

THE SPIRIT
OF
HAJJ

An Ultimate Act of Worship

Maulana
Wahiduddin Khan

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SECTION 1

HAJJ IN LIGHT OF THE QURAN AND HADITH

Performing Hajj (provided one is financially and physically able) is obligatory for all Muslims. It is one of the five fundamental pillars of Islam. Here are some Quran verses and hadiths related to the obligation of Hajj:

Quran

1. Pilgrimage to the House is a duty to God for anyone who is able to under-take it. Anyone who disbelieves should remember that God is independent of all creatures. (Quran 3:97)
2. The first House to be built for mankind was the one at Makkah. It is a blessed place; a source of guidance for the whole world. (Quran 3:96)
3. Call mankind to the Pilgrimage. They will come to you, on foot, and on every kind of lean camel, by every distant track, so that they may witness its benefit for them and, on the appointed days may utter the name of God over the cat-tle He has provided for them. Then eat their flesh, and feed the distressed and the needy — then let the pilgrims purify themselves and fulfil their vows and perform the circumambulation of the Ancient House. (Quran 22:27-29)
4. The pilgrimage is in the appointed months. Whoever

intends to perform it during them must abstain from indecent speech, from all wicked conduct, and from quarrelling while on the pilgrimage. Whatever good you may do, God is aware of it. Make provision for yourselves—but surely, the best of all provision is God-consciousness. Always be mindful of Me, you that are endowed with understanding. (Quran 2:197)

Hadiths

1. The Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him), “Islam is built upon five [pillars]: the testimony that there is no deity except God and that Muhammad is the Messenger of God, the establishment of prayer, the giving of Zakat, the pilgrimage to the House [Hajj], and the fasting of Ramadan.” (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 8; *Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 16)
2. “O people, God has made Hajj obligatory upon you, so perform Hajj.” (*Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 3236)
3. “Whoever performs Hajj for God’s sake, without engaging in obscenity or committing sin, he will return [after Hajj free from all sins] as if he were born anew.” (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1521; *Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 1350)
4. “One Umrah to another is an expiation for what is between them, and an accepted Hajj has no reward except Paradise.” (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1773; *Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 1349)
5. “A man asked the Prophet: ‘What is the best deed?’ He said, ‘Faith in God and His Messenger.’ The man asked: ‘Then what?’ He said, ‘Jihad in the way of God.’

The man asked: ‘Then what?’ He said, ‘A righteous Hajj.’ (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 26; *Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 83)

6. “I heard Abu Huraira saying: The Messenger of God said: three kinds of per-son are delegates of God: the mujahid, the pilgrim performing Hajj, and the one performing Umrah.” (*Sunan an-Nasa’i*, Hadith No. 2624)
7. “A man came to the Prophet and asked, ‘O Messenger of God, what makes Hajj obligatory?’ He replied, ‘(The ability to afford) the provision and means of transport.’” (*Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, Hadith No. 813)
8. “Whoever intends to perform Hajj should hasten to do so.” (*Sunan Abi Dawood*, Hadith No. 1732)
9. A man stood up and asked the Prophet, “Who is the true pilgrim, O Messen-ger of God?” He replied, “One who is disheveled and dusty.” Another man asked, “Which type of Hajj is best, O Messenger of God?” He replied, “The one with loud recitation and abundant sacrifice.” Then another man asked, “What is the way (to perform Hajj), O Messenger of God?” He replied, “(The ability to afford) the provision and means of transport.” (*Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, Hadith No. 3243)
10. “Whoever sets out as a pilgrim for Hajj, Umrah, or to strive in the path of God and passes away along the way, God will grant them the full reward of a pilgrim, one performing Umrah, and one striving in His cause.” (*Shu’ab al-Iman* by al-Bayhaqi, Hadith No. 3806)
11. Aisha said: “I sought permission from the Prophet to

participate in jihad. He replied, ‘Your jihad is Hajj.’” (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 2875)

12. Ibn Abbas said: “The people of Yemen used to perform Hajj without carry-ing provisions, saying, ‘We are those who rely on God alone.’ When they ar-rived in Makkah, they would beg from people. So God revealed: ‘And take provisions, but indeed, the best provision is Taqwa (piety).’” (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1523)
13. “The circumambulation of the House, the Sa’i between Safa and Marwah, and the stoning of the pillars have only been prescribed to establish the remembrance of God, the Mighty and Majestic.” (*Sunan al-Kubra* by al-Bayhaqi, Hadith No. 9646)
14. “Hajj is [obligatory] once; whoever does more, it is voluntary.” (*Musnad Ahmad*, Hadith 2642)
15. Narrated by Aisha: “I asked, ‘O Messenger of God, is there any jihad upon women?’ He replied, ‘Yes, upon them is a jihad with no fighting in it: Hajj and Umrah.’” (*Musnad Ahmad*, Hadith No. 25322)
16. Narrated by Abdullah bin Abi Awfa, a Companion of the Prophet: “I asked him about a man who has not performed Hajj. Should he borrow for Hajj?” He replied, “No.” (*Musnad al-Shafi’i*, Hadith No. 745)
17. ‘When a man sets out for Hajj with pure provisions, and he places his foot in the stirrup (footrest), saying, “Labbayk Allahumma Labbayk” (Here I am, O Allah, at Your service), a caller from the heavens calls out, “Labbayk and Sa’dayk (May you be joyous in response),

your provision is lawful, your conveyance is lawful, and your Hajj is accepted, free from sin.” But when he sets out with impure provisions and places his foot in the stirrup, saying, “Lab-bayk,” a caller from the heavens calls out, “No Labbayk, no welcome. Your provisions are unlawful, your wealth is unlawful, and your Hajj is not accepted.” (*Al-Mu’jam al-Awsat* by Al-Tabarani, Hadith No. 5228)

18. “O Allah, we ask You for piety and righteousness on this journey, and such deeds that are pleasing to You. O Allah, You are the Companion in the journey and the Guardian of the family.” (*Sunan al-Kubra* by Al-Bayhaqi, Hadith No. 10316)
19. “Here I am, O Allah, here I am. Here I am, You have no partner, here I am. Verily, all praise, grace, and sovereignty belong to You. You have no partner.” (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1549; *Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 1184)
20. “O Allah, make this Hajj an accepted one, and a means of forgiveness for my sins.” (*Musnad Ahmad*, Hadith No. 4061)

THE HAJJ OF THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD (PBUH)

The practice of Hajj was instituted by Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) and Prophet Isma'il (Ishmael). The tradition of performing Hajj had continued despite numerous distortions over time. When the Prophet Muhammad (may peace be upon them) was born in Makkah, the Hajj, despite the inclusion of pre-Islamic rituals, was still very much alive.

How many times did the Prophet Muhammad perform Hajj? This question can be divided into two historical periods: before Hijrah (migration) and after Hijrah. We have complete information regarding the latter period, but there is no definitive information about the former period.

After Hijrah, the Prophet Muhammad performed the Hajj only once, commonly known as the Farewell Pilgrimage (Hajjatul Wada). Before the Hijrah, while residing in Makkah, it is established through narrations that the Prophet did perform Hajj, but the exact details are not available. In *Sunan al-Tirmidhi* (Hadith No. 826) and *Sunan Ibn Majah* (Hadith No. 3076), it is mentioned that he performed two Hajj before Hijrah. *Sahih Muslim* (Hadith No. 1253) mentions only one Hajj. Some scholars assert that the Prophet performed Hajj annually according to

the custom of the people of Makkah. From a narration in *Tabaqat Ibn Sa'd* (Vol. 2, p. 157), it is understood that after receiving prophethood, the Prophet performed only one Hajj.

There is a stark contrast between the limited information available about the Prophet's Hajj before the Hijrah and the extensive details surrounding his Farewell Pilgrimage. This difference can be attributed to the context in which these events occurred. Before the Hijrah, the Prophet was seen as a relatively unimportant figure, and as a result, his early Hajj was not systematically documented. In contrast, the Farewell Pilgrimage took place towards the end of his life, when he had already become the acknowledged leader and unifier of Arabia. This shift in his status accounts for the detailed recording of the Farewell Pilgrimage, with even the smallest aspects meticulously documented.

Various scholars have attempted to compile the scattered details of the Farewell Pilgrimage found in the narrations. Some notable works in this regard include:

1. *As-Sirah an-Nabawiyyah* by Abu al-Fida Isma'il ibn Umar ibn Kathir (1300–1373)
2. *Zad al-Ma'ad* by Shams ad-Dīn Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (1292–1350)
3. *Sharh al-Mawahib al-Laduniyyah* by Muhammad al-Zurqani (1645–1710)
4. *Hajjatul Wada and the Umrahs of the Prophet Muhammad* (PBUH) by Muhammad Zakariyya Kandhlawi (1898 – 1982)

Below is a brief account of the Hajj performed by the Prophet:

The Farewell Pilgrimage took place in the 10th year of Hijrah. Approximately two months later, the Prophet passed away in Madinah. This pilgrimage is called the Farewell Pilgrimage because the Prophet bid farewell to the believers during his sermon at Mina and Arafat, stating that after this year, they would not meet him at this place again.

The Hajj performed by the Prophet Muhammad holds significance from various aspects, which is why it is referred to by multiple names, such as Hajjatul Wada (The Farewell Pilgrimage), Hajjatul Islam (The Pilgrimage of Islam), Hajjatul Balagh (The Pilgrimage of Conveyance), Hajjatul Kamal (The Pilgrimage of Perfection), and Hajjatul Tamam (The Pilgrimage of Completion).

Makkah was conquered in Ramadan of the 8th year of Hijrah. However, the Prophet Muhammad did not perform Hajj in either 8 AH or 9 AH. Instead, under his guidance, a group of 300 Muslims from Madinah went to Makkah to perform Hajj in 9 AH led by Abu Bakr al-Siddiq. During this Hajj, polytheists of Arabia were also present. However, following the command revealed in Chapter 9, At-Tawbah, it was announced during this Hajj that no polytheist would be allowed to perform Hajj in the future. This announcement was made by Ali ibn Abi Talib (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 369).

The Fairwell Pilgrimage

In the following year, 10 AH, the Prophet Muhammad announced his intention to perform Hajj, sending messages to all tribes to encourage as many people as possible to join him. Although the rituals of Hajj had continued since the time of Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham)

and Prophet Isma'il (Ishmael), many pre-Islamic practices had been incorporated into it. Therefore, it was essential for a large number of people to observe the Prophet performing the Hajj rituals so that they could follow his example in the future. Such rituals are better understood through observation rather than mere verbal instruction.

Jabir bin Abdullah reported that he saw the Prophet Muhammad on his mount performing the ritual of stoning the Jamarat. The Prophet addressed the people, saying, "Learn your Hajj rituals from me, for perhaps I will not be able to perform Hajj again after this year." (*Al-Sunan al-Kubra* by Al-Nasai, Hadith No. 4002)

When the news of the Prophet's Hajj journey spread throughout the surrounding regions, people began to gather. Eventually, nearly one hundred thousand people assembled in Madinah. He departed from Madinah on the 25th of Dhu al-Qi'dah in the 10th year of Hijrah. As the Prophet journeyed towards Makkah, more people joined along the way. Jabir bin Abdullah remarked that as far as his eye could see, there were people everywhere. By the time they reached Makkah, the gathering had swelled to over 120,000. The Prophet Muhammad was riding his camel named al-Qaswa, an extraordinary fast camel. Despite its speed, the saddle on the camel was worth no more than four dirhams, symbolizing the Prophet's balance between necessity and simplicity.

Before setting out, the Prophet led the people in the four Rak'ahs of Zuhr prayer. He then delivered a sermon explaining the obligations and etiquettes of donning the Ihram. Afterwards, he departed from Madinah. Five miles from Madinah, at a place called Dhul Hulaifah (the Miqat

for the people of Madinah), he spent the night. The next day, after performing Ghusl (ritual purification) and offering two Rak'ahs of Zuhr prayer, the Prophet donned the Ihram for both Hajj and Umrah (Qiran) and set off, reciting the Talbiyah:

“Here I am, O Allah, here I am. Here I am, You have no partner, here I am. Verily, all praise, grace, and sovereignty belong to You. You have no partner.” (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1549; *Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 1184)

As he travelled from Madinah to Makkah, whenever the Prophet ascended a hill, he would loudly proclaim, “Allahu Akbar” (God is the Greatest), as if declaring the greatness of God to the entire world.

The Prophet Muhammad reached Makkah on the 4th of Dhu al-Hijjah, completing the journey from Madinah to Makkah in nine days. It was afternoon when he entered the Haram. Upon seeing the Ka'bah, the Prophet prayed:

“O Allah, increase this House in honour, greatness, nobility, and reverence.” (*Al-Mu'jam al-Awsat*, Hadith No. 6132)

He then raised his hands, saying: “O Allah, You are Peace, and from You comes Peace. O our Lord, keep us alive in peace.”

Entering the Haram, the Prophet did not perform the two Rak'ahs of Tahiyat al-Masjid but instead began the Tawaf (circumambulation) of the Ka'bah. He approached the Black Stone (Hajar al-Aswad), recited “Bismillah, Allahu Ak-bar,” and touched it. He then proceeded to circumambulate the Ka'bah seven times, keeping it on

his left side. During the first three rounds, the Prophet walked briskly (a practice known as *Raml*), and for the remaining four, he walked normally. His *Ihram* was draped over his left shoulder, leaving his right shoulder exposed, a practice known as *al-Idtiba'*. As he passed the Black Stone, he pointed to it with his staff and touched it.

Between the Black Stone and *Rukn al-Yamani* (the Yemeni Corner), the Prophet would recite the following supplication:

“Our Lord, grant us good in this world as well as good in the world to come, and protect us from the torment of the Fire.” (*Musnad Ahmad*, Hadith No. 15399)

After completing the *Tawaf*, the Prophet went to the *Maqam Ibrahim* (Station of Abraham) and recited the verse:

“Make the place where Ibrahim stood a place of worship.” (Quran 2:125)

He then stood there and prayed two *Rak'ahs*. Afterward, he returned to the Black Stone and kissed it before proceeding to the hill of *Safa*. Upon reaching *Safa*, he pointed to the Quranic verse: “Indeed, *Safa* and *Marwah* are among the symbols set up by God” (2:158), and said: “I begin with what God began with.” (*Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 1218) He then ascended *Safa* until the *Ka'bah* was visible, and facing the *Qiblah*, he recited:

“There is no deity but God, the one and only, without partner. His is the dominion, to Him belongs all praise, and He has power over all things. There is no deity but God, the one and

only. He fulfilled His promise, supported His believer, and defeated the confederates by Himself.” (*Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 1218)

The Prophet then descended from Safa and headed towards Marwah. Between the two hills, when he reached the valley (the green marker lights between Safa and Marwa), he began to run. Upon leaving the valley, he resumed walking. Upon reaching Marwah, he ascended until the Ka’bah was visible and repeated the same Takbir (saying Allahu Akbar, that is God is he Greatest), Tahleel (saying: La ilaha illa Allah, that is, there is no god but God), and supplication. The Prophet completed seven circuits between Safa and Marwah, with some reports indicating that he performed the initial walks of seven laps (Sa’i) between the mount Safa to Marwa on foot and the remaining on his camel, likely to allow the vast crowd to observe his actions. (*Zad al-Ma’ad*, Vol. 2, p. 278) The seventh circuit of Sa’i ended at Marwah.

