

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

إِنَّ الْحَمْدَ لِلَّهِ ، نَحْمَدُهُ وَنَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ ، وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا  
وَمِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا. مَنْ يَهْدِهِ اللَّهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ لَهُ، وَمَنْ يُضِلِّ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ.  
وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ.

Praise be to **الله**.

We praise him and ask him for help and forgiveness. We ask him for protection from the evilness in ourselves and from our bad deeds. Whomever God guides to the truth no one will lead astray, and whomever He leads astray, no one will ever guide.

I testify that there is no God but **الله** to whom there is no partner  
and I testify that Muhammad **ﷺ** is his servant and messenger

وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ  
وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَيُطِيعُونَ اللَّهَ  
وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَئِكَ سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٧١﴾

*“And (as for) the believing men and the believing women, they are guardians of each other; they enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong, they establish prayers, they give in Zakat and they obey Allah and His Messenger. For these, Allah will show them mercy. For Allah is The Mighty and Allah is The Wise” (S9, A71)*



Brothers and sisters, ASA.

I do not think that there is a need to remind you of what today is. We are very fortunate that today, the day of “Arafat” is also a Friday. This is indeed a Holy day for the Muslim Ummah, and we need to understand the significance of this occasion.

As our brothers and sisters travel to Makkah, and then set off to “Arafat”, they were chanting what our beloved prophet said hundreds of years ago:

“Labaika-Llahuma-Labaik. Labaika-Laa-Sharika-Laka-Labaik. Inna-Llhamda-Wanni’ mata-Laka-Walmulk. Laa-Sharika-Lak”.

These few words sum up to us, the Muslims, the essence of Islam. We must understand these words and we must understand what they represent. Islam is such a vast and wonderful religion. There is so much to learn, so much to understand and so much to apply that we sometimes, probably more often than not, lose our focus. Days like these and words like these get us back on the straight path, the path to Allah. This is one of the things that make Islam so wonderful. We could talk about a million and one things today, but because of “Arafat” we go back to basics again.

Let us look at these wonderful words again:

The Prophet<sup>(SAAWS)</sup> repeated these words on his way from Madinah to Makkah on his farewell pilgrimage. Tens of thousands of Sahabah who traveled with him were also repeating these words loudly all the way. Imagine, for a moment, that we are there among them. The cries of “Labaika-Llahuma-Labaik” echoing throughout, the cries of “Oh Allah, here we come to you as you have commanded us”.

“Labaika-Llahuma-Labaik”. For us Muslims, who do we seek in this world? Who do we turn to? For the millions of Muslims standing on “Arafat” today; the young, the old, men and women, rich and poor, the executive and the worker, the scientist, the physician, the stock broker, the mechanic, the engineer, the student, the teacher, and so on. They are all so different, so diverse and yet, they all seek the same thing with equal humility. When they cry “Labaika-Llahuma-Labaik”, they are instantly unified in their belief. It is Allah, and Allah alone they seek. Let us never forget this glorious moment when Muslims all unite seeking nothing but Allah.

In adversity we seek Allah. In times of ease we seek Allah. When we are feeling down we seek Allah, and we are on top of the world, we also seek Allah. To me the message is so clear. This is what unifies the Muslim Ummah. The cries of “Labaika-Llahuma-Labaik” by all these millions on “Arafat”, and echoed in the hearts of millions of Muslims wishing they could be there on this day, that is what unifies this Ummah. Allah in His infinite mercy and wisdom gave us this glorious day, gave us the guidance of the Prophet<sup>(SAAW)</sup>, and gave us the words to get us all together on His path, “Labaika-Llahuma-Labaik”.

Next we hear “Labaika-Laa-Sharika-Laka-Labaik”. This statement sums up the message of Islam. There is only One God, The Almighty God, a God without partners or associates. Should we understand this message, our lives will become so easy. It is not just a theological message. It does not only mean that we associate no other gods with God Almighty in worship or belief. It is a wide encompassing statement. The early Sahabah understood the full meaning of “Labaika-Laa-Sharika-Laka-Labaik”.

For a Muslim, every single thought and every single action is governed by this statement. When we are in need, it is only from Allah. When we go through difficult times, it is the will of Allah. When we have it good, it is still the will of Allah. Our past, present and future are all determined by Allah. Muslims do not believe in bad luck, breaking a mirror, black cats, walking under a ladder, Friday 13<sup>th</sup> and so on. We do not depend on horoscopes for our future. We do not function on the belief that our future lies in the hands of others. What comes our way it is by the will of Allah and Allah only, and what does not come our way, it is also by the will of Allah and Allah only. Imagine how much easier, calmer and steadier our lives would be when we believe these words and act these words “Labaika-Laa-Sharika-Laka-Labaik”.

