter that says: “There was a lover who had a beloved, and has told a long balladry for her. When the lover arrived at beloved, started to read his balladry and love letter beside her, the loved one took the paper and torn it up and said: you wrote all these to come beside me. Now you are beside me, is there any more word or anything to say?”

This is why when you reached there and felt the existence of the Beloved, you don’t say *Labbaik* anymore. You said *Labbaik* to see Him, when you saw Him, then keep silence. Naserkhosro asked his friend - in the balladry: did you hear the voice of Homeowner, when you were saying *Labbaik*? The friend replied: no! Thus saying the *Labbaik* was nothing but a word, and had not had a meaning or sense anymore.

<sup>10</sup> لَبَّيْكَ اللَّهُمَّ لَبَّيْكَ، لَبَّيْكَ لَا شَرِيكَ لَكَ لَبَّيْكَ إِنَّ الْحَمْدَ وَالْبِعْثَةَ لَكَ وَالْمُلْكَ لَا شَرِيكَ لَكَ لَبَّيْكَ

Then after, it is time for circumambulation. When you are going to circumambulate, you must turn seven times around the God's House (*Kaaba*) which is called *Shawt*. The number seven is a blessed number and many points have been cited about this number. The week has seven days, there are seven skies, spiritual stages are seven levels, creation was in seven days etc. You must turn seven rounds around the Kaaba, and in this circumambulation, you must be careful that your left shoulder has to be in the Kaaba's side. You should neither turn completely to *Kaaba* to be faced with it, not back to it. This act is a sign of politeness and respect. So do not turn your back to the House, (the place which is called by the name of God) also don't mention too much by facing to the House which is made from stone and mud-built, but completely mention to the House-Owner.

Circumambulation starts from *Hajar-al-Asvad* (black stone inside the Kaaba house), as everything even a small matter has a starting point, in circumambulation base point, this stone is the starting point, because we have a single life, same creation kind, so starting from this stone shows our united lives.

After you circumambulated you must go to Abraham's Position, where he used to stand to pray. The first house built by the name of God is this *Kaaba*, which was built on his Excellency Abraham. Although, it is told that God showed this place to Adam, and stated that this is a holy land. *Beit-ul-Maghdas* was built after Kaaba and at the time of the prophets David and Solomon; and the *Kaaba* was the first. **“The first house (of worship) appointed for men was that at Bakka: full of blessing and of guidance for all kinds of beings”**.<sup>11</sup> So, for respecting the House and its Landlord, we stand there and pray two units. God told to Abraham and Ishmael about *Kaaba*:<sup>12</sup> **“Purify my house for those who go around and those who meditate therein and those who bow down and prostrate themselves (in worship)”**. When you are praying two units there, it seems you are following Abraham, as told in Quran<sup>13</sup>: **“There is for you an excellent example (to follow) in Abraham and those with him”**.

These explanations in fact are reminders to the pilgrims that when they are doing an action and saying *Labbaik*, pay attention to the meaning of that. Of course, the only meaning is not what told, but it has thousands of other meanings, just one of the meanings, which we feel and understand, is the one told in the balladry too. So, it should not be said that only this meaning is correct; explanation and the meaning of the commandments are the same in which it is told apparently, but each person has to get an inferential meaning. Of course, this inference should not be against the apparent one; as it is narrated that a sage ordered his follower to work and have a job, but the follower replied “you order me to work in apparent but in secret (by feeling) you have told me to be jobless”. Such a thing is not right and the inner meaning cannot be against the outer one.

Let us return to the Hajj actions: I told you that in the circumambulation, you must be polite. By mean that for the highness of the Beloved, while you have desire and eagerness to meet, you keep politeness. It is said that in the circumambulation, if you turn to any side, as you get far from the outward politeness, the circumambulation is nullified.