The Prophet Muhammad arrived in Makkah on the 4th of Dhu al-Hijjah and stayed at the location of Abtah. He remained there for four days until the 8th of Dhu al-Hijjah, offering shortened (Qasr) prayers along with his Companions. On the 8th of Dhu al-Hijjah, the Prophet proceeded to Mina with all his Companions. He did not perform Tawaf before leaving. On that day, he performed the Dhuhr, Asr, Maghrib, and Isha prayers at Mina and spent the night there. The following morning, on the 9th of Dhu al-Hijjah, after the sun had risen, he departed for Arafat. He camped in a tent at Namerah (Wadi Urnah). Some Companions chanted the Talbiyah, while others recited the Takbir, and none objected to the other.

At the time of Zawal (when the sun begins to decline), the Prophet mounted his camel and moved to the center of the plain of Arafat. There, seated on his mount at the location where the current Masjid Namerah stands, he delivered his famous Farewell Sermon (Khutbah Hajjatul Wada). Both this sermon and the second sermon he delivered are mentioned separately in the books of Hadith. A compilation of these sermons is being transcribed in the following sections.

It was Friday, the 9th of Dhu al-Hijjah. After the sermon, the Prophet instructed Bilal to call the Adhan. Bilal did so, and the Prophet offered the Dhuhr and Asr prayers, shortened to two Rak'ahs each, with one Adhan and two Iqamahs. This was not the Jumu'ah prayer but the shortened Dhuhr prayer, as he did not recite the Quran aloud, and he did not perform any Sunnah or Nafl prayers after the obligatory prayers.

After completing the prayers, the Prophet went to the place in Arafat known as the standing area. Here, he remained on his camel and supplicated until sunset. The Prophet emphasized that the supplication on this day is the best of all supplications (*Sunan Al-Tirmidhi*, Hadith No. 3902). His deep sense of devotion and humility can be gauged from the words he uttered during this time. According to one narration, he said:

“O Allah, You are listening to my words and You are aware of my situation. You know my hidden and visible matters. Nothing is concealed from You. I am in distress, in need, and I turn to You in pleading. I seek refuge in You. I am troubled and fearful. I confess my sins and admit my wrongs.

I approach You as a helpless person, seeking Your mercy. I am pleading before You as a sinful and humble being. I ask You in fear, as one struck by calamity, like a person whose head is bowed in submission to You, whose eyes weep for You, whose body humbles itself before You, and whose forehead is pressed to the ground in reverence. O Allah, do not leave me disappointed in seeking Your help, and be compassionate and merciful to me. O the best of those who are asked and the most generous of those who give!" (*Al-Mu'jam al-Kabeer* by Al-Tabarani, Hadith No. 11405)

During this time, people approached him with questions about the rituals of Hajj. Some people from Najd asked, "What is Hajj?" The Prophet replied, "Hajj is [standing at] Arafat," meaning that whoever reaches Arafat before the day of sacrifice (Yawm al-Nahr) has completed the Hajj.

It was during this stay at Arafat that the Quranic verse was revealed:

Today I have completed your religion for you and completed My blessing upon you. I have chosen for you Islam as your religion. (Quran 5:3)

After sunset, the Prophet left Arafat for Muzdalifah, with Usamah bin Zaid riding behind him. Throughout the journey, he continued to recite the Talbiyah. Upon reaching Muzdalifah, he instructed the people to walk calmly, saying:

"O people! Walk with calmness and steadiness, for piety is not found in haste." (*Al-Sunan al-Kubra* by Al-Bayhaqi, Hadith No. 9483)

At Muzdalifah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) instructed Hazrat Bilal to call the Adhan. After the Adhan, the Prophet stood and offered the Maghrib prayer before having the camels sit down or unloading the luggage. Once the people had unloaded their belongings, he offered the Isha prayer as qasr, performing two rak'ahs. Both prayers were performed with a single Adhan and two *Iqamah*. Apart from the obligatory prayers, the Prophet did not perform any additional prayers. Afterwards, he lay down and slept until morning. Upon awakening, the Prophet offered the Fajr prayer at the earliest time on the morning of the 10th of Dhu al-Hijjah.

After the Fajr prayer, the Prophet mounted his camel and proceeded to Al-Mash'ar Al-Haram, where he faced the Qiblah and engaged in supplication and invocation until daylight spread. Before sunrise, he left Muzdalifah for Mina, continuing to recite the Talbiyah. Fadl bin Abbas was riding behind the Prophet, who directed him to collect seven pebbles to throw at the three pillars known as the Jamarat.

Upon reaching the Valley of Muhassir, the Prophet urged the people to pass through quickly and increased the pace of his camel. This valley is where God meted out His punishment upon the people of the elephant. The Prophet continued onward until he reached Mina. He then went to Jamarat al-Aqabah and stood in such a way that Makkah was on his left and Mina on his right. He then threw seven pebbles at the Jamarat after sunrise, with each pebble accompanied by the proclamation of Takbir. After completing the stoning, he stopped reciting the Talbiyah and returned to Mina.

Back in Mina, the Prophet (may peace be upon him) summarized the essence of the religion in these words:

“Worship your Lord, offer your five daily prayers, fast during the month of Ramadan, and obey those in authority among you, and you will enter the Paradise of your Lord.” (*Musnad Ahmad*, Hadith No. 22258)

At Mina, the Prophet Muhammad delivered a sermon similar to the one he gave at Arafat. This repetition was likely intended for those who had not heard the sermon at Arafat, ensuring that they could listen and memorize it thoroughly. Among the important declarations he made during this sermon were:

“There is no superiority of an Arab over a non-Arab, nor of a non-Arab over an Arab, nor a white person over a black person, nor of a black person over a white person, except by piety (Taqwa).” (*Musnad Ahmad*, Hadith No. 23489)

He also proclaimed:

“Indeed, Satan has despaired of being worshipped in your land ever again. However, he will find obedience in some of the actions you consider insignificant, and he will be pleased with them.” (*Sunan Ibn Majah*, Hadith No. 3055)

Following this, the Prophet went to the sacrificial place at Mina, where he slaughtered 63 camels, corresponding to the number of years he had lived. He then paused and instructed Ali to complete the remaining number of sacrifices out of the total of 100 camels. After the sacrifice, the Prophet summoned Muammar bin Abdullah

(the barber) and had his head shaved, a ritual known as Halaq. He also clipped his nails. He advised the women to trim their hair slightly (Taqsir) and forbade them from shaving their heads.

After the sacrifice, the Prophet mounted his camel and headed towards Makkah. He stated that sacrifices could be offered at places other than the sacrificial site. He had a small portion of the sacrificial meat cooked and ate it, while the remainder was distributed as charity. He instructed the people to eat the sacrificial meat, share it with others, and preserve it as long as necessary.

On the 10th of Dhu al-Hijjah, the Prophet arrived in Makkah. Before the Dhuhr prayer, he performed Tawaf al-Ifada (also known as Tawaf al-Ziyarah). During this Tawaf, he did not engage in Raml (the brisk walking) or Idtiba' (exposing the right shoulder), nor did he perform the Sa'i (the ritual walk between Safa and Marwah). After completing the Tawaf, the Prophet went to the well of Zamzam, stood by it, and drank its water. At that time, members of the family of Abd al-Muttalib were drawing water from the well and distributing it to the pilgrims. The Prophet then returned to Mina on the same day, where he spent the night.

On the 11th of Dhu al-Hijjah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) remained in Mina, waiting for the sun to begin to decline. When the time for Zawal (midday) arrived, he dismounted from his camel and proceeded to perform the stoning of the Jamarat. He first threw seven pebbles, one after the other, at the Jamarat al-Ula (the first pillar), followed by a period of supplication. He then did the same at the Jamarat al-Wusta (the middle pillar), also pausing

to pray. Afterwards, he threw seven pebbles at the Jamarat al-Aqaba (the last pillar) and left without praying there.

The Prophet stayed in Mina for the three days of Tashreeq (11th, 12th, and 13th of Dhu al-Hijjah). During this time, he continued to lead the people in offering shortened (Qasr) prayers without combining them. On the 13th of Dhu al-Hijjah, after Zawal, he departed for Makkah. He camped in a tent at the Valley of Muhassir (Abtah) and performed the Dhuhr, Asr, Maghrib, and Isha prayers there, spending the night in rest.

During the last part of the night, the Prophet woke up, went to the Haram, and performed Tawaf al-Wada (the Farewell Tawaf) before offering the Fajr prayer. After completing the Tawaf, he instructed the caravan to prepare for the journey. The people then departed for their respective homes, while the Prophet set out for Madinah with the Muhajireen and Ansar. His stay in Makkah, from the time of his arrival until his departure, lasted a total of ten days.

When the Prophet reached Dhul Hulayfah (near Madinah), he halted and spent the night there. At sunrise, he entered Madinah. Upon seeing the familiar sight of Madinah, he exclaimed:

“God is the Greatest (three times); then he said: there is no deity but God alone and without a partner. His is the dominion, and to Him belongs all praise, and He is over all things capable. We are returning, repentant, worshipful, prostrating, and praising our Lord. God fulfilled His promise, helped His worshipper, and defeated the confederates alone.” (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1797; *Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 1344)

Response to Questions in Mina

Usamah bin Shuraik narrated that people in Mina would approach the Prophet with various questions. Some would say, “O Prophet, I performed Sa’i before Tawaf,” or “I performed the ritual shaving before the stoning,” or “I sacrificed before stoning.” In response to such concerns, he would say, “Do it, there is no harm in it” (If’al wa la haraj), “Do it, there is no harm in it.” (*Musnad Ahmad*, Hadith No. 6800)

According to another hadith, he said, “The harmful act is when someone humiliates his brother; such a person is an oppressor, and it is he who has committed the harmful act and will be ruined.” (*Sunan Abi Dawood*, Hadith No. 2015)

A Lesson from the Farewell Pilgrimage

The way in which the Prophet Muhammad performed the Farewell Pilgrimage (Hajjatul Wada) holds many important lessons for us. One of the most significant lessons is that communal life always follows traditions. Breaking traditions can cause irreparable disruption in communal life. Therefore, whatever is done in communal life should be done without breaking traditions. Acting contrary to established traditions is not in line with the prophetic way.

“Jabir bin Abdullah reported that the Prophet Muhammad stayed in Madinah for nine years without performing Hajj. Then, in the tenth year of Hijrah, it was announced that the Prophet Muhammad was going to perform Hajj, and a large number of people gathered in Madinah. Then we set out with him for Hajj.” (*Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaybah*, Hadith No. 14705)

In light of the Prophet's example, one might wonder why he did not perform Hajj for ten years. In the early years, it seems likely that the Quraysh's resistance, as seen during the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah when they prevented the Prophet from performing Umrah, was a concern. However, after the conquest of Makkah in Ramadan 8 AH, this obstacle was removed. Despite this, the Prophet did not perform Hajj in 8 AH or 9 AH and only went for Hajj in 10 AH, two months before his passing. The reason for this delay was that he wanted to reform the Hajj system without breaking traditions.

There are two types of calendars: lunar and solar. The lunar calendar is based on the waxing and waning of the moon, which everyone can observe directly. The solar calendar is calculated mathematically by astronomers based on the sun's rotation. In other words, the lunar calendar is based on natural phenomena, specifically the moon's cycles, while the solar calendar is based on mathematical calculations of the sun's movements.

For the system of worship, God preferred the lunar calendar. This preference is not because the lunar calendar is superior or sacred. The same God who ordained the moon's orbit also ordained the sun's orbit, so how could one be sacred and the other not? The reason is practical rather than doctrinal. Acts of worship are meant to be simple and natural, which is why they are based on the lunar calendar.

This idea is supported by a hadith, which highlights this principle:

Abdullah bin Umar reported that the Prophet Muhammad said, "We are an unlettered nation;

we neither write nor calculate. The month is like this and like this and like this” (indicating 29 or 30 days by folding his thumb). (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1913; *Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 1080)

The lunar month is based on the sighting of the moon, which is why it sometimes has 29 days and sometimes 30 days. The Prophet explained this simply by showing his fingers three times, representing ten days each, indicating a total of 30 days. Then, he showed his fingers again, folding his thumb the third time, indicating ten days for the first two and nine for the third, representing a total of 29 days.

This does not mean that the lunar month is a religious month and that all matters should be calculated based on the lunar calendar. This principle applies specifically to acts of worship, meaning that the dates of worship will be based on the lunar calendar to make it easy for everyone to follow.

When Prophet Ibrahim established the system of Hajj, he based it on the lunar calendar for this very reason. However, the Quraysh of Makkah, who were the custodians of the Ka’bah, later sought to align the timing of Hajj with the solar calendar to serve their commercial interests, ensuring that the pilgrimage would always occur in the same season. To achieve this, they adopted the practice of intercalation (known as Kabisa) from other nations and applied it to the Hajj.

The solar year consists of 365 days, while the lunar year consists of 354 days, resulting in a difference of 11 days. Over eight years, this difference accumulates to

approximately three months. The Arabs would adjust the lunar months by adding extra days to align with the solar months. This practice caused the lunar months to shift, completing a cycle every 33 years. Consequently, Hajj would fall on different dates within this cycle and only return to the original Abrahamic dates in the 34th year.

When Makkah was conquered in Ramadan 8 AH, this 33-year cycle was nearing its end. The Hajj of 8 AH and 9 AH took place in the month of Dhul Qa'dah, according to the previous system. However, in 10 AH, the cycle was completed, and Hajj returned to its original date in Dhul Hijjah.

The Prophet Muhammad, in a way, was a restorer of the faith of Ibrahim. He was divinely appointed to re-establish the Hajj system on its original Abrahamic basis. As the conqueror of Makkah in 8 AH, he could have announced this change then. Similarly, in 9 AH, he could have instructed that Hajj be performed according to the original Abrahamic dates. However, he remained silent both times. The Prophet only made this necessary change in 10 AH when the Hajj dates naturally aligned with the original Abrahamic dates.

The reason for this was that in 8 AH and 9 AH, implementing the change would have required breaking centuries-old traditions. In contrast, in 10 AH, the same objective was achieved without disrupting any traditions. Traditions hold great significance in social life, which is why the Prophet always sought to achieve his objectives without breaking traditions. In 10 AH, he performed Hajj according to the established Abrahamic date and then announced that this would be the practice in the future.

This wisdom is encapsulated in the Prophet's sermon during the Farewell Pilgrimage:

The Prophet Muhammad said, "Indeed, time has reverted to its original state, as it was on the day God created the heavens and the earth. And indeed, the number of months with God is twelve." (*Maghazi al-Waqidi*, Vol. 3, p. 1112)

This means that after the completion of the 33-year cycle, the 9th of Dhul Hijjah once again coincided with the original 9th of Dhul Hijjah. This is in accordance with the natural order. The previous artificial calendar was abolished, and henceforth, Hajj would be observed every year in Dhul Hijjah according to the natural calendar.

THE FAREWELL SERMON

The Farewell Sermon is the final and most significant address given by the Prophet Muhammad. This sermon was delivered on the 9th of Dhu al-Hijjah in the 10th year of Hijrah in the plains of Arafat. The Farewell Pilgrimage (Hajj) was the largest Islamic gathering during the Prophetic era, with approximately 125,000 Companions in attendance. About two months before his passing, the Prophet delivered this sermon, making a final proclamation of all the teachings for which he had been sent.

The Farewell Pilgrimage is extensively mentioned in the books of Hadith, yet the complete text of the Farewell Sermon is not found in any single narration. Different narrations contain various parts of it. Numerous scholars have attempted to compile these parts into a cohesive collection.