The next statement confirms that, when we say Inna-Llhamda-Wanni'mata-Laka-Walmulk. Laa-Sharika-Lak”. All praise, all blessings and all ownership belong to You, and there is no partner with you in any of this. **This is the message of Islam.**

For the young here today who are beginning on their journey in Islam, if asked what does Islam mean to you, what would be your answer? You might say I have to pray and I have to fast. I need to read the Quran. I have to be a good person. I have to respect and obey my parents. I have to give to the needy and so on. These are all correct, but they do not answer the question of belief. They simply define the responsibilities of a Muslim, “Takleef”, and not his core belief. The statement of belief in Islam is “La-illaha-illa-Llah”. That is our statement of belief. It is the statement of Ibraheem<sup>(AS)</sup>, and we testify accordingly on this day when we say “Inna-Llhamda-Wanni'mata-Laka-Walmulk. Laa-Sharika-Lak”. **This is our statement of belief.**

“Labaika-Llahuma-Labaik. Labaika-Laa-Sharika-Laka-Labaik. Inna-Llhamda-Wanni'mata-Laka-Walmulk. Laa-Sharika-Lak”.

What the pilgrims do during Hajj is in principle putting their belief into action. When the pilgrims enter Makkah, they proceed to the Holy Qaba to do “Tawaf”. When a Muslim first sets eyes on the Qaba, he or she cannot help but let the tears flow in abundance. No matter who you are, your heart and your mind melt, and all you can do is cry in humility. Allah tells us that this is the first place of worship that has been established for people:

إِنَّ أَوَّلَ بَيْتٍ وُضِعَ لِلنَّاسِ لَلَّذِي بِبَكَّةَ مُبَارَكًا وَهُدًى لِّلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٩٦﴾

***“The first House (of worship) appointed for people is that at Bakka: Full of blessing and of guidance for all nations” (S3, A96)***

On the night of ascension, the Prophet<sup>(SAAWS)</sup> witnessed in the seventh heaven a similar house with 70,000 angels performing “tawaf” every day until the Day of Judgment. The reward for praying in the “Haram” is equivalent to the reward of 100,000 prayers. When we think about it, Muslims are asked to believe quite a lot here; the ascension of the Prophet<sup>(SAAWS)</sup> through the seven heavens, “Al-Bayt Al-Ma’mour”, 70,000 angels, the first house of prayers for people. There is a lot of believing here, and our appreciation of the Holy Qaba is built on these beliefs. It is therefore not surprising that in Islam, visiting this holy place is of immense spiritual significance.

Next, the pilgrims proceed to carry out the “Sa’i” between the mount of “Safa” and “Marwa”. In contrast to “Tawaf”, the “Sa’i” between the mount of “Safa” and “Marwa” is in recognition to human endeavor. I think all of us are aware of the story behind this event and the physical element is there for us to witness, but is there a deeper meaning to it.

Islam tells us that Ibraheem<sup>(AS)</sup> left his wife “Hajar” and his son Ismaeel<sup>(AS)</sup> at the Sacred House:

رَبَّنَا إِنِّي أَسْكَنْتُ مِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي بِوَادٍ غَيْرِ ذِي زَرْعٍ عِنْدَ بَيْتِكَ الْمُحَرَّمِ

***“Our Lord, I have settled of my offspring in a valley (barren) without cultivation, at Your Sacred House”(S14, A37).***

I think all the youngsters here know what happened next. Hajar and Ismaeel<sup>(AS)</sup> ran out of water. Hajar became anxious and started running between the two mounts seeking the sight of a nearby caravan that can come to their assistance, but in vain. After running seven times, she finally exhausted herself and rested next to Ismaeel<sup>(AS)</sup> accepting the fate of Allah. It is then that Ismaeel<sup>(AS)</sup> kicked his heel gently into the ground, and Zamzam came flooding out, and it continues to flow ever since.

Is there a message in that? Well, first of all, we have to believe that this is the history as we Muslims believe it to be, and the miracle of the water happened as stated. If so, one may ask, If Allah was going to allow this miracle to happen, why did Allah not settle Hajar’s anxiety immediately and allowed the water to flow before she exhausted herself running between the two mounts. Brothers and sisters, understanding this event is so important for us if we want to understand the concept of depending on Allah.

Some may have the mistaken belief that depending on Allah is based on total submission to Allah’s will without us putting any effort. For instance, a Muslim may say whatever I do is irrelevant, if Allah wills it, it will happen. This, unfortunately, is where we go wrong. Remembering the story of Hajar is so important. Even though Hajar had an unyielding belief in Allah, when water ran out, she did not sit down and pray for water. No, what she did was to go looking for water and for help. She did all that she can do in her capacity. She stopped when she became exhausted.

Isn’t it amazing that the main figure in this event that we celebrate during “Sa’i” between “Safa” and “Marwa” is a woman, a mother. That is what Allah expected of Hajar, and that is what Allah expects of us. Our total submission to Allah does not mean that we sit on our backsides and do nothing. It means that we do everything in

our capacity, and then we submit totally to the will of Allah in the ultimate outcome. In this case, Allah demonstrates to us the miracle. Ismaeel hits his heel on the ground, and the water flows out. In Islam, in this story, the miracle happened after human endeavor and not before. In Islam, our total submission must be coupled with working to our fullest capacity. That is the correct concept of submission in Islam.

