

HAJJ

The Hajj Pilgrimage, is one of the Pillars and fundamentals of Islam. It is the completion of surrender and the day of perfection of the religion of Islam. It was on this day that Almighty Allah revealed the following message to the Ummah of His beloved Prophet, Sayyiduna Rasoolullah (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam): "Today, I have perfected your religion for you and completed my grace upon you and approved Islam as your religion." We must understand that the basis of all actions is intention and intention without doubt bears fruit if there is sincerity, and Hajj, which is an integral part of Islam, will therefore require those who perform it to have sincerity.

When the person intends undertaking Hajj, he severs all ties with his family and home. This is a reminder to him also of the journey he will have to undertake for the Hereafter.

As for provisions, the intending pilgrim must ensure that they have been acquired in the Halaal (permissible) manner. If a person desires to take a lot for the journey, then let him remember the journey to the Hereafter which is longer and more difficult and that the best provision for that journey will be Taqwa (Piety).

As for transport, when the pilgrim acquires transport he should give thanks to the Almighty Creator and at the same time remember the transport that will carry him to the grave and the next world, namely his Kaffan (Shroud). As for leaving home, the intending pilgrim should know that he is now bound for the House of Allah. He is on a journey unlike any other. He should bear in mind where he is heading and whom he intends to visit. He should also have hope that his Hajj will be accepted, not because of the difficulties faced, but because of the trust that he has in His Creator.

When wearing the Ihraam, the pilgrim is aware that he has heard the summons of Almighty Allah. He should possess fear and hope when considering the acceptance of his Hajj. This fear should be the fear of Almighty Allah and hope in His Mercy.

As for touching the Hajre Aswad (Black Stone), the pilgrim should believe that he is pledging his loyalty to Almighty Allah and that he will obey the Commands of the Supreme Being. Make firm your promise and do not be like those who promise today and change their minds tomorrow.

When the pilgrim clings to the Khilaaf (Cloth) of the Holy Kaaba, seek forgiveness and beg for Allah's Mercy. Even the running between Saffa and Marwa must signify a slave who is running to and from the Court of a Mighty King not knowing whether he has been accepted or rejected. As for standing at

Arafaat, look at the crowds following their Imaams (Leaders) and recall the sight of the Yaumul Hashr (Day of Gathering).

After this, plead for Almighty Allah's Mercy. When you throw stones at the Shaitaan, your purpose should be obedience to your Creator. The idea is to drive Shaitaan away from you.

Such should be the various duties of the pilgrim at all stages of the Hajj. When all acts are completed, your heart should be filled with concern and hope, for you do not know whether your Hajj has been accepted or rejected. Yet after completion you realise that your inner and outer self has been filled with enthusiasm and love, and you have a genuine feeling of making Ibaadah, then remember that you have been placed among the chosen ones!

This is without doubt the culmination of a great festival - a festival where Muslims of all colour and language congregate on one massive plain to celebrate the praise of their Creator, Almighty Allah. Hajj provides an opportunity to unite Muslims of the world and it also offers to Muslims an occasion to exchange views on their mutual problems, to iron out their differences, to discuss common opinions, to exchange gifts as well as goodwill, and to take back to their respective homelands memorable feelings of the Muslim brotherhood, of course, in addition to the innumerable blessings of Almighty Allah and the new found purity of their body and soul.

The Five days of Hajj

1ST DAY - 8th Zil-Hajj : The people go to Mina from Makkatul Mukarramah in the morning after wearing the Ihraam.

2ND DAY - 9th Zil-Hajj : The people arrive at Arafaat in the morning and continue their Ibaadah. They also read their Zohar and Asar Salaah and leave for Muzdalifa just before sunset.

3RD DAY - 10th Zil-Hajj : People stay in Muzdalifa for the night and read their Maghrib and Isha Salaah together. They continue their Ibaadah the whole night. Just after Fajar Salaah, they leave for Mina. They then make Qurbaani and stone the Jamratul Uqbah. After Qurbaani, they trim or shave their hair and remove their Ihraam for ordinary clothes. Tawaaf-e-Ziyaarah is then made and Sa'ee between Saffa and Marwa. They now return to Mina.