In essence, this sermon proclaimed the greatness of God and the equality of all human beings. The Prophet emphasized that the only valid distinction among people is between those who are pious and those who are not. All other distinctions are artificial and were declared invalid, and the Muslim community was tasked with continuously proclaiming this truth.

A practical demonstration of this proclamation was evident during the sermon, when he addressed an assembly of 125,000 people on the majesty of God and the equality

of all humans, the two Companions closest to the Prophet were freed slaves: Bilal al-Habashi, who held the reins of the Prophet's camel, and Usama bin Zayd, who shaded him with a cloth held above his head.

The Sermon Delivered by the Prophet Muhammad on the Day of Arafah:

“Indeed, your blood and your wealth are as sacred and inviolable as this day, this month, and this city of yours. Listen attentively: every negative practice from the Age of Ignorance (Jahiliyyah) has been abolished, and the blood-revenge from that era is annulled. The first act of blood revenge I abolish is our own—the killing of the son of Rabi‘ah bin Harith bin Abdul Muttalib. He was a toddler, under the care of a wet nurse from the Banu Sa’d tribe, when he was killed by the Hudhayl tribe. The usury of Jahiliyyah is abolished, and the first usury I abolish is that of our uncle, Abbas ibn Abd al-Muttalib, which is entirely abolished. Be mindful of God regarding women. You have taken them as a trust from God, and they have been made lawful to you as spouses by God’s word. You have rights over them that they do not allow anyone you dislike to sit on your bed, and if they do, you may discipline them gently. And they have rights over you to provide for them and fittingly clothe them. I have left among you something which, if you hold fast to it, you will never go astray: the Book of God (and the Sunnah of His Prophet). You will be asked about me, so what will you say?” They said, “We bear witness that you have conveyed the message, fulfilled the duty, and sincerely advised us.” Then, raising his index finger

towards the sky and pointing it towards the people, he said, "O God, bear witness! O God, bear witness! O God, bear witness!"

(*Al-Muntaqa* by Ibn Jarood, Volume 1, Page 123; *Mustadrak al-Hakim*, Hadith No. 321).

The Second Sermon

"O people! Do you know which day it is, which month it is, and which city it is?" They said, "It is a sacred day, a sacred month, and a sacred city." He said, "So your blood, your wealth, and your honour are sacred to you, as this day of yours, in this month of yours, in this city of yours, is sacred until the day you meet Him." Then he said, "Listen to me and live accordingly. Beware, do not oppress! Beware, do not oppress! Beware, do not oppress! Indeed, it is not permissible to take a person's wealth unless he gives it willingly. Know that all blood feuds, usurious wealth, and privileges of pride from the time of ignorance are beneath my feet until the Day of Resurrection. The first blood-revenge to be abolished is that of the son of Rabi'ah ibn al-Harith ibn Abd al-Muttalib; he was a toddler under the care of a wet nurse from the Banu Sa'd tribe when he was killed by the Hudhayl tribe. All usury from the time of ignorance is abolished, and the first usury to be abolished is that of Abbas ibn Abd al-Muttalib. You are entitled to your principal, neither oppressing others nor being oppressed. Know that time has returned to its original state as it was on the day God created the heavens and the earth." Then he recited the verse: "He decreed that the number of months should be twelve in number. Out of these,

four are sacred. That is the true religion. Do not wrong your souls in these months.” (Quran 9:36) He continued, “Beware, do not return to disbelief after me, striking each other’s necks. Beware, Satan has despaired of being worshipped by those who pray, but he seeks to sow discord among you. So fear God concerning women, for they are dependent upon you and possess nothing for themselves. Your rights over them are that they do not allow anyone on your bed whom you dislike, and they should not permit anyone into your house whom you dislike. If you fear disobedience from them, then admonish them, forsake them in bed, and discipline them lightly. Their right over you is that you provide them with food and clothing in a fitting manner. Indeed, you have taken them as a trust from God, and they were made your spouses by the word of God. Let those who have been entrusted with anything fulfil their trust.” Then, spreading out his hands, he said, “Have I conveyed the message? Have I conveyed the message? Have I conveyed the message?” He then said, “Let those who are present convey it to those who are absent, for perhaps the one informed may understand better than the one who heard it.”

(*Musnad Ahmad*, Hadith No. 20695; *Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 1218).

Explanation

The essence of this entire sermon is encapsulated in the words: “Beware, do not oppress! Beware, do not oppress!” The purpose of this sermon is to close every door that leads to oppression, whether it arises from false superstitions, wrongful laws, or arrogance and rebellion.

To achieve this, it was declared that, in principle, the blood, wealth, and honour of every individual are inviolable to others unless justified by the clear law of God. Actions driven by pre-Islamic customs and vengeful emotions were absolutely prohibited.

Usury (interest) was completely forbidden, as it fosters economic oppression among different segments of society and significantly hinders social justice. The rights of women were explicitly defined, and men were prohibited from exploiting their vulnerability.

The Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet were established as the final criterion for all interactions among people. Muslims were required to resolve all their disputes according to the rulings of the Quran and Sunnah, regardless of whether those rulings aligned with their desires or not.

Muslims were warned against the greatest cause of their deviation—internal discord. God has secured and preserved the final religion to such an extent that Satan can no longer find a path to corrupt it. However, by inciting false disputes, he will attempt to instigate fighting among Muslims. If Muslims can protect themselves from this trial, nothing else will harm them.

Faith demands that a sense of trustworthiness be cultivated among Muslims. Conveying the religion of God to others also fulfils trust. Returning the property of others to them is fulfilling a trust. Recognizing the competence of a deserving person and making space for them is also a fulfillment of trust. Every Muslim is required to prove themselves trustworthy and responsible in every matter of trust.

The Prophet's sermon is, in essence, a living call. A true pilgrim listens to this call during Hajj and returns from it with the determination to make this sermon the guiding principle of their entire life.

SECTION 2

THE REALITY OF HAJJ

Hajj is one of the fundamental pillars of Islam. Like other acts of worship, its essence lies in taqwa (piety and consciousness of God). However, Hajj also possesses a unique character, as it is intimately associated with the life of Abu al-Anbiya (the Father of the Prophets) Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him).

The purpose of Hajj is that a Muslim who is capable of reaching the sacred sites of Hajj should make it a point to do so at least once in their lifetime. Upon arrival, through various acts of worship, they demonstrate their complete servitude to God. By performing the symbolic rituals of Prophet Ibrahim, they kindle within themselves a fervour to immerse their outer and inner selves in the spirit of Ibrahim.

After constructing the Ka‘bah, Prophet Ibrahim called out, “O people, come and perform Hajj for the sake of your Lord.” The journey of Hajj is a response to this call of Ibrahim. During the season of Hajj, the proclamation “*Labbayk Allahumma Labbayk*” (Here I am, O Allah, here I am) resounds from all directions. This is the response to the call of Ibrahim, signifying that the pilgrim, having answered the call, now stands before God, ready and willing to fulfil any command given with all their heart and soul.

The literal meaning of the word “Hajj” is “to intend a

journey” or “to set out for a place with a purpose.” In Islamic Shariah, Hajj refers to the annual act of worship in which a person travels to Makkah to perform the Tawaf (circumambulation) of the Ka‘bah, stands in the plain of Arafat, and engages in other rituals collectively known as the Manasik al-Hajj (rites of Hajj).

Hajj is a comprehensive act of worship. It involves spending wealth and enduring physical hardship. It includes the remembrance of God and the offering of sacrifice for His sake. Hajj is an act of worship that, in one way or another, embodies the spirit of all other forms of worship.

The performance of the obligations of Hajj centres around the House of God (Baytullah), which is located in Makkah. The House of God serves as a reminder of the life of a true believer, beginning with the history of Prophet Ibrahim, Khalilullah (the Friend of God) and concluding with the history of Prophet Muhammad, the Seal of the Prophets. The House of God stands as a commemorative symbol of how a believer sacrifices everything for Him, shapes their life according to God’s will, and dedicates themselves wholly to God’s mission until they pass away in that state.

The Journey Towards God

Hajj is a journey towards God, representing the closest proximity one can achieve with their Lord during worldly life. While other acts of worship serve as reminders of God, Hajj stands as a unique journey of drawing closer to Him. If general worship can be seen as the worship of God at the level of the unseen, then Hajj represents the worship of God at the level of profound realization.

When a pilgrim stands before the Ka'bah, they feel as though they are standing directly before the Lord of the Ka'bah. The circumambulation of the Ka'bah symbolizes the reality that the believer, having found their Lord, circles Him in a state of thrilling devotion. When the pilgrim clings to the Multazam and prays, it feels as though they have grasped the hem of their Master, to whom they desperately cling, eager to pour out all their supplications.

This unique characteristic of Hajj is due to the fact that its rituals are performed at a place where divine manifestations descend, a place chosen by God to be the centre of the religious practices of Prophet Ibrahim, the great proponent of a God-worshipping life. This is where the history of Islam, as established by Prophet Ibrahim, is inscribed. The surrounding area bears traces of the exemplary divine revolution that occurred fourteen centuries ago under the guidance of the Seal of the Prophets, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

Such traditions and characteristics have bestowed extraordinary historical and spiritual significance upon the Sanctuary. This is why anyone who goes there cannot remain unaffected. A person returning from Hajj is like someone drenched in dust, who has washed in a clean river.

Hajj is of unique importance among Islamic acts of worship. In one Hadith, it is referred to as the most superior act of worship. However, the special significance of Hajj lies in its spirit, not merely in its external form. In other words, Hajj is not just about physically visiting the holy sites and returning; it is about attaining the

spiritual states for which this duty has been ordained. The superiority of Hajj as an act of worship means that for the one who performs it with its true spirit and proper etiquette, Hajj will become the greatest act of worship in their life.

The Supreme Act of Worship

When a person undertakes the journey and reaches the sacred sites of Hajj, they are enveloped in unique divine experiences. It feels as though they have left “their world” and entered the “world of God.” They feel as if they are touching their Lord, circling Him, running towards Him, journeying for His sake, offering sacrifices in His presence, casting stones at His enemies, asking Him for whatever they desire, and receiving from Him whatever they should receive.

The Ka‘bah is one of the signs of God on earth. It is where lost human souls are embraced by God, where parched hearts are made to flow with the waters of servitude, and where blind eyes are shown the divine light. However, all of this is for the one who comes with the capacity to receive it. For those who lack this capacity, Hajj is merely a form of sightseeing. They go there only to return as they were before.

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: “Hajj is Arafah” (*Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 55), emphasizing the significance of standing in the plain of Arafat. During Hajj, the plain of Arafat presents a scene reminiscent of the Day of Judgment. On a specific day, the believers are seen arriving from all directions in caravans.

It is a truly remarkable sight. Everyone is dressed in the same simple attire (Ihram). Each person has shed their distinguishing features. The same phrase is on everyone's lips: "*Labbayk Allahumma Labbayk, Labbayk Allahumma Labbayk*" (Here I am, O Allah, here I am; Here I am, O Allah, here I am). Observers are reminded of the Quranic verse: "The trumpet will be blown and, at once, they will rise up from their graves, and hasten to their Lord." (Quran 36:51) That is when the trumpet is blown, everyone will suddenly emerge from their graves and start moving towards their Lord.

The presence in Arafat serves as a reminder of standing before God on the Day of Judgment. It is a chance for one to mentally and spiritually prepare themselves for what will physically occur in the future.

In reality, Hajj holds the highest position among all acts of worship, just as the Ka'bah occupies a central place among all mosques.

THE MESSAGE OF HAJJ

What is Hajj? Hajj is a journey undertaken for the sake of God. It involves spending one's time and wealth to reach the places that are marked by the remembrance of God and are connected to the memories of God's faithful servants. All the rituals of Hajj are practical demonstrations of a person's devotion to God. It signifies that they have oriented their life completely around God. The state of standing before God on the Day of Judgment is something they have already imposed upon themselves today. They are the most God-fearing and the most mindful of God.

Hajj may appear to be a temporary act of worship, but in reality, it is a representation of a believer's entire life of faith. It is a declaration of servitude that lasts until the last breath. A person lives to perform Hajj for their Lord, and they perform Hajj to live for their Lord. Hajj symbolizes both the life and death of a believer.

Hajj is akin to a visit of the Almighty. It is the ultimate form of drawing close to one's Lord during worldly life. While other acts of worship serve as a remembrance of Allah, Hajj itself represents reaching Allah directly. Standing before the Ka'bah, a person feels as though they are standing before the very Lord of the Ka'bah. The act of Tawaf (circumambulation) symbolizes the reality that

the servant, upon finding their Lord, revolves around Him with a devotion akin to that of a moth circling a flame. When they cling to the Multazam in supplication, it feels as if they have grasped the hem of their Master, embracing it with profound yearning and expressing everything in their heart.

The unique feature of Hajj lies in the fact that it is performed at a place that God has described as blessed and a source of guidance (Quran 3:96). Prophets Ibrahim and Isma'il rejected the idea of turning to multiple deities and instead devoted their worship exclusively to the One God. To fulfill this purpose, they constructed the Ka'bah (House of God), which stands as the universal center for the worship of the One God. This same center of monotheism also serves as the focal point for performing the rituals of Hajj, a place where the entire history of Islam is deeply embedded.

Around the Ka'bah lie the traces of the exemplary Companions of the Prophet Muhammad, who, under his guidance, transformed God's religion into a historical reality for the first time. Due to this profound history of divine struggle, Makkah holds a unique status as the most beloved and best place on earth in the sight of God, as mentioned in the hadith: "By God, you are the best and most beloved land to God." (*Musnad Ahmad*, Hadith No. 18715). These historical and spiritual dimensions have created a unique atmosphere around Makkah, imbued with historical and psychological significance in favour of Islam. Anyone who visits it cannot help but be deeply affected. A pilgrim who approaches the experience with

an open heart returns from Hajj enriched with a portion of God's divine provision, which becomes a source of spiritual energy for the remainder of their life.

Hajj has always held exceptional significance among Islamic acts of worship. It embodies all forms of worship and revitalizes them. The worship of Hajj serves as a reenactment of the grand divine mission initiated by Prophet Ibrahim. However, the true value of Hajj lies in its spiritual essence rather than its outward rituals and formalities. In other words, Hajj is not merely about traveling to the sacred land, performing specific rites, and returning home. It is about embracing the profound spiritual transformation that Hajj is meant to inspire.

Food undoubtedly provides nourishment, but it benefits only those who consume it properly. If someone merely looks at it or spills it on themselves, even the most valuable food will be utterly useless to them. Similarly, the true benefit of Hajj is gained by the person who performs it in the manner it should be performed. Regarding the essence of Hajj, the Quran states:

“The pilgrimage is in the appointed months. Whoever intends to perform it during them must abstain from indecent speech (Rafath), from all wicked conduct (Fisq), and from quarrelling (Jidal) while on the pilgrimage. Whatever good you may do, God is aware of it. Make provision for yourselves—but surely, the best of all provision is God-consciousness. Always be mindful of Me, you that are endowed with understanding.”
(Quran 2:197)

“Rafath” refers to engaging in obscene speech. “Fisq” is a term that roughly translates to “casting off the garment of humanity,” while “Jidal” means disputing or arguing with one another. These three terms refer to the kinds of sins that are generally committed through the tongue. When different people gather together, someone with base desires might disrupt the serious atmosphere by making lewd comments. Sometimes, a situation arises that causes a person to abandon their dignified demeanour and start speaking inappropriately. Occasionally, someone might be offended and unable to control themselves, starting quarrelling with others.