<sup>11</sup> Holy Quran, Surah: Ale-Omran, Verse: 96. **إِنَّ أَوَّلَ بَيْتٍ وُضِعَ لِلنَّاسِ لَلَّذِي بِبَكَّةَ مُبَارَكًا وَهُدًى لِّلْعَالَمِينَ**

<sup>12</sup> Holy Quran, Surah: Bagharah, Verse: 125. **طَهَّرْنَا بَيْتِيَ لِلطَّائِفِينَ وَالْعَاكِفِينَ وَالرُّكَّعِ السُّجُودِ**

<sup>13</sup> Holy Quran, Surah: Momtahinah, Verse: 4. **فَدَقَاتُكُمْ أَسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ فِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ**

In the balladry (Naserkhosro) asks: when you were circumambulating, did you remind that the angels also do it on the God's Emphyrean.

- From the circumambulation of all angles,
- Did you remind in circumambulation of the Great Emphyrean?

He replied no. It is said that in the fourth sky, God has put a symbol of *Kaaba*, that angels circumambulate around that and the God's Emphyrean. This is to remind us. Circumambulation as even nowadays is in our common society is to turn around someone, by means that you are ready to sacrifice yourself for him.

After circumambulation and doing *Taqsir* and finishing *Umrah*, you get *Ihram* again and move. Here may be questioned: now that all have arrived at the destination and their beloved, so why they must go? They do not go by their own decision, but they are missioned and ordered to go. Now you must go to *Arafat* desert. Obeying the order even if the order is to get far away is considered as worship. *Kaaba* is the house of the Beloved, so, when you arrived there, you must reside, but God who is the owner, orders you to go; where should I go? To the *Arafat* desert, by mean that when you lost yourself, faded out, and got unity, by order of Beloved you are going to get mysticism and become a mystic. It is told *Arafat*, because (in Arabic language, it means knowing) when Adam and Eve were sent to earth, there saw each other for the first time and knew each other.

This knowing and mysticism are different from knowing and mysticism you see in the books. This knowing is a special, as after reaching to beloved, he orders to go, obeying this order is to do an action in the way. There, this knowledge is a sign and a secret, means that you must go to a desert that gets knowledge.

I have to point out something here. Many times it is discussed about Sufism and Mysticism and mentioning these two as different and apart from each other and compare them. In case that these two are single but separated from each other. Mysticism means knowing, and because every worshipper knows God, even a slight bit, thus it is not possible definitely to say that he does not have knowledge (mysticism/episteme). But it is like that you see something in a road from far away and have a slight knowledge by mean that you see a black point appears to you; you get knowledge as to the extent you see this black point, then you start to go toward that. Each step you take to get near, you get more knowledge about the destination and the goal. When you go a little bit more, you will see that it slightly moves, by taking more steps and getting closer, you see that it has left, by taking more steps, you see it is a tree which wind is blowing to it. When you get near, you understand that it is an apple or grapes tree. Knowing God and mysticism is also like this. The closer you go, you know him better. *Arafat* is also a symbol of this knowing. When you want to know something, this knowledge has degrees. Suppose a light that you want to know around of this light. If you are so close to the light, the dazzling lighting abandons your sighting, you must stand far; when you stood far, you can see around of it. After going far, if you come near again, you can know that goal, thus when you got the initial knowledge and got near that, you would see it completely and your knowledge will be accomplished.

*Arafat* is also a symbol and shows this matter. You get far from that close feeling, of course not at your will, because if you get far on your desire; the farness will be getting far from Him but according to the order of the Beloved and the determined method get far, and look from far to know better. This getting far is a kind of success and attainment.

Asked: Did you know? (In the balladry):

- Said: No!
- I asked him , when you got *Arafat*,
- did you stand and receive the welcoming?
- Did you know *Haq* and negate yourself?
- Did you receive the breeze of episteme?
- Said: No.

