

Date: 24.07.2020

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

إِنَّمَا يَعْمُرُ مَسَاجِدَ اللَّهِ مِنْ أَمَنِ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ
وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَى الزَّكَاةَ وَلَمْ يَخْشَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ فَعَسَى
أُولَئِكَ أَنْ يَكُونُوا مِنَ الْمُهْتَدِينَ.
وَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ:
مَنْ بَنَى مَسْجِدًا لِلَّهِ بَنَى اللَّهُ لَهُ فِي الْجَنَّةِ مِثْلَهُ.

HAGIA SOPHIA: THE CONQUEST'S SYMBOL, THE CONQUEROR'S ENTRUSTMENT

Honorable Muslims!

Today is the day the recitations of takbir, tahlil, and salawat echo again around Hagia Sophia's domes, of adhan and salat rise from its minarets. The longing of the descendants of Mehmed the Conqueror and the silence of the grand temple have come to an end. Today, Hagia Sophia is meeting its mu'min and muwahhid congregation again.

Endless thanks and praise be to Allah (swt) who enabled us to gather here on such an honorable and historic day today. Salat and salam be upon Prophet Muhammad (saw) who gave the good news about the conquest by saying, "Verily you shall conquer Constantinople. What a wonderful leader will he be, and what a wonderful army will that army be!"¹

Salam be to the spiritual architect of Istanbul, who hit the roads to become the addressee of this glad tidings, Abu Ayyub al-Ansari in particular, the Companions of the Prophet, and those who followed their blessed footsteps, and all our martyrs and veterans who made Anatolia our homeland, defended it, and entrusted it to us.

Salam be to that young and determined ruler Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror, who produced the most advanced technology of his era, had the ships move over land, conquered Istanbul with the permission and help of Allah, and then did not allow anybody to cause even the slightest harm to even a piece of rock in this honorable city.

Hagia Sophia is a rose-colored good news from centuries ago. Hagia Sophia is the conquest's

symbol and the entrustment of its Conqueror who endowed it on condition that it remains a mosque until the Last Day. Salam be to our authorities, scholarly and intellectual people, leaders full of wisdom and benevolence, and all our brothers and sisters who have from past to present worked with their heart and soul for this rare and precious entrustment to meet its congregation.

Dear Believers!

Hagia Sophia's reopening to worship means the reinstatement of this holy place, which embraced Muslims for five centuries as a mosque, to its original function.

The reopening of Hagia Sophia to worship means all crestfallen and oppressed masjids on earth, first and foremost Masjid al-Aqsa, to have their hopes up again.

The reopening of Hagia Sophia to worship means that our civilization, the foundation of which is tawhid, the building block of which is knowledge, and the cement of which is virtue, continues to rise.

Dear Muslims!

The Islamic civilization is centered around the mosque. Our mosques are the source of our unity and amity, and knowledge and wisdom. The Almighty Allah (swt) states regarding those who build and maintain mosques and masjids, "The mosques of Allah are only to be maintained by those who believe in Allah and the Last Day and establish prayer and give zakat and do not fear except Allah, for it is expected that those will be of the [rightly] guided."²

The Prophet Muhammad (saw) gives glad tidings that people who make any effort for construction of a mosque and its maintainance will be rewarded with Paradise, "Whoever builds a masjid for (the sake of) Allah, be it small or large, then Allah will build a house for him in Paradise."³

Dear Muslims!

Now, what falls upon us is to make our mosques vivid with our sense of unity and brotherhood. Our duty is to center our lives around the mosques. We all must fill mosques and spring to life with mosques, regardless of gender or age. We need to work more with greater belief, ambition, determination, excitement, and devotion in order to uphold the divine meaning of the Hagia Sophia Mosque.

¹ Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Musnad, IV, 335.

² Tawbah, 9/18.

³ Muslim, Zuhd, 44.