The gathering for Hajj is an opportunity to train oneself to avoid these kinds of sins. It is a place associated with sanctity and reverence, where one is specially trained to avoid these evils while living in a communal environment. It encourages individuals to turn away from frivolous and superficial interests and focus on serious matters. It cultivates an attitude of steadfastness in righteousness and piety. Despite experiencing unpleasant situations or emotional wounds in communal life, a person should not immediately resort to fighting with their brother.

Whenever a group of people gather or live together, it is inevitable that one person will develop some grievance against another. This is particularly true during Hajj, where large numbers of people from diverse backgrounds congregate in one place. As a result, people frequently experience discomfort or annoyance during Hajj. If individuals start quarrelling based on personal grievances, the atmosphere of worship will be ruined, and the purpose of Hajj will not be fulfilled. Therefore,

during Hajj, quarrelling and anger have been categorically prohibited, making Hajj a training ground for something much greater. Just as disputes can invalidate Hajj, they can also lead Muslims away from Islam in their everyday life.

Often, a person mistakenly assumes that some outward action is a sign of piety and believes that by performing it, they have achieved a pious life, even though their heart may be devoid of true piety. Some people believe that forgoing provisions for the journey during Hajj is a sign of piety, and as a result, they neglect to prepare them. However, provisions for the journey are a matter of necessity, not piety.

In such matters, a person should prepare according to their needs, but piety is something entirely different. It is a matter of the heart (*Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 2564). God does not accept a person merely because they undertook the journey without provisions and unnecessarily burdened themselves. What God desires is the piety of the heart. The journey of Hajj should be an opportunity to cultivate the provision of piety, for this is the provision that will be of use in the journey of the Hereafter. The best wisdom for the traveller of Hajj, and similarly for the traveller of life, is to avoid indulgence in base desires, to distance oneself from actions disapproved by God, and to steer clear of quarrels and disputes.

Some Aspects

It has been observed that many pilgrims while performing the rituals of Hajj, repeat memorized prayers or read

from a book without much contemplation. Although this approach fulfils the obligations of Hajj, it does not do justice to the spiritual state that is sought through God's remembrance and supplication during Hajj. A person performing Hajj should experience the same emotions and states that Prophet Ibrahim and his family went through. For instance, when performing Sa'i (the ritual running between Safa and Marwah), the pilgrim's words should express a prayer such as, "O God, just as You blessed Hajar with an eternal spring after she strived, grant that my efforts produce springs of goodness that sustain me in this world and the Hereafter."

Sayyid Sabiq rightly stated in his well-known book *Fiqh us-Sunnah*:

"It is recommended for anyone performing Tawaf to focus on remembrance (dhikr) and supplication (du'a'), choosing what they prefer and what brings comfort to their heart, without being restricted to specific words or merely repeating what the guides say. There is no specific dhikr that the Shari'ah has bound us to during Tawaf. The supplications and remembrances that people recite in the first and second rounds, and so on, have no foundation. Nothing from this has been reported from the Messenger of God. Therefore, the ones performing Tawaf should pray for themselves and their brothers for whatever good they desire in this world and the Hereafter." (*Fiqh al-Sunnah*, Vol. 1, p. 694)

The rules of Hajj, as outlined in the Quran and Hadith,

are so few that they could be written in a few pages. However, jurists have, like with other forms of worship, expanded Hajj with countless additional issues, making it nearly impossible for the average person to grasp them all. The justification for this “addition” is often claimed to be for the convenience of pilgrims, but this reasoning lacks substance. The truth is that a person cannot properly perform Salah (prayer) or Hajj just by learning the rules and instructions. These are practices best learned by observing others. This is why the Messenger of God said, instead of detailing the rules of Salah:

“Pray as you have seen me pray.” (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 631)

Similarly, during the Farewell Pilgrimage, he said:

“Learn your Hajj rituals from me” (*Sunan Abi Dawood*, Hadith No. 1984)

This is the true method of learning practical matters. The Companions learned how to pray by observing the Prophet. The Successors (Tabi'in) learned from the Companions, and the Followers of the Successors (Taba' Tabi'in) learned from them. This tradition continues to this day. If people relied solely on detailed juristic issues, they would never be able to perform prayers correctly. Imam Abu Hanifa, a renowned expert in this field, admitted to making five mistakes in the rituals of Hajj, which a barber corrected: ‘Waki’ said: Abu Hanifa al-Nu'man ibn Thabit told me, ‘I made five mistakes in the rituals, and a barber taught me the correct way.’ (*Al-Basa'ir wal Dhakha'ir* by *Abu Hayyan al-Tawhidi*, Vol. 5, p. 131)

Nowadays, nearly 95% of the pilgrims are elderly, many of whom are extremely old and find it difficult to perform the rituals of Hajj. For such people, it is better to appoint someone to perform Hajj al-Badal (Hajj on behalf of another or Hajj by proxy). In contemporary times, Hajj al-Badal has become common for deceased individuals, but according to Shariah, it is originally meant for people in such situations. A hadith states:

“Ibn Abbas (may God be pleased with them) said: A woman from Khath’am came during the Farewell Pilgrimage and said, ‘O Messenger of God, the obligation of Hajj prescribed by God has become due upon my father in his old age, but he is unable to sit on a riding animal. Should I perform Hajj on his behalf?’ He said: ‘Yes.’”
(*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1854)

Another form of Hajj Badal (Hajj on behalf of another) is when a person has passed away and has left a will stating that Hajj should be performed on their behalf. This situation is deduced through Islamic jurisprudence.

According to Imam Malik, “Hajj may only be performed on behalf of someone if they have explicitly made a bequest requesting it. If no such bequest has been made, Hajj should not be performed on their behalf.”
(*Fiqh al-Sunnah*, Vol. 1, p. 637)

Hajj is obligatory once in a lifetime for every able person. The hadith states that the reward for an accepted Hajj is nothing less than Paradise:

“There is no reward for a Hajj Mabroor (a Hajj accepted by God) except Paradise.” (*Sahih*

al-Bukhari, Hadith No. 1773; *Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 1349)

A narration from Amr ibn al-As (may God be pleased with him) further emphasizes this:

“When God instilled Islam in my heart, I came to the Prophet and said, ‘Extend your right hand so that I may pledge allegiance to you.’ The Prophet extended his hand, but I withdrew mine. He asked, ‘What is the matter, O Amr?’ I said, ‘I wish to set a condition.’ He asked, ‘What condition is that?’ I said, ‘That I be forgiven.’ He replied, ‘Do you not know that Islam wipes out whatever came before it, migration wipes out whatever came before it, and Hajj wipes out whatever came before it?’” (*Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 192)

This hadith emphasizes the profound spiritual renewal that comes with embracing Islam, making migration for the sake of God, and performing Hajj, as these acts erase past sins, granting the believer a fresh start.

Hajj Mabroor

Many people often equate Hajj Mabroor with an accepted Hajj. However, its true meaning is a Hajj that is free from any sins: “A Hajj in which no sin is committed.” (*Sharh al-Nawawi*, Vol. 9, pp. 118-119).

Hasan al-Basri, a prominent Tabi’i, said that Hajj Mabroor is one from which a person returns with a detachment from the world and a yearning for the Hereafter: “Hajj Mabroor is one where a person returns with a disinterest in the world and a desire for the Hereafter.” (*Al-Tarikh al-Kabir* by al-Bukhari, Hadith No. 3675).

In essence, if Hajj is performed with the correct understanding and sincerity, not only will a person remain free from sins during the pilgrimage, but they will also return with a heart that is averse to all evils and inclined towards all forms of goodness.

A Matter for Reflection

There is a narration in which the Messenger of God (peace be upon him) said: “The pilgrim is under God’s protection, coming and going.” (*Al-Firdaws bi Ma’thoor al-Khitab*, Hadith No. 2761).

The meaning of this statement about the pilgrim is not mysterious but rather rooted in a well-known psychological reality. God has arranged special conditions for Hajj such that as soon as the intention to perform it arises, the person begins to feel a heightened sense of God’s remembrance and a special inclination towards Him. If someone is preparing for a journey to New York, their psychology begins to reflect that of “New York,” and even after returning, the thoughts of “New York” dominate their mind. Similarly, when a person undertakes the journey of Hajj, both before going and after returning, they will experience a unique spiritual psychology within themselves.

However, the benefits of Hajj are not automatic or mechanical, guaranteed to all pilgrims by default. For these blessings to manifest, it is essential that the pilgrim possesses a sense of receptivity and inner readiness. The attainment of all such benefits always depends on a person’s preparedness. If the capacity is present, the benefits will

be gained. If it is absent, even in the presence of abundant opportunities, a person will remain deprived.

A narration from Hazrat Anas bin Malik has been transmitted in these words:

“A time will come upon people when the wealthy of my Ummah will perform Hajj as a form of luxury and leisure, the middle class will undertake it for business and trade, the scholars will do so to seek fame and recognition, and the poor will perform it as an opportunity to beg.”
(*Tarikh Baghdad*, Hadith No. 5386).

This narration of Hazrat Anas is profoundly thought-provoking and serves as a stern warning. In its light, Muslims today must undertake sincere self-reflection and examine whether their Hajj aligns with the concerns highlighted in this narration. Wealthy individuals should reflect on whether their Hajj is driven by the spirit of taqwa (piety) or by the spirit of tourism. Ordinary people should consider whether they are going for Hajj for spiritual benefit or commercial gain. Scholars should reflect on whether they are going to the House of God to learn the lessons of servitude or to elevate their status as leaders. Similarly, the poor should contemplate whether they are using Hajj as a means to ask God or as a means to beg from people.

HAJJ A HISTORIC ACT

It is said that Imam Abu Hanifa was uncertain about which Islamic act of worship is the most superior. After performing Hajj, he reportedly remarked that he was now convinced that Hajj was the most superior of all acts of worship.

One of the unique aspects of the virtue of Hajj is its connection to a grand divine plan. Hajj is a commemoration of a divine plan that began in the time of Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) and reached its completion during the time of Prophet Muhammad.

The various rituals of Hajj symbolize different stages of this divine plan, which the pilgrim reenacts symbolically. The pilgrim leaves their home and sets out for the Hijaz, much like Prophet Ibrahim left Iraq for the Hijaz. Upon approaching Makkah, the pilgrim removes their sewn garments and wraps themselves in two simple sheets of cloth, resembling the simple attire worn by Prophet Ibrahim and Prophet Isma'il in their time. Upon reaching Makkah, the pilgrim performs Tawaf by circling the Ka'bah. This is the same circumambulation that Prophet Ibrahim and Prophet Isma'il performed to affirm the covenant with God. The pilgrim then performs Sa'i, running seven times between Safa and Marwah, reenacting Hajar's desperate

search for water in the barren desert. The pilgrim goes to Mina to perform the sacrifice, symbolically reenacting the act of sacrifice initially intended by Prophet Ibrahim for his son, which was later substituted with a ram at God's command. The pilgrims then cast pebbles at the Jamarat, commemorating the act of Prophet Isma'il casting stones at the devil when he attempted to dissuade him. Finally, all the pilgrims gather in the plain of Arafat, representing the culmination of their journey, where each pilgrim, with the chant of "Labbayk Allahumma Labbayk" (Here I am, O Allah, here I am), makes a collective commitment to live by the lessons taught through the Hajj.

In the Quran, the rituals of Hajj are referred to as Sha'air—symbols or signs (5:2). These symbols are, in reality, the events that befell Prophet Ibrahim and his family during the unfolding of this divine plan. By symbolically reenacting these events, the pilgrim pledges to become a part of this historic legacy.

Hajj, therefore, is not just a journey to sacred sites but a journey through history, reconnecting with the profound moments that shaped the faith and reasserting one's commitment to the divine covenant that these rituals represent. It is an act that intertwines personal devotion with the larger narrative of faith, making the pilgrim a participant in the ongoing history of Islam.

Hajj: A Commitment to Ultimate Sacrifice

Through Hajj, the pilgrim essentially makes a solemn vow that if the need arises, they will forsake their worldly comforts and move forward on the path of truth. They

pledge to leave behind ease and luxury and embrace simplicity and contentment. They will run towards God and circle around Him, much like the Tawaf around the Ka'bah. They commit to casting stones at the temptations of Satan, symbolically driving away all evil influences. The pilgrim vows to go wherever God's religion demands and to offer whatever sacrifice is required, even to the extent of sacrificing their child if needed, as Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) was prepared to do.

The journey of Prophet Ibrahim from Iraq to Makkah and the events that took place there was part of a grand divine plan spanning 2,500 years. This plan was set in motion 5,000 years ago when idolatry had so deeply permeated human minds that no aspect of life was free from it. This situation persisted for generations, creating a cycle where each new generation was born into a world dominated by polytheism. As a result, the message of monotheism preached by the prophets failed to resonate with people.

The culmination of this divine plan was to break the cycle of idolatry and reestablish the pure worship of the One True God—a mission that began with Prophet Ibrahim and was completed by Prophet Muhammad. The rituals of Hajj are not merely acts of worship but symbolic reenactments of the sacrifices and dedication required to fulfil this divine mission. They serve as a profound reminder of the covenant with God and the commitment to live according to His will, even to the point of ultimate sacrifice.

God devised a plan to raise a generation of human beings in an environment completely free from idolatrous

influences, enabling them to think independently and break free from the continuity of idol-worshipping traditions. For this purpose, a remote and uninhabited location, far removed from urban centres, was deemed most suitable. Thus, the arid region of Arabia was chosen—a land that, at the time, lay entirely isolated and uninhabited, far from the populated areas of the world.

To establish a new generation in this desolate place, a person was needed who was willing to settle there, even at the cost of his life. At this crucial juncture, Prophet Ibrahim was shown a vision in which he was sacrificing his young son, Isma'il. This physical act of sacrifice was, in reality, a symbolic representation of the sacrifice required to settle in the barren wilderness. It was intended to test whether Ibrahim was willing to involve himself in God's plan to the extent that he would take his beloved son to settle in the barren region of Hijaz, where there was nothing but dry mountains and sandy deserts. At that time, living in Hijaz was equivalent to living in the valley of death.

In ancient times, Hijaz remained uninhabited due to its lack of water and vegetation. The absence of life's basic necessities kept the region free from the corrupted influences of civilizations where human nature often became conditioned. This very characteristic, which preserved ancient Hijaz from the culture of idolatry, made it an ideal place to nurture a new generation of monotheists. Prophet Ibrahim's willingness to sacrifice his son showed his readiness to make the ultimate personal sacrifice. Consequently, Prophet Ibrahim and Prophet

Isma'il were chosen for this divine plan, and they were settled in the isolated region of ancient Hijaz to begin the process of raising a new generation.

There is a narration from Ibn Ishaq regarding the journey of Ibrahim and his family to Makkah, which states:

“Abdullah ibn Abi Yahya narrated to me from Mujahid and others among the scholars: ‘When God revealed to Ibrahim the location of the Ka‘bah, he set out from Syria, bringing his infant son Isma‘il, who was still nursing, along with his mother, Hajar. With them was Jibril, guiding Ibrahim to the place of the House and the landmarks of the Sacred Area. As they passed by each village, Ibrahim would ask, “Is it here that I am commanded to stop, O Jibril?” Jibril would respond, “Continue.” This continued until they reached Makkah, which at that time was a barren place with no people except for a group called the Amalekites who lived outside Makkah and around it. The House at that time was a raised, red mound. Ibrahim then asked Jibril, “Is it here that I am commanded to place them?” Jibril said, “Yes.” Ibrahim then placed them near the spot where the stone (of the Ka‘bah) was later positioned and instructed Hajar to set up a shelter for herself there. Then, Ibrahim prayed, as mentioned in the Quran (14:37): ‘O Lord! I have settled some of my offspring in an uncultivable valley near Your Sacred House, Lord, so that they might establish their prayers.