Said: when you went to *Arafat*, did you find knowledge and episteme? Said: No. Then you go to *Mash'ar-ul-Haram*, *Haram* means forbidden, and it is called by this name to all areas of Mecca, *Arafat*, *Mena* etc. as part of sacred premises of Mecca (*Haram*) means you are forbidden even to cut out a plant or hunt an animal. No blood drop must fall in these areas. Remember Imam Hussein (AS) in Karbala tragedy, that to keep the reputation of *Haram* left there. This is also a symbol of knowledge. When your knowledge becomes complete, in fact you have reached your goal. The goal is to know your Beloved (God) and success in the attainment both.

Attainment of beloved solely is like as a butterfly that is burning in the middle of the candle flame. It does not understand anything because it is out of itself (does not pay any attention to itself). So then, when you gain knowledge and attainment both, you celebrate that you have passed these steps. This celebration of yours is for passing the levels and thanks of the pilgrims who have done these actions there, and it is so much important and affecting on the hearts that people here also celebrate. In fact, all the Muslims celebrate for their brothers who have fulfilled the Hajj and have made the Hajj as Imam Sajjad (AS) has told; God willing. And you also were successful to do Hajj in this way, God willing. That is after attainment, you have gotten knowledge. Then for thanks giving of this matter and in a memorandum of Ishmael, you also sacrifice a sheep. This sacrifice is a sign of the same first sacrifice, which was done instead of Ishmael.

His honourable Abraham and Ishmael, in principle both were a single person. Would he sacrifice his unique and single child, if the order was not from God? He was ready to die but his son would live. But this was a God's order to sacrifice his son. That is in the way to obey the orders of the Beloved, he must leave other interests, even his child whom was sweeter than his own life. When he got ready to do it and proudly passed the test, God sent him a sheep and told him "I need you and these were all your tests", at that time, Abraham was named *Khalil-o-Allah* (Friend of God), and reached to the position, which had to reach. Now, we do similar to his acts and we act like having faith in God. We do it that may God pays attention to us, and our acts also get the meaning.

When you sacrificed the sheep and circumambulated again, - which can be done on the same day - in fact you were reminded that you are ready to sacrifice your life for the Beloved and circumambulated with this inner decision. In time, God says to you to get out of that so close state. Your *Ihram* finishes and you are again a man for the material world. After then, you must divide the sacrificed among honoured, family, friends, the poor, needy people, and those who need. It is told that the sacrificed should be divided into three parts: one for the pilgrim himself, one part for the honours and the faithful and the third part for needy people.

Now there is another one-step left and that is to drive away the Satan from you. Satan always wants to mislead us and want a hunt from a human being; and has gotten a time for this from God. Bigger and fatter the hunt is, he will get more satisfaction. This is why Satan goes to Abraham, Mohammad, Moses, and Jesus at first. He would be much satisfied and happy if he could mislead them. But, among the fame of the honours he could only mislead one and that is *Bal'ame-Ba'ura*.

*Bal'ame-Ba'ura* was one of the great men who when asked something from God, it was definitely granted, and he has a position very close to prophesy, and as Torah says, God wanted to take him to prophesy level but he spoiled himself. Of course, Torah does not say that he spoiled himself, because, he might have been Isaiah, but in our narrations, it is that the Satan misled him. Well, he was a big hunt for Satan and after him; Satan could not hunt any bigger hunt. Although, he is always looking for big hunts and wants to trap them. I mean among the God's obedience those who are closer to God and are at high levels and are more valuable; the Satan wants to trap them more in order to pull them down.

Well, for riding away from this satin, you must do *Rami-Jamara* (throwing gravel) for three days continuously. By means, that you must throw seven gravels to the Satan with the will of driving satin away. Where should you bring the gravels? From *Mash'ar* desert, that is the desert of awareness and understanding. You should drive off the satin by full awareness and realization. "**Feeble indeed is the cunning of Satan**"<sup>14</sup> that if you have brought the gravels by awareness from the *Mash'ar desert*, you can drive it away by only seven of gravels of hazelnut size. Of course, it returns back, and you repeat the action three times. He comes to mislead you three times. This three times is also a memorandum of Abraham; but he drove the satin away before sacrificing and reached to the level that should be reached. He became a messenger, a friend, an imam, but we after sacrificing, which is when coming back to this material world state and again satin come to us to cheat. In *Ihram* times and doing Hajj actions we less consider material world matters and we have seen operational that Satan comes towards us less, but after sacrifice for three days he is chasing us.

