Synopsis of the Friday Sermon delivered by Ameer Mustapha Elturk on December 03, 2010

Signs of an Accepted Hajj (Hajj Mabroor)

In the first part of the sermon, he gave a brief introduction of Hajj, and its virtues. He began his discourse with a few references from the hadith and the Qur’an that addressed the significance and virtues of Hajj.

According to a hadith narrated by Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him), the Prophet (SAW) said, “The Umrah to the next Umrah is a kaffarah (expiation) of all sins one commits between them, and an accepted Hajj (Hajj mabroor) is a supreme action, the reward for which is paradise.” There is another hadith in which Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates: I heard the prophet say, “Whoever goes for Hajj with the intention solely for the sake of Allah, and does not indulge in any indecency or immoral act, and does not commit any disobedience, he will return as though the day he was brought into this world—the day his mother bore him.” In other words, he will return sinless.

Hajj, which is a very significant act of worship and one of the five pillars of Islam started with the Patriarch Ibrahim and his son Ismail (peace be upon them) some four thousand years ago when they began to reconstruct the Ka’ba, which is supposed to be the first house of worship of Allah (SWT) on earth. Behold! We gave the site, to Abraham, of the (Sacred) House, (saying): “Associate not anything (in worship) with Me; and sanctify My House for those who compass it round, or stand up, or bow down or prostrate themselves (in worship), and publicly proclaim Pilgrimage for all mankind so that they come to you on foot and mounted on lean camels from every distant point. (Al-Hajj, 22:26-27)

The Qur’an also alludes to this when it says, “And mention when Abraham and Ishmael were raising the walls of the House, they prayed, "Lord, accept this service from us; You are All-Hearing and All-Knowing. Lord, make us Your Muslims (submissive servants) and also raise from our offspring a community which should be Muslim (submissive to Your Will). Show us the ways of Your worship and forbear our shortcomings: You are Forgiving and Merciful."’” (Al-Baqara, 2:127-128)

The main rituals of Hajj include the Tawaf (circling the Ka’ba), the Sa’i in which the pilgrims trace the footsteps of Hagar (wife of Ibrahim) by taking seven laps between the two hillocks of As-Safa and Al-Marwa, Arafah, a place about five miles from Mecca, where pilgrims implore Allah and seek His mercy and forgiveness, and which is the climax of Hajj, the Rami in which the pilgrims throw stones at pillars representing Satan in order to commemorate Ibrahim’s action of rejecting Satan’s temptations, and hence instilling in themselves the consciousness of not falling into Satan’s allurements, and the Nahr or making a ritual sacrifice on the day of Eid al-Adha to remember Ibrahim’s ultimate test of his willingness to sacrifice his own son Ismail when asked to do so by Allah (SWT) who in His infinite mercy and wisdom brought a sheep for sacrifice in place of his son. And mention when his Lord put Abraham to test in certain things and he fulfilled all of them, He said, "I am going to make you the leader of mankind..." (Al-Baqara, 2:124). In the context of this ayah, Ibrahim (peace be upon him) is our leader and our model.

In the second part of the sermon, Ameer Mustapha talked about the signs of an accepted Hajj. How can one know whether one’s Hajj is accepted or not? He elaborated that among the signs of an accepted Hajj (Hajj Mabroor) are:

1. You should feel that Allah (SWT) has accepted your Hajj. This feeling should be embedded in your psyche. This is only possible when your intention of performing Hajj is solely to fulfill this Islamic obligation for the sake of Allah (SWT) and not just to earn the title of Hajji or Hajjia or for any other purpose.

2. You should feel more pious upon your return; more conscious of your Lord, through your thoughts and actions. You should notice a positive change in your attitude after your return from Hajj and become a true and sincere ‘abd (slave) of Allah (SWT) by inculcating an attitude of repentance and seeking forgiveness from Allah (SWT).
3. You should have forgiven those who have wronged you in return for God’s forgiveness of your sins except those who have oppressed you or others unless they give up their oppression.

4. You should do Kathrat al-Istighfar i.e., seek Allah’s forgiveness abundantly and repeatedly, not only through saying astaghfirullah (I seek forgiveness from Allah) but by actually refraining from all prohibited and detestable acts mentioned and explained in the Qur’an and the Sunnah.

5. You should do zikr (remembrance of Allah). The best zikr is to recite the Qur’an on a daily basis. The morning and evening azkar (supplications) prescribed in the Prophetic traditions should also be practiced regularly. Such supplications which the pilgrims would have heard chanted day in and day out during the Hajj by their group leaders, companions and others should be done with persistence. Doing this strengthens our relationship with Allah (SWT) and brings us closer to Him.

6. You should increase your supererogatory prayers (Nawafil), especially the Tahajjud (the late night prayers) and strive to perform them regularly. A hadith reported by Tirmidhi says, “You should get up at night, because that was the practice of the righteous before you. It is a means to get closer to your Lord. It is expiation for your past sins and a protection from future mistakes.”

7. You should stay away from laghw (vain and frivolous matters). The Qur’an says, The believers have indeed attained true success: those who, in their Prayers, humble themselves; who avoid whatever is vain and frivolous (Al-Mu’munun, 23:1-3). A person returning from Hajj should not only avoid what is laghw as it neither benefits him in this world nor in the hereafter but should be focused toward alakhirah (the hereafter). Indeed, Allah (SWT) makes a way out for the pious and righteous believers for all matters that pertain to this duniya (world). The Qur’anic ayahs such as Allah will find a way out for him who fears Allah (At-Talaq, 65:2) and Allah will create ease for him who fears Allah (At-Talaq, 65:4) are sufficient to make us understand this proposition. According to Al-Hasan al-Basari (may Allah have mercy on him) Hajj Mabroor means to return with an attitude of abstinence of this world and a desire for the hereafter. This can be understood from the Qur’anic ayah, As for those who were led to the Guidance, Allah increases them in their guidance and causes them to grow in God-fearing. (Muhammad, 47:17)

8. You should refrain from disobeying Allah (SWT) at all costs and control your passions and base desires so as to be able to stand up and fight your biggest enemy - Satan. …Satan indeed is an open enemy to mankind (Al-Isra, 53:17). At the same time, you should strive to obey Allah (SWT) at all times, not allowing a single sin to be recorded by the angel on your left while keeping the angel on your right busy in recording your good deeds.

9. You should show goodness to people at all times. According to a hadith, the Prophet (SAW) when once asked as to which people were dearest to Allah (SAW) replied that they were those who were most useful to other people.

10. You should make a concerted effort to keep on increasing your knowledge of the Islamic faith. O my Sustainer, cause me to grow in knowledge. (Ta Ha, 20:114)

11. You should strive in the path of Allah (SWT) by participating in Da’wah activities and outreach programs. Of course, this should be started with one’s own family members. O you who believe! save yourselves and your families from a fire whose fuel is men and stones...(At-Tahrim, 66:6)

These, briefly Ameer Mustapha concluded are the signs of an accepted Hajj. In the end, Ameer Mustapha invoked Allah’s blessings to accept the Hajj of all pilgrims.

End
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