So, make people's hearts incline towards them and provide them with fruits so that they may be grateful." (*Tafsir al-Tabari*, Vol. 2, p. 554).

According to another narration, at that time, there was no one in Makkah, and there was no water. Ibrahim left them there with a bag of dates and a water skin, then turned to leave. Hajar followed him and said, "O Ibrahim, where are you going? Are you leaving us in this desolate valley where there is neither a single human being nor any means of sustenance?" She repeated this several times, but he did not look back. Finally, she asked, "Has God commanded you to do this?" Ibrahim replied, "Yes." She then said, "Then He will not abandon us," and returned to her place. Ibrahim continued until he was out of sight. Then, facing the direction where the Ka'bah would later be built, he raised his hands in supplication and offered the (Quranic) prayer mentioned above. (*Tafsir al-Qurtubi*, Vol. 9, p. 368).

Hajar nursed her child and drank from the water, but when the water was used up, she and her infant son, Isma'il, became thirsty. She looked at him, twisting and writhing in agony from extreme thirst and discomfort, and she could no longer bear to watch. She ran to the nearest hill, Safa, looking for someone but saw no one. She descended and ran in the valley, then climbed Marwah, again looking for someone but finding no one. She did this seven times. Ibn Abbas said the Prophet Muhammad remarked: "That is why people perform Sa'i between them." When Hajar reached Marwah, She said to herself, "Be still!" trying to calm her nerves. Then she listened closely and heard the sound again. She called out, "I hear

you! If you have any help to give, please help us!” Then she saw an angel at the spot where Zamzam now stands. The angel struck the ground with his heel—or, as some narrations state, with his wing—until water began to flow forth. Hajar began to make a basin around it and scooped the water into her water skin as it continued to flow.” (*Tafsir al-Qurtubi*, Vol. 9, p. 369).

(After the spring of Zamzam gushed forth in the barren valley of Makkah, the tribe of Jurhum settled there, and life gradually began to flourish.) Eventually, Prophet Isma’il married a woman from the Jurhum tribe, and later, his mother, Hajira, passed away. Subsequently, Prophet Ibrahim visited to check on those he had left behind. However, upon his arrival, he did not find Isma’il. Instead, he met his daughter-in-law and asked about Isma’il’s whereabouts. She replied, “He has gone to seek sustenance for us.” Prophet Ibrahim then inquired about their living conditions, to which she responded, “We are in a state of hardship, struggling with poverty and distress.” In other words, the woman expressed her dissatisfaction.

Ibrahim said to her, “When your husband returns, convey my greetings to him and tell him to change the threshold of his door.” When Isma’il returned, he sensed something unusual and asked, “Did anyone visit us?” She replied, “Yes, an old man of such-and-such description came. He asked about you, and I informed him of our situation, mentioning that we are living in hardship and difficulty.” Isma’il asked, “Did he leave any advice for me?” She replied, “Yes, he told me to convey his greetings to you and said you should change the threshold of your

door.” Isma’il understood and said, “That was my father, and he has instructed me to separate from you. Return to your family.” He then divorced her and married another woman.

Sometime later, Ibrahim visited again but did not find Isma’il at home. This time, he was welcomed by Isma’il’s new wife. When he asked about Isma’il’s, she replied, “He has gone out to seek provision for us.” Ibrahim then inquired about their living conditions, and she responded, “We are living in ease and abundance,” praising God for His blessings.

Ibrahim asked, “What is your food?” She replied, “Meat.” He asked, “What is your drink?” She replied, “Water.” Ibrahim then supplicated, “O Allah, bless their meat and water.” The Prophet added, “At that time, they did not have grains. Had they had grains, Ibrahim would have prayed for blessings in them as well.”

The Prophet further remarked, “Meat and water are not sufficient for anyone outside of Makkah, except for the people of Makkah.”

According to another narration, Prophet Ibrahim said to her, “When your husband returns, convey my greetings of peace to him and tell him to secure the threshold of his door.” When Prophet Isma’il returned, he asked his wife, “Did anyone visit you?” She replied, “Yes, an elderly man with a dignified and pleasant appearance came to us.” She praised him further and added, “He asked about you, and I informed him. He also inquired about our living conditions, and I told him that we are in a good state.” Isma’il then asked, “Did he give you any message

for me?” She replied, “He conveyed his greetings of peace to you and asked that you secure the threshold of your door.” Isma’il said, “That was my father, and you are the threshold. He was advising me to keep you as my wife.”

Years later, Ibrahim returned and found Isma’il crafting arrows under a tree near Zamzam. They greeted each other warmly, as a father and son would. Ibrahim said, “O Isma’il, God has commanded me to build a house here,” pointing to a small hill. Together, they began constructing the Ka’bah, with Isma’il bringing stones and Ibrahim building. As the walls grew higher, Isma’il brought a stone for Ibrahim to stand on, which later became known as the Maqam Ibrahim. While building, they prayed together, as mentioned in the Quran (2:127): “Our Lord, accept this from us. Indeed, You are the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing. (*Musannaf Abd al-Razzaq*, Vol. 4, p. 352).

Prophet Ibrahim had prayed for a prophet to arise from Isma’il’s descendants (Quran 2:129). The Prophet Muhammad was born as the fulfilment of this prayer. However, as is known, there was a gap of 2,500 years between the prayer and its acceptance. The reason for this delay was that, during this period, a generation was being prepared—one that would be able to break free from the continuity of idolatry and think independently. Through the rigorous training of the desert, this generation developed the capacity to support the Prophet and carry out the challenging mission to its completion. The Quran refers to them as “Khair Ummah” (3:110), the best of nations. This was a unique nation in history. Initially, some among them became enemies of the Prophet, but once

they understood the truth, they fully supported him.

Despite the later influence of idolatry from the surrounding world, the generation formed in Hijaz remained, at its core, a protected lineage.

Apart from a few individuals, they remained true to their innate nature. Though they initially opposed the Prophet, this was largely due to a lack of understanding. Once they realized that he was indeed a true prophet and that his religion was the truth, their opposition turned into full support.

When Prophet Ibrahim “sacrificed” his son, the generation that emerged from him possessed a distinct characteristic: it could perceive and acknowledge the truth with an open mind. The ability to accept the reality of a situation was inherent within them to the highest degree. Here, three different examples are presented. The first is of a person who accepted the truth as soon as he heard it. The second is of one who initially denied it, but when he understood the matter, he did not delay in acknowledging it. The third is someone who, although refraining from acknowledgment due to fear of losing their position of leadership, still shared this common attribute.

1. Among those who believed in the Messenger of God during the early stages was Khalid bin Saeed bin Al-As. He came to the Messenger of God and said: “O Muhammad, what is your message? The Prophet replied, “My message is to believe in one God, who has no partner, and that Muhammad is His worshipper and Messenger, and to abandon the worship of stones that neither hear nor see nor can they bring benefit or harm. ‘And they do not

know who worships them and who does not worship them.' Upon hearing this, Khalid said, "I bear witness that there is no deity but God, and I bear witness that you are the Messenger of God."

When Khalid's father, who was a polytheist, learned that his son had embraced Islam, he caught him and began to beat him. He struck him so fiercely that the stick he was using broke. Despite this severe punishment, when Khalid refused to renounce Islam, his father threatened him by saying, "I will stop your food and drink, and I will throw you out of the house." Khalid responded, 'By God, he has spoken the truth, and I follow him.' (*Mustadrak Al-Hakim*, Hadith No. 5082). In other words, he meant that when Muhammad was speaking the truth, how could I possibly not accept it?

2. The second example is Suhail bin Amr. During the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah, he was the representative of the opponents of Islam. After lengthy discussions, when the treaty was about to be written, the Messenger of God dictated these words: "These are the terms on which Muhammad, the Messenger of God, has made peace with the people of Quraysh: 'This is what Muhammad, the Messenger of God, has agreed upon.'"

Suhail bin Amr strongly objected to these words, saying, "By God, if we knew that you were the Messenger of God, we would not have prevented you from entering the Ka'bah, nor would we have fought against you. (*Sahih Bukhari*, Hadith No. 2732)."

Later, history confirmed that Suhail bin Amr was entirely sincere in his words. His opposition stemmed from a

lack of understanding. Once he realized that the Prophet was indeed a true messenger, he entered into the fold of Islam wholeheartedly and devoted the rest of his life to supporting the cause of Islam.

3. The third example is of Abu Jahl. Although Abu Jahl did not accept the prophecy of God's Messenger, he, too, displayed an example of the Arab character that is rarely found elsewhere.

During the Makkan period, it is reported that one day, Abu Jahl encountered the Messenger of God and spoke to him very harshly. The Messenger of God remained silent. A woman from Makkah witnessed this incident and informed the Prophet's uncle, Hamza bin Abdul Muttalib, saying that Abu Jahl had spoken to his nephew in a very inappropriate manner. At that time, Hamza was holding an iron bow. He approached Abu Jahl and struck him on the head with the bow, causing a severe injury. Some members of Abu Jahl's tribe (Banu Makhzum) rushed to attack Hamza, but Abu Jahl restrained them and said, "Leave Abu Umara (Hamza) alone, for by God, I did indeed speak very harshly to his nephew today." (*Mustadrak Al-Hakim*, Hadith No. 4879).⁷

4. In the famous incident involving Heraclius, it is reported that he asked Abu Sufyan whether the people had ever found Muhammad lying before his claim to prophethood. Abu Sufyan replied, "No." After narrating this event, Ibn Kathir writes:

"Abu Sufyan, then the leader of the disbelievers and the chief of the Makkans, still admitted the truth." (*Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Volume 4, Page 222).

This lineage was established by Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) through the profound act of “sacrifice” involving his offspring. From this lineage emerged selected individuals who were designated as the “best of nations,” wholeheartedly devoted to monotheism. Through their unparalleled sacrifices, they ended the era of religious persecution and the dominance of polytheism, paving the way for religious freedom and the ideological supremacy of monotheism.

From Prophet Ibrahim to Prophet Muhammad, this was a 2,500-year plan. Its centre was the region of Arabia known as Hijaz, where Makkah is located. Hajj is a symbolic reenactment of this history. Through Hajj, Muslims renew their commitment to be part of this divine plan. By saying “*Labbayk Allahumma Labbayk*” (Here I am, O Allah, here I am), they gather in the land of Ibrahim and Isma’il, symbolically reenacting in a few days what those people experienced in reality. Through this, they declare to God that if needed, they are ready to repeat the history that was enacted here before.

The issue we face today is essentially the same as in ancient times, with the key difference being that in the past, people were shaped by a polytheistic mindset, whereas today, they are influenced by an atheistic worldview. Overcoming this mindset is the central task of Islam in our time. The Islamic mission will continue to unfold today in the same way it did in the past.

In reality, the Hajj does not end with the completion of the pilgrimage; the real work begins after Hajj. The return

from the Hajj journey marks the beginning of a new, more significant journey.

During the rituals of Hajj, the pilgrim repeatedly says, "*Labbayk Allahumma Labbayk*" (Here I am, O Allah, here I am). These are words of a covenant. Hajj is a covenant between God and His worshippers. A covenant always marks the beginning; it does not signify an end. The same applies to the act of worship in Hajj. A person who returns after performing the rituals of Hajj comes back having made a sacred covenant with God. Upon returning, they should not be complacent but must actively fulfil the commitments made to their Lord, according to their circumstances and abilities.

Returning from Hajj means leaving the place of the covenant and returning to the place of action. After Hajj, one's responsibilities increase; they do not end.

What is the covenant of Hajj? It is a commitment to repeat history. Hajj is a proclamation to revive the legacy of Prophet Ibrahim. When Prophet Ibrahim observed that the civilized people of Iraq were unwilling to heed the message of God's creation plan, he formulated a new course of action. He subjected himself and his offspring to the most severe trials, ultimately cultivating a new and vibrant generation. He formulated a comprehensive plan to make people aware of God's creation plan and fulfilled every requirement necessary to achieve this objective.

Similarly, today, the pilgrim must do everything that the present circumstances demand and continue doing so until either death comes or the destination is reached.

Just as polytheism dominated the world during the time of Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham), atheism today exerts a similar global influence. Those returning from Hajj now bear the responsibility to strive, through ideological efforts, to restore the dominance of monotheism by reviving the legacy of Ibrahim—a legacy that aligns with the very essence of human nature. They must revitalize Ibrahim’s actions and devote everything they have to this cause, as the present circumstances demand. They must transform the symbolic sacrifice into a real one.

Hajj is a commitment to reenact history—symbolically through the rituals during the days of Hajj and practically through planned action in real life after Hajj.

HAJJ: REMINDER OF THE ABRAHAMIC SPIRIT

Before the advent of the Last Prophet, Prophet Muhammad, Bayt al-Maqdis (the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem) served as the centre of prophetic guidance. After his arrival, al-Bayt al-Haram (the Sacred House in Makkah) became the centre of divine guidance (Quran 2:144). Hajj, in essence, is an annual gathering of Muslims from all over the world. They congregate at the Haram during specific days to renew their connection with God in its sacred atmosphere, reinforce their unity, and symbolically reenact significant events from the prophetic life of the greatest missionary, Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham). Through this spiritual journey, they commit to spreading God's message to all of humanity, regardless of circumstances.

The History of Hajj

God appointed Prophet Ibrahim as a leader of guidance, as mentioned in the Quran:

“I will make you a leader of human kind.” (2:124)

This role entrusted him with the lasting responsibility of ensuring that divine knowledge continued to be conveyed to humanity. For the first 2,000 years, this divine mission was carried out primarily through the lineage of his son Ishaq (Isaac). From Prophet Ishaq to

Prophet Isa (Jesus), many prophets were sent in this line to deliver God's message to human beings in Palestine and its surrounding regions.

After Prophet Isa, this sacred responsibility was transferred to the descendants of Ibrahim's other son, Isma'il (Ishmael). The final prophet, Prophet Muhammad, was born into this lineage. He was uniquely chosen to preserve the divine scripture and establish the religion firmly so that it would never be lost. This mission, referred to in the Quran as the manifestation of the religion — "... so that He may make it prevail [ideologically] over every other religion" (9:33) — highlights a unique aspect of the role of the Final Prophet. Unlike earlier prophets, whose task was solely to convey the message, the Final Prophet was entrusted with both delivering the message and establishing the conditions that would ensure it could be practiced in its pure and unadulterated form by anyone who wished to follow this divine guidance.

To fulfil this monumental task, a supportive community was necessary—one that exemplified exceptional human qualities. This community would stand by the final prophet and help bring the divine mission to fruition. For this purpose, Prophet Ibrahim settled his wife Hajar and his son Isma'il in the barren and uninhabited region of ancient Makkah. In this remote and simple environment, far from the complexities of urban civilization, a nation could emerge that embodied the highest virtues: a people of integrity in thought and action, unwavering in their commitment to truth, and willing to sacrifice everything for divine principles.