These are some parts of Hajj formalities about Mecca and Hajj operations that you must observe. Naserkhosro says at the end of balladry:

- He said:
- About these subjects whatever you said,  
- I didn't know the right and wrong.
- I said oh' friend! You did not do the Hajj.  
- You didn't stay at the position of effacement.
- You have just gone to visit Mecca and returned back,  
- Just you have bought the discomfort of the desert by paying silver coins.
- If you would want to do the Hajj after now,  
- do it as the way I taught you.

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<sup>14</sup> Holy Quran, Surah: Nisa, Verse: 76. كَيْدَ الشَّيْطَانِ كَانَ ضَعِيفًا

Of course, there are many books about Hajj<sup>15</sup>, but the inner view and attention that Naserkhosro had, or we can also have it -even purer than him- can be lesser got by the others. Now, I wish the pilgrims who have decided to go to Hajj, act as: “Do it as the way I taught you”

## Eid of Adha

All Muslims share this Eid. God willing, (In Sha Allah), it will create affiliation among Muslims as well. One who dedicates themselves more to the Prophet’s orders obviously benefits more from this Eid, however, this Eid belongs to all Muslims. The praying of this Eid reads: **“To this day that you assigned Eid for Muslims”**.<sup>16</sup>

To Moses (AS) God says: **“Remind the people of the Days of Allah’s”**<sup>17</sup>. However, there are two Days of Allah’s for Muslims; one is Eid of Fitr and the other is Eid of Adha and both of them are considered to be acts of obligatory worship, just as daily prayers, fasting and so on are. There are certain rules on these two days like fasting is banned and all the rules are basically to celebrate the Eid and to develop friendship among all Muslims. In other words, there shall be friendship and affiliation established among Muslims on these two days.

Why is it called Eid of Adha anyway? Adha means to sacrifice and the root of this word in Arabic stems from closeness. That is, you sacrifice in order to get close to God. On the one hand, this sacrificing traces back to our Prophet’s Ancestor; His Holiness Abraham, and on the other hand, back then, sacrificing had been a ritual performed by nations and even they had been sacrificing their own children, therefore, since then, God forbade the ritual of sacrificing humans.<sup>18</sup>

Mankind is a unique combination of angel, evil and animality and therefore, all the animals’ characteristics exist in them. For example, the passion for violence in all animals is displayed in disputes among men. In Islam, nonetheless, this violence is applied via jihad and other sharia orders, as God has created this feature in men and pays attention to it. If men made sacrifices once a year, they might lose this trait of violence.

God has set today an Eid and that is reasonable enough for us to consider it so. In Arabic, the word “Eid” comes from “returning”; returning to God. So, as it is said by a great person, it is not Eid when one wears new clothes or something, but Eid is when they become safe from God’s tribulations.<sup>19</sup>

We can consider a different aspect for this Eid that is God said to the Prophet about His Holiness Abraham: **“Human races are Abraham’s children”**. In this verse, God introduces

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<sup>15</sup> Like the booklet of Dr. Shariati, printed by Ministry of Culture, which explained some summary of these actions.

<sup>16</sup> بحق هذا اليوم الذي جعلته للمسلمين عيداً

<sup>17</sup> The Quran, Ibrahim (Abraham), 5: “وَذَكِّرْهُمْ بِأَيَّامِ اللَّهِ”

<sup>18</sup> The Sons of Israel did not follow this rule and it was one of their faults.