Isn't Islam wonderful. When we say "Labaika-Llahuma-Labaik. Labaika-Laa-Sharika-Laka-Labaik. Inna-Llhamda-Wanni'mata-Laka-Walmulk. Laa-Sharika-Lak", we are in the height of spirituality, but when we look at the "Sa'i" between "Safa" and "Marwa", we are at the height of human endurance. What an amazingly beautiful religion.

أَقُولُ قَوْلِي هَذَا وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ لِي وَ لَكُمْ

2<sup>nd</sup> Khutbah:

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ ثُمَّ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ. الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ نَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ، وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ  
أَنْفُسِنَا وَسَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا. أَمَا بَعْدُ:

Now to "Arafat", why is it so important? We all worship Allah. We are worshipping Him here today. We are asking him for forgiveness here today, so why is it that those who are standing on Arafat have a different status. This is a serious question that we need to ask and we hope for an understanding. This is a special day for the Muslims, and out of the billion Muslims in this world who are praying to Allah on this Friday, those two-three million Muslims on "Arafat" have a different status. I think it is safe to say that we would all rather be there with them, than the other way, so why?

What makes their presence on this day, on Arafat so special? Why go through all the hassle and trouble?

This takes us back to a fundamental issue in Islam. When a person believes in Allah and wants to adhere to Islam as a way of life he or she become duty bound. This term is known in Arabic as "Takleef". As an example, if one is not a Muslim, they are not duty bound to pray, or fast or give zakat. However, once you accept Islam as your way of life, you are now duty bound to do certain things. This "Takleef" forms the foundations on which Islam is built. Some actions seem easy and logical, while others are hard, and probably harder to explain.

For most actions dictated by Islam, we are usually bound by time restraints, such as fasting and praying. We can fast and pray wherever we are, but we are restricted by a time frame. On the day of "Arafat", those pilgrims and for that matter, the Muslim Ummah as a whole, recognise that this unique event is bound equally by place as it is by time. The place is a very special one. My understanding is that the place of "Arafat" is where Adam and Eve were reunited and it is a place of forgiveness and a place of mercy. Allah<sup>(SWT)</sup> showers the believers with mercy and forgiveness on that day in that place, and may Allah grant us the opportunity to be among them in the future.

However, going back to the concept of “Takleef”. All these actions and restraints, especially those on the day of “Arafat”, serve many purposes, but one crucial one is to confirm in body and soul our total obedience to Allah

Satan, in a moment of pride, chose to disobey Allah. Satan was asked to prostrate before Adam, but disobeyed because his pride was far too important. One can argue that Satan could have apologised after the event, but somehow it was not to be. Pride is so devastating, that to us Muslims, it is arguably the original sin. When Muslims of all colours, status and background gather by their millions, putting aside all their differences, and are all seeking the forgiveness of Allah, in the knowledge that the most honoured among them in the sight of Allah is not the one full of pride, but the one most humble and fearing of Allah. We know that pride has no role in such a gathering. In Islam, the concept of “Takleef” drives home our obedience to Allah. Satan will look at these millions on “Arafat” and weep and say these are the ones that got away.

Pride is so devastating. Not only did Satan disobey Allah in that moment of pride, but Satan persisted in his way and wanted to prove that Adam and his children are no match to him. In Islam, this is where the battle lies. It does not lie between Adam and Eve. Our combined enemy is Satan. His weapons are diseases of the heart, worldly desires, a “Nafss” that drives one into wrong and ignorance. However, Islam guides us to our weapons. Should we choose to use them, our weapons are total obedience to the One Allah coupled with sound knowledge and sound actions.

On the day of “Arafat”, and during the afternoon, the pilgrims raise their hands asking Allah for His forgiveness, and for His Protection. They seek Allah’s help in strengthening their Iman to help them in the forthcoming battle against Satan. Tomorrow, ISA, they proceed to “Al-Jamarat” to throw a symbolic seven stones at Satan, and in each throw the pilgrim cries out “Allahu-Akbar”, God is The Greatest. This symbolic event defines our eternal struggle against Satan.

إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ فَاتَّخِذُوهُ عَدُوًّا

*"Surely Satan is your enemy, so take him for an enemy" (S35, A6)*

Brothers and sisters, the pilgrimage to Makkah is a wonderful event that is full of spirituality and full of endeavor. I ask Allah to bless us with the understanding of the concept of Hajj and to bless us to be on “Arafat” next year, ISA.

As the dawn of the day of Eid unravels, we hear the Muslims all over the world confirming the message of Islam:

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ وَلِلَّهِ الْحَمْدُ  
اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ كَثِيرًا وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ كَثِيرًا وَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا  
لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ صَدَقَ وَعْدُهُ وَنَصَرَ عَبْدَهُ وَأَعَزَّ جُنْدَهُ وَهَزَمَ الْأَحْزَابَ وَحْدَهُ  
مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكَافِرُونَ  
اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى أَصْحَابِ مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى أَزْوَاجِ مُحَمَّدٍ  
وَعَلَى ذُرِّيَةِ مُحَمَّدٍ وَسَلِّمْ اللَّهُمَّ تَسْلِيمًا كَثِيرًا