Through generations, this community developed in

the harsh desert environment, cultivating the qualities described in the Quran as “the best nation” (khayr ummah, Quran 3:110). It was among these people that the final Prophet, whose arrival was prayed by Prophet Ibrahim during the construction of the Ka‘bah (Quran 2:129), was eventually born.

From Prophet Ibrahim’s wife Sarah, God blessed him with a son, Prophet Ishaq, during his lifetime. However, the fulfilment of Ibrahim’s prayer for a prophet from Ism‘ail’s lineage took more than 2,000 years. This delay was due to the differing roles of the two lineages. The Final Prophet needed a vibrant, virtuous, and resilient nation to support his mission, and the natural development of such a community required centuries.

In the meantime, the continuity of divine guidance was maintained through the prophets sent in the Israelite lineage of Prophet Ishaq. Prophet after prophet reminded humanity of God’s message and His purpose for creation until the arrival of the final Prophet which made further prophetic missions unnecessary.

The Divine Plan of Guidance

In accordance with this divine plan, Prophet Ibrahim migrated from his homeland in Iraq. He settled his wife Sarah in Palestine (Hebron), where Prophet Ishaq was born, and placed his other wife, Hajar, and their son Isma‘il in Arabia (Makkah), where he constructed the Ka‘bah. Thus, the divine mission initiated through Prophet Ibrahim had two centres: Palestine, the focus of the earlier phase, and Hijaz (Arabia), the centre of the final phase.

Initially, after Prophet Ibrahim, Palestine became the hub

of divine guidance. It was in this region that all subsequent prophets of that era, including Prophets Ishaq (Isaac), Yaqub (Jacob), Yusuf (Joseph), Dawud (David), Sulayman (Solomon), Musa (Moses), Yahya (John), and Isa (Jesus), were born. Prophet Ibrahim's grandson, Yaqub (Jacob), also known as Israel, became the namesake of the Israelites (Bani Israel).

However, when the Israelites declined spiritually and morally, despite repeated warnings from the prophets, they were divested of their role as the bearers of divine guidance. This sacred responsibility was then transferred to the descendants of Isma'il. By this time, a 2,000-year process had prepared them to serve as the custodians of God's message.

As a symbolic marker of this transformation, the direction of worship (Qiblah) was changed. Until then, all prophets after Prophet Ibrahim had prayed facing Bayt al-Maqdis. Now, the old Qiblah was replaced, and the Ka'bah was established as the new Qiblah for worship.

Reenacting Abrahamic History

Hajj is a symbolic reenactment of Abrahamic history. It embodies the global mission initiated by Prophet Ibrahim to spread the message of truth. Pilgrims symbolically replicate various stages of his mission, renewing their covenant with God to dedicate themselves to the same divine purpose. They pledge to continue the prophetic mission in the post-final-prophethood era, just as the chosen prophets carried it forward.

The purpose of Prophet Ibrahim's mission was to make humanity aware of God's plan of creation. To fulfil this

purpose, he left his homeland. Similarly, a pilgrim leaves their home, signalling their readiness to abandon personal comfort and dedicate themselves to informing humanity about God's divine plan. Prophet Ibrahim adopted a simple and modest lifestyle, and pilgrims, by donning the Ihram, commit to limiting themselves to only the bare essentials, directing their focus entirely toward their ultimate spiritual objective.

Prophet Ibrahim circumambulated the Ka'bah to reaffirm his loyalty to God. Likewise, pilgrims perform Tawaf around the Ka'bah, declaring their allegiance to God. In their devotion to the divine mission, Prophet Ibrahim's family endured hardships—Hajar ran between Safa and Marwa searching for water. Similarly, by performing Sa'i (the walk between these hills), pilgrims demonstrate their willingness to endure challenges for God's sake, even if it involves their families facing circumstances as difficult as those experienced by Hajar and Isma'il.

When Satan tried to divert Prophet Ibrahim from God's path, he threw pebbles at him to repel the temptation. Similarly, pilgrims perform Rami, symbolically throwing pebbles at Satan, to affirm their resolve to reject all satanic influences. Prophet Ibrahim was even willing to sacrifice his son in obedience to God's command. In the same spirit, pilgrims offer a sacrificial animal, declaring their readiness to make the ultimate sacrifice for the cause of faith.

One of Prophet Ibrahim's key mission was to remind people of the Hereafter. Pilgrims reflect this by gathering in the plain of Arafat, evoking the imagery of the Day of Judgment. This gathering aims to remind the reality of

the Hereafter into their consciousness and renews their commitment to spreading awareness of this ultimate truth. Whenever God called Prophet Ibrahim, he responded without hesitation. In the same spirit, pilgrims repeatedly chant during their Hajj rituals:

“Here I am, O Allah, here I am. There is no partner for You. Here I am. Indeed, all praise, blessings, and sovereignty belong to You. You have no partner”

(*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1549; *Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 1184).

This proclamation signifies the pilgrim’s readiness to answer God’s call at all times.

Hajj as a Global Centre for Divine Awareness

The Ka‘bah serves as a global centre for enlightening humanity about God and His plan of creation. Hajj is a worldwide gathering of individuals committed to spreading this divine message. Every act performed during Hajj recalls the struggles and experiences of Prophet Ibrahim and his family as they worked tirelessly to deliver God’s message to humanity. The rituals of Hajj are symbolic reenactments of the challenges Prophet Ibrahim faced during his mission. Through these symbolic acts, pilgrims resolve to continue the mission of spreading awareness about God’s purpose of creation, just as Prophet Ibrahim did. Some rituals directly reflect his struggles, while others represent symbolic aspects of his mission.

The rituals of Hajj symbolize pivotal moments in Prophet Ibrahim’s prophetic journey, reflecting his unwavering struggles and profound dedication to fulfilling the mission

of conveying God's message. However, for many Muslims today, Hajj and the pilgrimage to the Ka'bah have become little more than an annual religious ritual. If Muslims were to revive their awareness of the mission to enlighten humanity about God's plan of creation—reawakening the spirit of propagation of the divine message—they would naturally infuse the Hajj gathering with the same spiritual vitality that characterized Prophet Ibrahim's life.

Unfortunately, when this missionary spirit diminishes among Muslims, Hajj risks becoming a hollow ritual. Pilgrims throw pebbles at a symbolic Satan but make no effort to resist the living Satan. They engage in symbolic acts but lack the passion and commitment to perform real actions.

Hajj: A Means of Unity

In today's world, one of the most glaring issues among Muslims is their division and disunity. Despite the unique institution of Hajj—a remarkable and unparalleled collective gathering—Muslims fail to achieve mutual unity. Hajj, with its annual global assembly, should serve as a powerful source of unity for Muslims worldwide, dissolving all differences. Yet, in practice, it has been reduced to a mere traditional crowd rather than a vibrant gathering of individuals united by a shared great purpose.

For unity to thrive, there must be a common and higher purpose that directs people's focus towards an elevated goal. Without such an overarching objective, individuals become preoccupied with minor issues, and even the largest assemblies fail to create genuine unity. The great mission of the Muslim Ummah is to make humanity aware

of God's plan of creation. If Muslims rekindle this sense of purpose within themselves, the entire community will naturally align toward this greater goal. Consequently, the Hajj gathering will evolve into a powerful means of global unity among Muslims and serve as the global centre of the Abrahamic spirit—a spirit dedicated to enlightening humanity about God's plan of creation.

Hajj as a Living Act

In the 10th year of the Hijrah, the Prophet Muhammad performed his final Hajj. During this occasion, in the plain of Arafat, he delivered a profound sermon before a gathering of over 100,000 Muslims, famously known as the Farewell Sermon (Khutbat al-Wada). This Hajj is also referred to as Hajjat al-Balagh (the Hajj of Conveyance) because the Prophet conveyed the basic teachings of Islam to the Ummah and took their pledge to uphold them. Toward the end of the sermon, he said:

“Let those who are present convey it to those who are absent, for it may be that a recipient of knowledge will retain it better than the one who heard it directly. And you will be asked about me, so what will you say?”

The people replied, “We bear witness that you have conveyed the message, fulfilled the trust, and given sincere advice.” The Prophet then raised his index finger towards the sky and pointed it toward the people, saying:

“O God, bear witness. O God, bear witness.”

(*Sahih Ibn Hibban*, Hadith No. 1457; *Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 1218)

Two months later, the Prophet Muhammad passed away. By this time, Islam had spread across the Arabian Peninsula. After his demise, his Companions embarked on a mission beyond Arabia, dedicating themselves to spreading God's message and making humanity aware of His plan of creation. They devoted their lives, wealth, and efforts to this mission. As a result, within fifty years of the Prophet's passing, Islam had reached and influenced a significant portion of the known world.

Today, Hajj is still performed regularly, and the Imam of Hajj addresses a congregation much larger than that of Hajjat al-Wada, delivering sermons that echo the teachings of the Prophet. Yet, these sermons often fail to produce meaningful results. Why is there such a stark difference? The answer lies in the fact that Hajj, which was once a vibrant and transformative act, has now become a mere ritualistic tradition.

During the time of the Prophet, those who attended Hajj did so with a clear intention and firm resolve to act upon the guidance they received. In contrast, today's pilgrims travel to Makkah and Madinah mainly to perform the rituals of Hajj and return to their lives unchanged, resuming their previous state without any transformative impact.

This demonstrates that in order to restore Hajj in its true spirit, the first step is to awaken the consciousness of the pilgrims. Unless pilgrims—and Muslims in general—are spiritually and intellectually awakened, the rituals of Hajj will remain hollow, much like a broken gun that fails to fire despite the trigger being pulled.

Reviving the Purpose of Hajj

To revive the true spirit of Hajj, Muslims must approach it with the same sense of mission and resolve as the Companions of the Prophet. Only then will Hajj regain its power to inspire, unite, and guide the Muslim Ummah towards fulfilling its divine purpose, making it a living and transformative act rather than a mere ceremonial tradition.

Reviving Hajj in its true spirit means transforming it into a global institution dedicated to enlightening humanity about God and His plan of creation. Hajj should become a global centre for this divine mission. During this international gathering, representatives from each country could present the conditions and challenges of their nations, allowing participants to exchange knowledge, share experiences, and learn from one another. Sermons during Hajj should emphasize the importance of spreading awareness about God's plan of creation and explore modern opportunities for doing so. Under the guidance of the Hajj institution, effective literature should be developed in multiple languages and disseminated on a global scale.

However, it must be understood that this reorientation of Hajj cannot occur without a broader reorientation of Muslim life. The primary responsibility of Muslims is to serve as witnesses of God's message for humanity (shahadah 'ala al-nas). Their relationship with other nations should be akin to the relationship between a compassionate doctor and their patient. Unfortunately, Muslims today have largely forgotten this principle. Instead, they have positioned non-Muslim nations as material rivals

and adversaries. For Hajj to regain its significance as a transformative institution, Muslims must first undergo a shift in mindset. They need to abandon activities and attitudes that hinder their mission to spread awareness of God's plan of creation. Without fostering mutual respect and a conducive environment between Muslims and other nations, how can Muslims hope to convey this divine message? And who would be willing to listen?

Achieving this goal requires the establishment of world-class universities with curricula and systems oriented toward God and His plan of creation. Institutions should be developed to train individuals in this vision. Comprehensive literature should be created to cultivate an Abrahamic mindset. Moreover, foundational Islamic literature needs to be revisited and redeveloped. Much of the Quranic exegesis and writings on the Prophet Muhammad's life produced in recent times were reactionary, primarily addressing external critiques rather than positive, proactive explanations of Islamic teachings. Looking back 1,400 years to the early Makkan period, we find the Prophet Muhammad performing Tawaf around the Ka'bah alone. At that time, Islam was a stranger in the world. Today, however, the Ka'bah is circled daily by countless individuals, and during Hajj, millions converge on Makkah, overwhelming even the continuously expanding facilities of the Sacred Mosque. This remarkable transformation was achieved through sincere and compassionate efforts to inform humanity about God and His plan of creation.

Hajj is, at its core, an annual demonstration of the Abrahamic mission of Islam. It illustrates that the key to all

progress for Muslims lies in spreading awareness of God and His plan of creation. This mission holds the secret to their worldly success and eternal salvation. History shows that the strength of Islam has always stemmed from its ideological power to connect humanity with their Creator.

In its early days, Islam struggled to gain acceptance among the general populace of Makkah. However, it succeeded in attracting individuals who later became the pillars of Islamic history. This success was solely due to Islam's ideological strength, as no other form of power was available at the time. Even distinguished leaders like Amr ibn al-As and Khalid ibn al-Walid were profoundly moved by Islam's intellectual depth and spiritual excellence, ultimately becoming devoted Companions of the Prophet.

In the second phase, Islam's establishment in Madinah was also a direct result of its ideological strength. No military campaigns were waged against Madinah. Instead, a few individuals carried the teachings of Islam to the city and began sharing them in a straightforward, sincere manner. Over time, Madinah transformed into the intellectual and practical centre of Islam.

During later periods, challenges such as the Mongol invasions posed severe threats to the Muslim world. Barbaric tribes armed with bows and swords launched devastating attacks, dismantling the power centres of Muslim civilizations. At first glance, it appeared that Islamic history would meet the same fate as other civilizations that had risen and fallen before it. Yet, at this critical juncture, Islam's ideological strength emerged as a powerful force. This ideological strength effectively resolved the crisis in challenging times.

Hajj and the Ka‘bah (Baitullah) are profound symbols of a grand strategy for making people aware of God and His creation plan. When Prophet Ibrahim’s message was not heeded in the civilized regions of Iraq, Syria, and Egypt, he, in obedience to God’s command, settled his family in Makkah. There, he constructed the Ka‘bah to serve as a permanent centre for divine guidance:

“The first House to be built for mankind was the one at Makkah. It is a blessed place; a source of guidance for the whole world.” (Quran 3:96).

This verse emphasizes that the first House designated for humanity was located in Makkah—a place of blessings and a source of guidance for all nations.

Amr ibn Awf narrates that the Prophet said: “Indeed, the religion will retreat to the Hijaz just as a snake retreats to its hole. The religion will cling to the Hijaz just as a mountain goat clings to the peak of a mountain. Verily, the religion began as something strange, and it will return to being strange. So, glad tidings to the strangers—these are the individuals who will reform those who have strayed from the true path of Islam. (*Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, Hadith No. 2630)

This hadith indicates that, just as the Hijaz became the epicentre of Islam’s message during the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), it will once again serve as the focal point for reviving God’s religion when it becomes neglected or forgotten. Thus, Hajj is not merely a venue for worship but also a hub for renewing and disseminating the divine message. It is vital today to restore the significance of Hajj as a global platform for this noble purpose.

In the present era, the scientific revolution has opened up numerous new opportunities for Islam. These advancements make it more feasible than ever to utilize the global gathering of Hajj for planning and organizing the dissemination of Islam's peaceful message on a worldwide scale. In this way, the divine way of thinking can once again become the dominant worldview, just as it was in the past. This objective, referred to in the Quran as establishing the faith (izhar-ud-deen) and exalting God's word (i'la-u-kalimatullah), is deeply embedded in the essence of Hajj. Undoubtedly, the key to achieving this lies in reviving the spirit of Prophet Ibrahim through the institution of Hajj.

A Necessary Condition

To transform the institution of Hajj into a global platform for the dissemination of the peaceful message of Islam, one essential condition must be met: Hajj must remain entirely free from political influence.