<sup>19</sup> ليس العيد لمن لبس الجديد، بل العيد لمن امن من الوعيد

His Holiness Abraham as our father, therefore, not only Abraham is the father of our Prophet's, but also he is the father of all of us. In the same verse, God continues: "**He had entitled you a Muslim beforehand**", Muslim in Arabic generally means the one who has surrendered to God's order. When God considers this position for His Holiness who is the father of all of us, it brings happiness and joy for us as well. When someone is granted such religious positions, everybody congratulates them and the person becomes happy themselves too. Therefore, this is one side of considering Eid, as on this very day, the highest level of prophecy was granted to His Holiness. There are forty stages in the path of prophecy, of which is firstly afflatus is voiced by an angel in a dream. Then, they hear a voice while awake. Next, the angel talks to them and in the last stage, they vividly meet the angel and talk to them as Gabriel revealed his real appearance to our Prophet so that he could see him. About Abraham, sacrificing his only child was his final examination.

Sarah, Abraham's wife had gone past the fertility age and it is said that she had been infertile in the first place, so she could not become pregnant anyway. Abraham had only a son with Hagar after years when he was eighty six. It has been mentioned in our narratives and also in the Old Testament that God gave him a child who was his only one when he was eighty six, then He ordered Abraham to sacrifice this very child. This is the hardest examination that Abraham also passed this one successfully. Not only His Holiness himself, but also his son who was going to be sacrificed passed this examination successfully. When Abraham shared this request of God with his son; Ishmael, he said to his father: "**O my father! do as you are commanded; if Allah wishes, you will find me of the patient ones**".<sup>20</sup>

Then it was decided either by Ishmael or by Abraham himself not to look at his son's face while sacrificing him in order to avoid the slightest of hesitation in his heart. Therefore, he turned his son's face toward the ground so that he could not see his face, as you know the story. At that very moment, Gabriel appeared and delivered a message : "**So, We ransomed him with a mighty sacrifice**".<sup>21</sup> "**A mighty sacrifice**", "**a great sacrifice**", does not denote a fat sheep or a fat calf. This meant spiritually mighty. In other words, that questioning or examination session was so important that God announced the result as "**a mighty sacrifice**".

That very day, that was His Holiness Abraham's last questioning from God and after that, he became a prophet; a Khalil, an Imam, which means people's guardian. Khalil in Arabic means a companion. So, another reason why we consider it Eid and celebrate is because our father Abraham passed the last test successfully as well. He was tested many times and accomplished them all well and reached a high position; the highest position of those days. Not only His Holiness, but also his small child; Ishmael succeeded well in the divine questioning in childhood and said to his father: "**O my father! do as you are commanded; if Allah wishes, you will find me of the patient ones**".

Now, there is a disagreement whether this sacrificing for God was Ishmael or Isaac. His Holiness Abraham (AS) had two sons. When His Holiness Ishmael was thirteen, His Holiness Isaac was born. Isaac was the son of Hagar who was a bondwoman and Ishmael was of Sarah who was the wife of Abraham. In the Old Testament, Isaac is known as the Sacrifice for God, although it reads there that Abraham was told to sacrifice his only child. So, how come they believe it was Isaac while he was born when Ishmael was 13? The Old Testament says when Sarah could not conceive a child and realized that Abraham was upset, she decided to marry

<sup>20</sup> The Quran, As-Saaffat (Those who set the ranks), 102: يَا أَبَتِ افْعَلْ مَا تُؤْمَرُ سَتَجِدُنِي إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مِنَ الصَّابِرِينَ

<sup>21</sup> The Quran, As-Saaffat (Those who set the ranks), 107: «وَقَدْ يَنَاهُ بِذَنْبِ عَظِيمٍ»

her bondswoman Hagar to Abraham. In other words, she freed her and asked her to marry her own husband. The Old Testament does not say she freed her but asked her to marry Abraham. It does not matter whether she freed her or not. Anyway, Abraham married Hagar and she gave birth to Ishmael. Later on, she showed an arrogant attitude toward Sarah who was taken special care by God and slightly disobeyed her. And then, as Sarah was upset, God told Abraham: **Take your wife and child somewhere far away.** Everyone knows the rest of the story.

