

Reflection & Prayertime: Eid al-Adha, the Feast of the Sacrifice, and Redeeming Souls

8/3/2020

I was torn today about whether to read the last essay of John Lewis, the Congressman and lauded Civil Rights Activist whose funeral occurred Friday or to talk about the Muslim holy holiday Eid al-Adha which just occurred. Then it occurred to me that the theme of sacrifice runs through both of them.

A few years ago National VOA Ministry office connected me to Martin Brooks of Peace Catalyst. Martin with our ministers and shared that together Muslims and Christians make up more than half the world's population and that without peace between these two groups, there's little hope for peace in the world. Martin creates opportunities for Muslims and Christians to talk to each other instead of about each other. He facilitates gatherings of people of different faith backgrounds to build relationships and work together and that's how I got connected with the American Turkish Friendship Association in Louisville and began attending their Eid holiday observances. At one of the gatherings last year, pre-Covid, we were talking and would hold up a sign that said "we refuse to be enemies."

The American Turkish Friendship Association has partnered with VOA Mid-States the past couple years and has contributed the meat of a cow and two lambs to our Unity House family shelter in observance of the Feast of the Sacrifice, the story of how Ibrahim was willing to sacrifice his son as an act of obedience to God's command. The Jewish and Christian faiths believe that in the Genesis 22 account Abraham took his son Isaac to sacrifice. Yet God made the provision of a ram instead for the sacrifice and in commemoration of this, Muslims provide 2/3 of the meat from the sacrifice to those who are needy and specifically to Unity House.

As I read this weekend John Lewis' last essay entitled "Together you Can Redeem the Soul of our Nation" I thought of his sacrifices during his life and that of many others. Here are the words from his last essay <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/30/opinion/john-lewis-civil-rights-america.html>.

I'm amazed at how John Lewis dedicated his life to the Civil Rights struggle and upended his life in a huge way to further the cause of justice. Perhaps as we reflect upon Congressman Lewis' life and think about obedience in sacrifice, maybe we will put more time and energy toward the things that have the greatest impact we seek.

I remember a decade ago teaching a young black man at my church how to drive as his parents were both legally blind, and we were getting together for 30 minutes here and 45 minutes there. At some point it hit me that if we were ever going to get the required 60 hours of driving that other things had to be tabled and we had to carve out big chunks of time together. Or it was never going to happen. It had to become a serious and intentional thing.

What fills you and me with hope that we are willing to prioritize and make sacrifices for and let's allow for God to show up with sacrifice also. Let's answer our life's highest callings. Perhaps we find our own life's work and legacy with this intentionality and focus. Let's walk with the wind and let the spirit of peace and the power of everlasting love be our guide, thanks be to God.