

A day to break the blindness

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Dear prayer warriors,

The 9th day of the month of Hajj marks a significant day for Muslims, yet it is a day not so well known or talked about in the rest of the world. The day is called the Day of Arafat, and we believe it is a day the Lord would have His people pray for the Muslim world!

Background: The Hajj Pilgrimage - Journey of a Lifetime:

One fifth of humankind shares a single aspiration. That is, to complete, at least once, the spiritual journey called the Hajj. In Arabic, Hajj literally means "a resolve"; i.e.; to resolve to some magnificent duty. The Hajj is also the 12th month of the Islamic lunar calendar. The first 10 days of this month are especially significant and include both Arafat Day and Eid al-Adha (Festival of Sacrifice) which is the 10th day of the month. Even for those who are not travelling for the pilgrimage, this month and especially these two days are a special time to remember Allah and spend extra time in devotion and good deeds.

Mecca, Saudi Arabia

Countless millions of Muslims, men and women from the four corners of the earth, have made the pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia, the birthplace of Islam. In carrying out this journey they fulfil one of the five "pillars" of Islam (a pillar is a central religious duty for the believer). The Prophet Muhammad said, "He who performs the Hajj with no obscenity or evil practices will come out as a newly born baby free from all sins". For Muslims, the pilgrimage is therefore much more than something to be done. It is a sacred and revered journey. They believe that if they do not do this journey, have less chance of getting into paradise.

Spiritual Climax

Whether a pilgrim spends years walking from his nomadic home in Africa, or several hours on a plane from Asia, there is little doubt that the pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia, will be the spiritual climax of his life. The pilgrimage takes place every year to commemorate Abraham's attempted sacrifice of his son (who Muslims believe was Ishmael, rather than Isaac). The Hajj, lasting for 30 days, begins two months and ten days after Ramadan.

Preparation

Before setting out a pilgrim should redress all wrongs, pay all debts and plan to have enough funds for his own journey and for the care of his family while he is away. Certain Governments even allocate funds to assist pilgrims. Many religious rites are performed according to the Qur'an and tradition. The pictures we usually see are of a great throng of humanity circling the Ka'bah (a cubical structure made of stone). Their circling of the Ka'bah, the symbol of God's oneness, implies that all human activity must have God at its centre. It also symbolizes the unity of God and man. It is circled seven times and a prayer is recited each time around. According to some traditions, the Ka'bah is the sole remnant of the original altar built by Abraham and Ishmael. While making their circuits pilgrims may kiss or touch the black stone. Perhaps the single most important reason for kissing the stone is that Muhammad did so.

Stoning of Satan

Another rite is The Stoning of Satan. According to the Qur'an, Satan tempted Abraham and Ishmael three times to stop the sacrifice. Each time they responded by throwing stones at Satan. As pilgrims throw seven pebbles at the three pillars, they remember the story of Satan's attempt to persuade Abraham to disregard God's command to sacrifice Ishmael. Throwing the pebbles is symbolic of man's attempt to cast away evil and vice; the number seven symbolising infinity.

Arafat Day and its Significance

On the first day of the hajj, pilgrims sweep out of Mecca toward Mina, a small uninhabited village east of the city. As their

throng spread through Mina, the pilgrims generally spend their time meditating and praying, as the Prophet did on his pilgrimage. During the second day, the 9th of Dhu al-Hijjah, pilgrims leave Mina for the plain of Arafat. The Prophet is reported to have asked Allah to pardon the sins of pilgrims who stood at Arafat, and was granted his wish. Thus, the hopeful pilgrims prepare to leave this plain joyfully, feeling reborn without sin and intending to turn over a new leaf.

Just after sunset, the mass of pilgrims proceed to Muzdalifah, an open plain halfway between Arafat and Mina. There they first pray and then collect pebbles to use on the following days. The next day begins the Eid holiday or Eid al-Adha, the festival of sacrifice.

Why Arafat Day?

For years the whole Christian community has been praying here at 30-days during the month of Ramadan, the "Night of Power" (the 27th day of the month of Ramadan), the month of Hajj, and on many other Muslim occasions. However, this year the Lord opened our eyes to the importance of Arafat day, which the prophet Mohammed said was so significant.

The Day of Arafat is the only day when Muslims gather together at Arafat Mountain in an act of unity to pray and fast for their religion and to offer sacrifices as they remember that Abraham offered Ishmael, not Isaac.

The Call to Christians to Pray and Fast in Unity on Arafat Day:

We felt that the Lord wants us to pray specifically on Arafat Day. From this year on, we will pray on Arafat Day and we call the whole body of Christ to pray with us for the Middle East to counter spiritual attacks and the spiritual blindness over our brothers and sisters eyes.

We felt that this day, prophetically, will break the blindness over the eyes of Muslims allow the truth of the real promise through Isaac in Jesus Christ to be known. We pray for Muslims to become the sons of Abraham and to know their rights to the promises which were through Isaac, not through Ishmael.

When?

Arafat Day comes 70 days after the start of Ramadan each year.

In 2006 (Islamic year 1427) Arafat day will be Saturday 30th December.

In 2007 Arafat day will be Wednesday 19th December.

In 2008 Arafat day will be Sunday 7th December.

In 2009 Arafat day will be Thursday 26th November.

In 2010 Arafat day will be Monday 15th November.

In 2011 Arafat day will be Saturday 5th November.

Prayer guide for Arafat Day:

1- Pray and fast through the day that the Holy Spirit will break spiritual deceiving and blindness over the eyes of the Muslims.

2 - Gather as many groups as possible on December 30 - either three to five believers or, in small meetings or overnight prayer events to offer the True God our sacrifices of praise.

3- Declare that the True God is known only through Jesus Christ the seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, not Ishmael, according to the Scriptures.

<http://www.30-days.net/islam/arafat.htm>