4TH DAY - 11th Zil-Hajj : The three Jamraats are stoned.

5TH DAY - 12th Zil-Hajj : The three Jamraats are stoned again. Before leaving Makkatul Mukarramah, the Haaji will have to make the Farewell Tawaaf (Tawaaf-e-Widaa).

A visit to Madinatul Munawwarah is also necessary. This can be done before or after the Hajj. Sayyiduna Rasoolullah (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) has said: "One who visits my grave, is like one who has visited me in my lifetime." AND "One who visits my grave, my Shafa'at becomes Waajib for him."

What is Ayyaam-e-Tashreeq

"Ayyaam-e-Tashreeq" or "The Days of Praise" are the 5 days from the 9th till the 13th of Zil-Hajj. It begins from the Fajar Salaah of the 9th and ends at the Asar Salaah of the 13th of Zil-Hajj. On these days, it is Waajib upon all Muslims to read the Takbeer-e-Tashreeq aloud once after every Fard Salaah. Females are required to read softly. It is Sunnah to read this Takbeer 3 times. The words of the Takbeer are: "Allah is Great. Allah is Great. There is none worthy of worship except Allah and Allah is Great. Allah is Great and to Allah belongs all Praise."

UMRAH: IMPORTANT MASAA'IL

The meaning of "Umrah" is "to visit." The accomplishment of Umrah at least once in a lifetime is Sunnat-e-Mu'akkadah. The Umrah performed during the auspicious month of Ramadaan supercedes that Umrah completed in other days. Bukhari Shareef states that Umrah in Ramadaan is equal to Hajj.

THE MASAA'ILS OF UMRAH CAN BE BRIEFLY SUMMARISED AS:-

The wearing of Ihraam before entering the Miqat boundary

The performance of two Rakaahs Sunnatul Ihraam

The recitation of Niyah and Talbiyah

The advancement towards Makkatul Mukarramah while constantly reading the Talbiyah

The performance of Tawaaf with Idh'tibaa and Ramal

The performance of two Rakaah Waajib Salaah after Tawaaf behind Maqaam-e-Ebrahim

Advancement to the Multazam to make Du'a and drink water from the Zam Zam well

Performance of Sa'ee between Saffa and Marwa

Shaving or trimming the hair of the head.

THE FARAA'IDH OF UMRAH:

Ihraam

Four circuits of Tawaaf

WAAJIBAAT OF UMRAH:

Completion of all seven circuits

Sa'ee

Shaving/trimming of the hair.

N.B. The rest are either Sunnat or Adaab.

SEQUENCE OF PERFORMING UMRAH:

Adoption of Ihraam and performance of two Rakaah with Niyyah of Umrah

Tawaaf

Du'a at Multazam

Performance of two Rakaah Salaah at Maqaam-e-Ebrahim

Drinking Zam Zam water

Performing Sa'ee between Saffa and Marwa

Two Rakaah Salaah

Shaving/Trimming of the hair.

VISITING THE GRAVE OF THE PROPHET:

Visiting the grave is part of the Sunnah and is both excellent and desirable. Hazrat Ibn Umar (radi Allahu anhu) said that the Prophet (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) said, "My intercession is assured for

all who visit me." (at-Tabarni) Hazrat Anas bin Malik (radi Allahu anhu) said that the Messenger of Allah (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) said, "Anyone who visits me in Madina for the sake of Allah is near to me and I will intercede for him on the Day of Rising." (Al-Bayhaqi).

Imam Malik (radi Allahu anhu) disliked anyone saying "the tawaf of the visit," or "we visited the grave of the Prophet," because people normally use that for visits between themselves, and he did not like to put the Prophet on the same level as other people. He preferred a specific statement like "We greeted the Prophet (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam)." He did not dislike people saying, "We visited the Prophet (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam)." (Ash-Shifa)

ZIARAH - PRESENTING ONESELF THE BLESSED COURT OF THE HOLY PROPHET (SALLAL LAAHU ALAIHI WASALLAM) IN MADINATUL MUNAWWARAH

To present oneself (Haaziri) at the blessed court of the Holy Prophet (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) is close to Waajib (compulsory). Certain people, disguising themselves as "friends", try to convince you to stay away from the Rauza-e-Anwar of Rasoolullah (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam). It is said that it is not important to go there. Beware! Never listen to their comments and do not return with the stain of being deprived of visiting Madinatul Munawwarah.