Jews in the custom of those days cared a lot about wives but about their maids and children of them they did not. Perhaps for this reason, they did not admit Ishmael was Abraham's legitimate son and when God says: "**Sacrifice your child**", He meant Isaac. But when this order was given Isaac either had not been born or if he had, he might have been very little. Here, the question is, which one is more difficult? Sacrificing a newly-born baby or a grown teenager like thirteen-year-old Ishmael?

Besides, the Old Testament states that Sarah married Hagar to Abraham. Let us assume those who believe Ishmael was a maid's child were right, but when Hagar married Abraham, she could not still be considered a maid. Therefore, we cannot say Ishmael was a maid's child since Hagar married Abraham according to what the Old Testament says. Also, in the Old Testament, to Abraham God says: I will multiply children and descendants of you via Ishmael. So He verifies Ishmael and asserts: I will multiply your descendants through Ishmael and originate twelve sultans or kings from him and the Old Testament reads twelve names as sons of Ishmael but these names are not mentioned in history. Most probably, according to some conclusive evidence, these twelve people might be our twelve Imams who are the descendants of Ishmael. Anyway, it is all said by the Old Testament. There are some Sunnite Muslims as well who believe Isaac was the Sacrifice for God. However, it does not have anything to do with being Sunnites or Shiites, it is a historical controversy. A historian believes the Sacrifice to be Ishmael and another believes it to be Isaac. A Shiite may also say it was Isaac or a Sunnite may say it was Ishmael. This issue does not effect one's religion or faith. But, as a matter of fact, Muslim historians cannot be expected to believe that it was Isaac, aside from the reasons we brought from Judaism and the Old Testament, there are some reasons also in Islam and in the Quran to verify that the Sacrifice for God was Ishmael. In the surah of Saaffaat, God mentions prophets and greets them: "**Peace be on Noah, on Moses and Aaron**", and continues: "**Peace be on Al-e-Yasin**". In this Surah, the story of Abraham, the Sacrifice and his dream is told and also how he wanted to sacrifice his child. Then it reads "**a Mighty Sacrifice**" and continues: "**Peace be on Abraham..., Surely he was one of Our believing servants**"<sup>22</sup> After that God says: "**And We gave him the good news of Isaac**"<sup>23</sup>. He mentions Isaac after He tells the story of Abraham and the Sacrifice. We could probably conclude that the Sacrifice was Isaac if the phrase "**And We gave him the good news of Isaac**" were said prior to the phrase "**Peace be on Abraham..., Surely he was one of Our believing servants**" in which prophets were mentioned. But because Isaac was mentioned after the story of Abraham and the Sacrifice was finished, we cannot consider Isaac to be the Sacrifice. So, if Muslims pay attention only to the words and phrases of the Quran, they will realize that the Sacrifice was Ishmael.

Anyway, there are several sides in this Eid and in our celebration. One side is that God has

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<sup>22</sup> The Quran, , As-Saaffat (Those who set the ranks), 109 ~ 111: سَلَامٌ عَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ... إِنَّهُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

<sup>23</sup> The Quran, , As-Saaffat (Those who set the ranks), 112: وَبَشَّرْنَاهُ بِإِسْحَاقَ

set today as Eid: **“To this day that you assigned Eid for Muslims”**. No matter it is on today or on any other day, any day He sets Eid for us is our Eid. Just like the three Days of Arafah or the kind in which there are some rules for hajis. Another side is, it is a tribute to the last test of His Holiness Abraham which He passed successfully and reached the highest position of prophecy.

The third side is all Muslims who are in Mecca today succeeded in practicing a ritual which has been the cause of affinity among Muslims. As well as celebrating for our father Abraham who was successful in the test, we are also celebrating the success of all Muslims who are practicing Hajj now. The Sacrificing is mandatory for them in Mina (if it is their first time), in the following years, it is not. Although, it is a pleasure to sacrifice in order to appreciate the pleasure of this Eid and journey that God has granted them. God willing (In Sha Allah), we will all have the pleasure of performing this ritual.