I performed Hajj in September 1982. One day, while I was inside al-Masjid al-Haram, a group of individuals from a particular country began chanting slogans in praise of their national leader. Their chants attracted a crowd of pilgrims, sparking heated debates and arguments that continued for a long time. The spiritual environment of the Ka'bah, meant for worship and remembrance of God, was sadly turned into a scene of political discord due to this thoughtless act.

A similar incident occurred in Madinah. While staying at a hotel, a group of young men came to my room carrying pamphlets printed in English and Arabic. These pamphlets

contained negative propaganda against the ruler of a specific Muslim country. When they handed them to me, I remarked, “You are wasting your valuable time and misusing these sacred days of Hajj.” Despite my advice, they argued with me, eventually leaving in frustration.

In recent times, such tendencies have become increasingly common. Certain organizations and governments view Hajj primarily as an opportunity to exploit the presence of Muslims from around the world for their narrow political agendas. This approach is entirely wrong and runs counter to the fundamental objectives of Hajj. Pilgrims gathering for Hajj should be seen solely as individuals fulfilling a divine obligation. The correct way to utilize this global assembly is to instil in pilgrims the spirit of Prophet Ibrahim, fostering an awareness of God’s creation plan. This way, they can return to their respective regions as ambassadors of God’s religion, rather than as participants in divisive propaganda against one another.

Hajj is an extraordinary force that can be harnessed effectively to spread the teachings of Islam on a global scale. However, this requires one critical condition: Hajj must not be turned into a platform for internal disputes or political agendas.

THE EMOTIONAL JOURNEY OF HAJJ

In the Quran, God has stated that He created jinn and humans solely for the purpose of worshipping Him (51:56). This indicates that the impulse to worship God is inherently embedded within human nature. Not only is it a fact that humans should worship God, but it is also a demand of their nature to do so. Worshipping God is intrinsic to human nature. This is why nothing other than the worship of God can truly satisfy a person: “surely in the remembrance of God hearts can find comfort.” (Quran 13:28)

Just as a small child is instinctively compelled to run towards his mother, similarly, a human being is compelled by their inner calling to rush towards God. A person cannot change their inner nature, and therefore, they cannot remove the thought of God from their heart and mind.

Testimony of Anthropology

This fact has been scientifically proven in the modern era through the study of anthropology. Experts in anthropology have conducted in-depth studies of human societies from the earliest periods of history to the present. One of the most significant truths that has emerged from these studies is that, despite all ups and

downs, humanity has always been a worshiper of God. The inclination towards God and religion is so deeply ingrained in human nature that it never separates from it. We summarize the findings of anthropology in the words of the *Encyclopedia Americana*:

“From the earliest days of the world’s history, man has been more or less a religious creature. Almost invariably, he had a god, or several of them, to whom he looked for protection. At times, these gods have been crude fetishes of whittled wood or roughly hewn stone; at times, they have assumed the form of animals or reptiles or have appeared as cruel monsters eager for the lifeblood of those who revered them. Howsoever they may have come, man has worshipped them because religion, as represented in the worship of supernatural power, is interwoven with the entire fabric of human nature.”
(*Encyclopedia Americana*, 1961, V. XXIII, p. 354)

This is a fact: the consciousness of God is inherently embedded in human nature. However, this consciousness is somewhat abstract. Therefore, when people do not find the true God, they artificially turn to worshipping self-made gods. The urge for worship arises from the force of nature within them. If they have the guidance of a prophet, this urge finds its fulfilment in the worship of the one and only God. But if they lack prophetic guidance, they may artificially satisfy their urge by imagining non-divine entities as gods and worshipping them.

The ultimate purpose of a human being is only one: to

connect with their Creator and Master. This purpose is deeply embedded in human nature. When a person wholeheartedly aligns with their innate disposition, they can recognize God's signs in their own existence and feel His presence in every moment of their life. This inherent nature can be seen as the "subconscious" of a human. A prophet guides humanity in elevating this subconscious to the level of conscious awareness.

However, for a creature like a human, this spiritual awareness alone is not sufficient. Humans desire to perceive God tangibly, to have a sensory understanding of Him. But here lies the limitation: the tangible perception of God is not truly possible before the Hereafter.

In the Hereafter, undoubtedly, humans will see God. The Quran states that 'Some faces will be radiant on that Day, looking towards their Lord' (75:22-23).

This is also established to the level of certainty through hadith. In a narration from Sahih Bukhari, it is said, "You will surely see your Lord openly; indeed, you will see your Lord openly." (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 7435).

Jareer bin Abdullah (may God be pleased with him) narrates that the Messenger of God looked at the moon on the night of Badr and said, "Indeed, you will see your Lord as you see this moon." (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 554; *Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 633)

Sha'air of God (Symbols of God)

It is a fact that the true vision of God will only be possible in the Hereafter. However, even while believing in the divine vision of the Hereafter, humans have a natural desire to experience closeness to God in this life. This is an intrinsic

aspect of human nature. The question then arises: how can this desire be fulfilled in the present world?

The answer is provided in the concept of Sha'air (signs) of God as mentioned in the Quran (2:158). God has designated certain things as His symbols due to their specific historical significance. These symbols or memorials have been surrounded by such circumstances that seeing them becomes akin to seeing God. Through these, one can indirectly experience the God whom one cannot directly perceive. While humans cannot see God in this world, they can see Sha'air of God. They cannot physically touch or experience the presence of God in this world, but they can touch these symbols and, through them, experience a tangible closeness to God.

The word Sha'ira (plural: Sha'air) means a sign, symbol, or memorial—something that is not the original itself but reminds one of the original due to a particular association. An example of this is the hills of Safa and Marwah, which the Quran refers to as Sha'air of God: “Indeed, Safa and Marwah are among the symbols of God.” (Quran 2:158). Safa and Marwah are two hills near the Ka'bah in Makkah, with a distance of approximately 500 steps between them. When Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) settled his wife Hajar and their infant son Isma'il in this barren area, there was no habitation or water there. When Hajar's water supply ran out, she ran between Safa and Marwah seven times in search of water. To commemorate this event, all pilgrims today perform the ritual of Sa'i by running seven times between these two hills.

This incident was so beloved to God that He declared Safa

and Marwah to be His symbols—authentic reminders of devotion to God. Seeing Safa and Marwah brings to mind the entire history when a believer, solely for God’s pleasure, left his lush homeland (Iraq) and settled his wife and child in an arid, uninhabited land. This is a perfect example of faith in and reliance on God.

Similarly, the Ka‘bah, the Black Stone (Hajar al-Aswad), and other elements related to Hajj are all Sha’air of God. These symbols represent the God-oriented life of Prophet Ibrahim, the friend of God. Observing them evokes the remarkable history of Ibrahim’s unwavering commitment to monotheism. Being in their presence allows one to feel enveloped in an atmosphere of divine grandeur and majesty, making one feel close to God.

The Black Stone has been described in hadith as “The hand of God on earth” (*Kanz al-Ummal*, Hadith No. 38072), although this is to be understood metaphorically, not literally. The divine emotions that rise within a person seek tangible fulfilment by wanting to touch the hand of God and satisfy the longing to connect with the divine. By kissing the Black Stone, a person fulfils this emotional desire. Similarly, a person desires to circle around God in devotion; by performing the Tawaf (circumambulation) of the sacred Ka‘bah, they fulfil this longing. A person wishes to run for the pleasure of God; running between Safa and Marwah provides that satisfaction. In this way, all the rituals of Hajj fulfil the hidden emotional needs of a person, serving as a means to establish a tangible connection with their Lord.

The instinct to worship a deity is deeply ingrained in

human nature. However, diverting this impulse away from the worship of the one true God—such as engaging in idol worship or attributing divine status to anyone or anything other than God—constitutes a misuse of this natural inclination. The belief in monotheism directs this natural impulse in the right direction. This is the essence of the rituals of Hajj. Hajj, in one sense, corrects a human error. It prevents a person's desire from being misguided and instead directs it towards the right path. Hajj provides the correct form of satisfaction for the same longing that a person seeks to fulfil through incorrect means.

A person desires to see God and to engage in acts of worship before Him after physically perceiving Him. To fulfil this desire, humans have made visible images of the unseen God and started worshipping these self-created images as representations of God. However, in the words of the Quran, this is "Ilhad" (deviation). The true response to this natural impulse, which humans wrongly seek in man-made idols, can be found more correctly in the divine signs, Sha'air of God.

Creating an idol of God is akin to making a statue of a person. A statue is made by someone who has seen the person or their image. But no sculptor can claim to have seen God. When a person makes an idol of God, they are reducing the infinite to the finite. They are transforming a supreme being into something lesser. Such an act is contrary to reality and undoubtedly signifies rebellion.

In one sense, Hajj is a means of correcting the human mind. The message of Hajj is: do not attempt to bring God down to the level of an "idol." Instead, perceive God at the level

of His “symbols.” In this world, you cannot experience God in His essence, but you can perceive Him through the symbols of His essence. These Sha’air are established by the actions of God’s exemplary worshippers. They are tangible memorials of those historical moments when a direct connection was established between God and His worshipper—when the worshipper discovered God, and God revealed Himself to them.

The Sha’air (signs) of God are the remnants of those precious individuals in history who embraced monotheism in its highest and most exemplary form. All the rituals of Hajj are performed among these Sha’air. Distancing oneself from these symbols is distancing oneself from God, and attachment to them is attachment to God.

Meeting with God

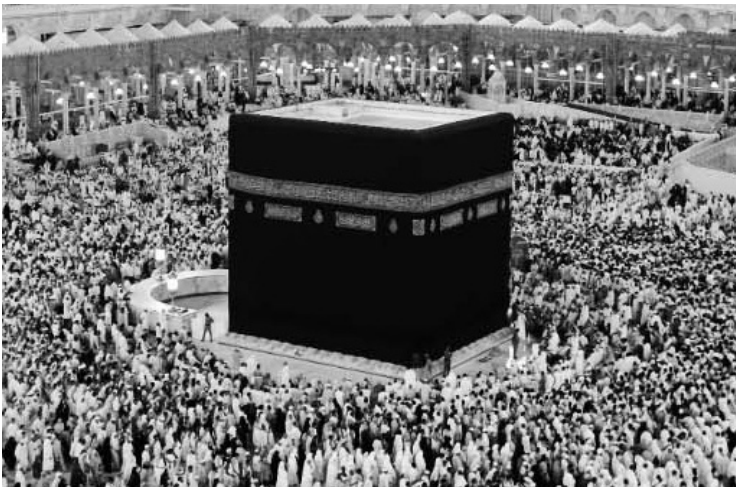
The plain of Arafat presents a truly remarkable scene in this regard. God’s worshippers come in caravans from all directions, all wearing the same simple garment. Each person has lost their distinguishing features. One single phrase is on everyone’s lips: “*Labbayk Allahumma Labbayk, Labbayk Allahumma Labbayk*” (Here I am, O Allah, here I am; Here I am, O Allah, here I am).”

Seeing this scene, one is reminded of the verse in the Quran that describes how when the trumpet is blown, all people will suddenly emerge from their graves and rush towards their Lord: “The trumpet will be blown and, at once, they will rise up from their graves, and hasten to their Lord. (36:51)

The truth is that the gathering at Arafat is a foretaste of the

gathering on the Day of Judgment. It is a vision in this world of the world to come. In a hadith, it is said: “Hajj is Arafah” (*Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 55). Meaning, the standing at the plain of Arafah on the 9th of Dhul-Hijjah is the cornerstone and the most essential element of the Hajj pilgrimage. This indicates what the most important purpose of Hajj is: to remind a person of their eventual standing before God on the Day of Judgment, to mentally prepare oneself today for what will physically happen tomorrow.

The Ka‘bah is the house of the One True God. It was built by two great prophets, Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) and Prophet Isma‘il (Ishmael). The extraordinary events of their noble lives and their remarkable sacrifices for the sake of God are associated with this house. Moreover, the lives of the Prophet Muhammad and his righteous Companions, along with their God-centered activities, are deeply woven into the atmosphere of the Ka‘bah.



A person reads about the unparalleled history of devotion to God and sacrifice for His sake in books. From childhood until the journey of Hajj, they continuously hear about it until it becomes a part of their memory. When they finally travel and stand before the Ka‘bah, all these memories stored in their mind suddenly awaken. They find themselves standing before a history—a history of fear and love for God, a history of sacrificing oneself for God, a history of making God their everything, a history of realizing God as the All-Powerful, a history of annihilating oneself for the sake of God.

Such a great divine history becomes embodied before a person in the form of the Ka‘bah. It appears to them as if it were written in stone. This experience shakes their mind, melts their heart, and transforms them into a new person.

In the travelogue of my Hajj journey (1982), I wrote:

“Our residence was very close to the Haram, on Ibrahim al-Khalil Street. Thus, apart from eating and getting a brief sleep, I spent most of my time in Haram. My daily routine was to perform ablution with Zamzam water near Bab al-Hijra, then drink Zamzam to my fill, and afterwards enter the Haram. Often, I would go to the upper section of the Haram because it was relatively quieter due to the smaller crowd. There, I would pray, recite the Quran, gaze at the Ka‘bah, and remember God. Hours would pass by daily in this way, and I would lose track of time. No matter how much time had passed, when I returned from the Haram, it always felt as though my heart was not yet satisfied. The feeling I experienced sitting in front of the Ka‘bah cannot be described in words.”

Relief in Distress

During Hajj, people from all over the world gather at the same time. Due to this, there are frequent instances where one person causes discomfort to another. Repeatedly, situations arise that seem very unpleasant to one's temperament. In such moments, if a person turns their attention toward God, their experience will change completely. Even a bitter experience will turn into a sweet one. What would normally only be a source of discomfort could become a means of divine sustenance.

For example, imagine you are standing in Masjid al-Haram for prayer, and a crowd of people enters, forming a row right in front of you due to lack of space. You find that there isn't enough room left for you to bow or prostrate properly. In such a situation, if you focus only on the people in front of you, anger and frustration will arise within you. However, if you begin to introspect, your state will change entirely. You might say, "O Allah, accept this broken and imperfect prayer of mine, for even my seemingly correct prayers are, in truth, just as imperfect as this one." A person who can shift their mindset in this way will experience a completely different reality. From a situation that most people find frustrating, this person will derive a sense of closeness to God.

Similarly, during the journey of Hajj, various unpleasant experiences arise—such as the crowd during the stoning at Mina, the intense heat in Mina and Arafat, and people pushing to get water. If you focus only on the immediate situation, feelings of anger and irritation will arise within you. However, if, in such moments, you reflect on how the minor discomforts of this world are nothing compared

to the great trials of the Hereafter, you will suddenly feel that what seemed like a hardship has turned into a source of comfort. It will envelop you as a manifestation of God's mercy.

An Extraordinary Journey

In the travelogue of the Hajj, as mentioned above (1982), the impressions are described as follows:

“In 1982, I set out on a journey to several countries. The plan did not include performing Hajj, nor did I even imagine that I would reach the Hijaz and fulfil the obligation of Hajj. When I arrived in Rawanda (Africa), I met a Muslim brother, Mohammed Soleman al-Qaid, and suddenly, the means for performing Hajj were arranged. In this matter, my situation was exactly as described by the poet in his verse:

Khuda ki dein ka Musa se poochhiye
ahwaal—

Ke aag lene ko jaayen, payambari mil jaaye.

‘Inquire of Moses about the divine blessings
granted to him by God

He went to fetch fire but was granted
prophethood instead’.