When going to Madinatul Munawwarah, make special intention of visiting Sayyiduna Rasoolullah (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam). Imam Ibn Ilhaam states that when going to Madinatul Munawwarah do not even make the intention of visiting the Masjid, but make intention of visiting the Holy Prophet (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam). You should drown yourself in the recitation of Durood and Zikr throughout your entire journey. When the Haram of Madinatul Munawwarah is visible, then it is better to travel on foot. Walk towards it crying, with your head bowed, eyes lowered, and, if possible, bare feet. When the Green Dome or Ghumbade Anwar is in sight, then recite Durood and Salaams in abundance. On reaching the Blessed City, drown yourself in the thought of Sayyiduna Rasoolullah (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam).

Before making Haaziri you should clear the heart of all other thoughts that are disturbing and avoid unnecessary conversation. Make wudhu (using Miswaak) and Ghusal, if possible, is better. Preferably wear white clothing and new clothes are better. Use fragrance and Surma. The best of fragrance is Musk. Now, with total love and reverence, turn towards the Roza-e-Aqdas. If you cannot cry, make a sorrowful face and force the heart to weep. Beg in the court of Rasoolullah (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam). At the entrance of the Masjid, send Durood and Salaams and then wait for a little while as if you are waiting for permission from Sarkaar-e-Madina (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam). Say "Bismillah" and enter with the right foot. Do so with utmost respect and reverence. When visiting the Rauza-e-Anwar, believe in your heart that the Holy Prophet (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) is

physically alive and present just as he was before passing from the world. His demise and the demise of all the other Ambiya (alaihimus salaam) is only a split second, to fulfil the promise of Allah. Their passing away was for them just to be hidden from the eyes of the general public. Imam Muhammad ibn Haaj Makki (radi Allahu anhu) in "Madkhal", and Imam Ahmad Qastalaani (radi Allahu anhu) in "Muwaahibul Laduniyah" state, "There is no difference in the life and demise of the Prophet (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) as he is seeing his Ummah, and he is aware of them, and he is aware of their intentions. He understands the thoughts of the hearts and all these are before the Prophet (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam). In this way, that there is nothing actually hidden in it."

Now at the height of respect, bow your head, lower your gaze, and shiver in the fear of Allah. Perspire in the shame of your sins, hoping and having faith in the mercy and blessing of the Prophet (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam). Present yourself at the feet of the Prophet (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) and hope that the blessed sight of the Prophet (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) is on you. This is sufficient for you in both the worlds. Now like the heart, the face is also towards the Jaali Mubaarak of Rasoolullah (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) which is the resting place of the beloved of Allah (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam). Stand with total respect and honour. With a soft voice, low gaze, ashamed, not with a harsh or loud voice (since to speak aloud in this court is disrespect and cause of destruction) and neither being too soft since it is against Sunnah (even though the Prophet is even aware of the condition of your heart, just as it was evident from the sayings of the A'imma mentioned above), say the following: "As Salaamu Alaika Ayuhan Nabiyyu wa Rahmatullahi Wa Barkatuhu, As Salaamu Alaika Ya Rasoolallah. As Salaamu Alaika Ya, Khairi Khalqillah. Asalaamu Alaika Ya Shafi Al Muznabeen, As Salaamu Alaika Wa Ala Aalika wa Ashaabika Wa Um'matika Ajmaeen."

Ask for Shafa'at (Intercession) from Sayyiduna Rasoolullah (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) for your parents, Ustaads, Peer-o-Murshid, respected ones, friends, relatives and all Muslims. Continuously say, "As Alukash Shafa'ata Ya Rasoolallah." If someone asked you to convey their Salaams, then do so. May Almighty Allah accept the Ziyaarat of all those of visit the Rauza-e-Anwar of Huzoor-e-Akram (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam). Ameen.