It was my deprivation that I had not yet made plans for Hajj. I left my homeland for a different journey, but strangely and wondrously, God took me through Asia, Europe, and Africa and finally brought me to the sacred land so that I could attain the blessing of Hajj. Although I was the one

performing Hajj, it was God alone who made it possible. No one else had any part in it. Finally, when I reached the Haram and set eyes on the Ka‘bah, it was a scene beyond words. Seeing the Ka‘bah and finding myself in its vicinity was such a profoundly divine experience that my pen fails to describe it. Upon receiving this unexpected blessing, my heart was filled with overwhelming emotions. Uncontrollably, I said, ‘O Allah, I had not yet made plans for Hajj in my life. It was as if I was content to die without performing Hajj. How extraordinary is Your grace that You saved me from this indescribable deprivation.’”

These appear to be the personal impressions of a pilgrim under specific circumstances. However, the truth is that this sentiment should overwhelm every pilgrim. Every pilgrim should feel that their Hajj is one that God Himself has facilitated. When they arrive in the sacred land, they should sense that it is God who has brought them to this point. They may have left their homeland as an ordinary traveller, but upon reaching their destination, they find themselves as guests of God. They only travelled a physical path, but God placed them in an environment filled with heavenly blessings. They came with nothing but the baggage of deprivation, but by God’s special mercy, their loss turned into gain.

Blessings According to Capacity

The Ka‘bah is one of the signs of God on earth. Historically, God has arranged circumstances there in such a way that whoever visits cannot help but be deeply affected. It is a place where God embraces wandering

souls. At this sacred site, hearts that have turned to stone are softened with springs of servitude, and eyes that were once devoid of light are shown the divine manifestations of God. However, in this world, the principle of 'blessings according to capacity' prevails. The blessings of the Ka'bah are bestowed upon those who approach it with the right capacity. For those without the proper capacity, the journey of Hajj is merely a form of tourism. They go there and return as they were, unchanged.

In the Hajj travelogue as mentioned above (1982), the following lines are recorded:

"The divine scenes I witnessed there were indescribable, as were the human scenes that I encountered. I observed that people were either engrossed in worldly conversations or busy purchasing worldly goods. Some were pushing others aside to express their fervent religiosity, even though such behaviour is not permissible at the holy sites of Hajj.

Where divine manifestations were scattered all around, meant to captivate people, they were instead lost in human spectacles. Where God's angels had descended so that people could converse with them, the people were instead engaged in conversations with one another. In a place where the provisions for the Hereafter were abundantly available, people were interested only in buying worldly goods. The place that deserved to instil the fear of God, prompting people to step back in reverence, was instead a place where people were displaying their skill in pushing ahead of others."

A Few Impressions

In the travelogue describing the conditions of Hajj, the following impressions are noted:

“On the evening of October 4, 1982, we performed the Farewell Tawaf (Tawaf al-Wada) and departed from Makkah to Madinah that night. After completing the final circumambulation of the Ka‘bah, as I left the Haram, I was overcome with a strange feeling. I kept turning back to look at the Haram. My steps were moving forward, but my heart was being pulled back. It felt as if I was leaving my true homeland and heading towards a foreign land. With such emotions, we departed from the Masjid al-Haram and set out for Madinah on the night of October 4.

Entering the Haram of Madinah was a deeply moving experience. The entire history of Islam and the Prophet of Islam unfolded before my eyes.

I found myself praying: ‘O Allah, I send blessings and peace upon Your Messenger. Include me among the pious followers of Your Messenger. Count me among those for whom the Prophet Muhammad will bear witness on the Day of Judgment, whose testimony You will accept, saving them from Hell and granting them entry into Paradise. How remarkable was the day that has passed, and how extraordinary is the day yet to come.’

We stayed in a hotel very close to the Masjid al-Nabawi in Madinah. The sound of the Adhan and Takbir reached our room. For several days, I had the blessing of praying in the Masjid al-Nabawi. However, the crowd of worshippers is so large that it is difficult for anyone to find peace and focus in their prayers. I had a similar experience in the early

days of my stay in Makkah. Afterwards, I began praying on the upper floor of the Masjid al-Haram, where I found more peace. It is unknown why the Masjid al-Nabawi has not been made into a two-story building, as someone like me could have found solace there.

The Masjid al-Nabawi is extraordinarily vast and magnificent, but the increasing number of visitors has rendered it insufficient despite its expansiveness. However, for someone like me, the sight of shops and hotels surrounding the Masjid al-Nabawi was not a pleasant one. Only one side of the mosque is free from shops and hotels, where tent-like structures have been erected for the worshippers. If the area around the mosque had remained open, the grandeur of the mosque would have been even more pronounced. The situation is almost the same around the Haram in Makkah.

On September 30, 1982, the Hajj rituals were completed, and we returned to Makkah. Dar Al-Thaqafa Printing House publishes statistics of the pilgrims each year. According to their announcement, the total number of pilgrims who came from countries other than Saudi Arabia in the year 1402 AH (1982 CE) was 853,555. The countries with the highest numbers of pilgrims were:

- | | | |
|--------------|---|--------|
| 1. Egypt | - | 98,408 |
| 2. Iran | - | 89,503 |
| 3. Nigeria | - | 81,128 |
| 4. Pakistan | - | 72,844 |
| 5. Indonesia | - | 57,478 |
| 6. Turkey | - | 53,788 |

7. Algeria	-	40,400
8. Syria	-	27,890
9. India	-	26,229

The Saudi government has made countless excellent arrangements, which have made Hajj much easier in the present time. However, there is one thing that perhaps has no solution: the crowd of pilgrims. Particularly at the time of stoning the devil, the way people rush upon each other is extremely regrettable. Countless people converge simultaneously to stone the symbolic devil, creating such a frenzy that it seems they are so eager to stone the symbolic devil that they are willing to trample over real human beings to do so. I have never seen a worse example of disregarding one of God's commands in the zeal to fulfil another. Several people were seen with plaster casts on their hands or feet. One scene I witnessed was when a pilgrim fell during the stoning and was trampled to death under the feet of other pilgrims. People mentioned that such incidents happen every year. How strange is that Hajj in which, in the zeal to strike a symbol of the enemy of humanity, a person ends up killing a fellow human being."

Renewal of Faith

Hajj is a form of renewing one's faith. The faith that existed before Hajj can be seen as a temporary faith. When a believer arrives in Makkah, proclaim "*Labbayk, Labbayk*" (Here I am, O Allah, here I am), and circumambulates the Ka'bah, they are, in essence, renewing their faith. It is as though they are pledging their allegiance directly to God. The forgiveness of sins after Hajj aligns with the same principle that applies to the acceptance of Islam. When

one comes into the fold of Islam, his previous sins are forgiven. This process begins after one's initial faith, and it reaches its completion with the renewal of faith through Hajj. If the initial faith was indirect, then the renewed faith through Hajj is direct. In cases of incapacity, the initial faith alone, by the mercy of God, suffices for the forgiveness of sins. However, for those with the capability of performing Hajj, their faith is completed through the renewal that occurs after Hajj.

The essence of Islam is to surrender oneself to God. This surrender is fully realized in Hajj. When all the pilgrims gather in the plain of Arafat, proclaiming "*Labbayk Allahumma Labbayk*" (Here I am, O Allah, here I am), it is a collective demonstration of this very surrender. Hajj, in a sense, is a presentation of oneself before God. On the Day of Judgment, every person will be seized and presented before God, while the arrival in the plain of Arafat during Hajj is akin to voluntarily presenting oneself before God.

The truth is that Hajj is the supreme act of worship. Just as the Ka'bah stands unparalleled among all mosques, Hajj holds a similarly supreme position among all acts of Islamic worship. (*Safarnama Ghair Mulki Asfar*, 1992, pp. 50-65).

HAJJ AND UNITY

One of the aspects of Hajj is the promotion of Islamic solidarity. During Hajj, Muslims from all over the world gather at a single place and perform the rituals of Hajj together. Hajj is a global religious gathering of Muslims. In this context, consider the following verses from the Quran:

“And We made the House [the Ka’bah] a place of assembly and a sanctuary for mankind” (2:125)

The first House to be built for mankind was the one at Makkah. It is a blessed place; a source of guidance for the whole world.” (3:96)

“God has made the Ka’bah, the Sacred House, a means of support to people.” (5:97)

“make people’s hearts incline towards them.” (14:37)

“Call mankind to the Pilgrimage. They will come to you, on foot, and on every kind of lean camel, by every distant track” (22:27)

The Universal Centre of Monotheism

From these verses of the Quran, it is evident that the construction of the Ka’bah in the Hijaz by Prophet Ibrahim was specifically intended to establish it as the

centre for the people of monotheism (Tawhid). People from nearby, as well as distant lands, were to come there, travelling by various means. Historical circumstances were created around the Ka‘bah so that people’s hearts would be drawn to it and people from all directions would converge there. The Ka‘bah is designated by God as the global Islamic centre for all time, serving as the international gathering place for Muslims around the world. According to traditions, God commanded Prophet Ibrahim to call upon the people to undertake the journey for the Hajj of this House:

Prophet Ibrahim said, “O my Lord, how can I convey this message to the people when my voice cannot reach them?” God said, “You call, and it is upon Us to convey it.” So, Prophet Ibrahim stood on his standing place—some say on the stone, some say on Safa, and some say on Abu Qubais—and said: “O people, your Lord has established a House, so perform its Hajj.” It is said that the mountains lowered themselves so that the voice reached the ends of the earth, and even those who were in the wombs and the loins heard it. Everything that heard it—be it stones, tents, or trees, and everyone whom God had decreed to perform Hajj until the Day of Judgment—responded, “Here I am, O Allah, here I am.” (*Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Vol. 5, p. 414)

This does not mean that all the people of the present and future literally heard Prophet Ibrahim’s call at that very moment. The call of Prophet Ibrahim was symbolic.

Indeed, all people heard it, but this hearing was in potential form, not in actual form. The call of Prophet Ibrahim was actually the beginning of a continuous event. He called out in his time, and after him, others took up his voice and conveyed it to others. Then, from generation to generation, people continued to make this call. When the era of the press and radio arrived, this call began to spread even more rapidly. It crossed mountains and seas, reaching far and wide until the possibility of anyone missing this prophetic call became negligible.

General Proclamation

Hajj is the natural occasion for making announcements concerning collective matters. Accordingly, some of the most important Islamic proclamations were made during Hajj. One example is the Proclamation of Disassociation (Bara'ah), which was announced after the revelation of Surah At-Tawbah.

Makkah was conquered in Ramadan of 8 AH. After that, during the life of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), there were three Hajj pilgrimages. The Prophet did not perform Hajj in the first two years; he only performed Hajj in 10 AH, which is commonly referred to as the Farewell Pilgrimage (Hajjat al-Wada'). After that, he passed away.

The command of disassociation from the deniers of the truth was revealed in Madinah, but its announcement was made in Makkah during the Hajj season. This clearly indicates that the true place for announcing all important decisions in Islam is Makkah and the time

of Hajj. Hajj is the central gathering place for Muslims from all over the world. It is here that they are to assemble, it is here that they are to announce their significant decisions, and it is from here that they are to undertake the global planning necessary according to the commands of God and His Messenger.

Another prominent example in this context is the sermon of the Farewell Pilgrimage (Khutbah al-Wada'). This was the most important sermon of the Prophet Muhammad. Before his death, he wished to inform people of the fundamental requirements of the faith clearly. However, he did not announce them at any other time but delayed the announcement until the Hajj of 10 AH. The following are the words at the beginning of the sermon:

“O people, listen to my words, for I do not know if I will ever meet you again after this year in this place.” (*Seerah Ibn Hisham*, Vol. 2, p. 603)

Afterwards, the Prophet Muhammad conveyed all the essential teachings to the people and finally asked, “Have I conveyed the message? Have I conveyed the message?” The people testified that, yes, he had conveyed it. (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 105 and 1741)

After the conquest of Makkah in 8 AH, the entire Arabian Peninsula had been brought under the control of the Prophet Muhammad. He could have made these announcements from any place in Arabia. At that time, Madinah was the political centre of Islam. The Prophet could have summoned people to Madinah and made the

proclamations there, which he later announced during the sermon of the Farewell Pilgrimage. However, he did not choose any of these methods. Instead, he waited for Hajj and, upon reaching Makkah during Hajj, made these announcements. This practice of the Prophet clearly demonstrates that Hajj is the designated occasion for announcing all significant matters in Islam.

Natural Approach

One reason for this arrangement is that Islam always prefers a simple and natural method. For example, one of the rituals of Hajj is the Sa'i between the hills of Safa and Marwa. There was a question of order in this ritual, specifically whether the Sa'i should start from Safa or Marwa. When the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) performed this ritual during Hajj, he said, "I begin with what God began with." (*Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 1218).

This statement refers to the verse in the Quran: "Indeed, Safa and Marwa are among the symbols of God." (Quran 2:158). This is the verse where the command for pilgrims to perform Sa'i between Safa and Marwa is given. The arrangement of this verse is such that the word "Safa" comes first, followed by "Marwah." The Prophet said that the sequence in the wording should also be followed in practice, so that remembering one sequence will be sufficient to recall the other, and there will be no need to memorize two separate sequences.

The same natural wisdom applies to making Hajj the occasion for announcements. Muslims from all over the world gather in one place every year to perform the rites

of Hajj and will continue to do so. Therefore, God made this the occasion for collective announcements so that a single gathering could suffice for both purposes.

Another benefit of making collective announcements during Hajj is that it gives these announcements a sacred status. The location of the Hajj is the most sacred place for Muslims, so any announcement made at the Hajj site naturally becomes sacred and respected in the eyes of the people.

The Social Significance of Hajj

Hajj is one of the most significant annual acts of worship in Islam. It is performed during the last month of the lunar calendar, Dhu al-Hijjah. The rituals of Hajj are carried out in and around the Ka‘bah (Makkah), which is located in the Arabian Peninsula. This act of worship is considered comprehensive, encompassing all aspects of worship. One of the prominent aspects of Hajj is its collective nature. In the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (1984), it is stated:

“About 2,000,000 persons perform the Hajj each year, and the rite serves as a unifying force in Islam by bringing followers of diverse backgrounds together in religious celebration.”
(*Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1985, Vol. IV. p. 844)

The Quran, when giving the command for Hajj, mentions: “And We made the House [the Ka‘bah] a place of assembly and a sanctuary for mankind” (2:125). The Arabic word “Mathabah” used in this verse has a meaning similar to what we today call a “centre”—a place where people gather, a common point of reference, and a place of unity for all.

People from every country and nation come to perform Hajj. The number of pilgrims annually reaches around 2.5 million. During the Hajj season, Makkah and its surrounding areas are filled with people. These individuals speak different languages and have various appearances, but after arriving here, they all share a common purpose. They all move toward the same goal as if some divine magnet is pulling all the “iron” pieces toward one focal point.

As these people from various countries approach the site of Hajj, they all remove their national attire and don the same simple garment known as Ihram. The Ihram consists of two unstitched white sheets—one wrapped around the lower body like a waistcloth and the other draped over the upper body. In this way, millions of people are dressed in the same manner and colour.

These pilgrims perform various rituals and eventually gather in the vast plain of Arafat. At this time, an extraordinary scene unfolds. It feels as though all distinctions between people have suddenly vanished. Individuals have set aside their differences and become united in divine harmony. Humanity stands as one, just as their God is one.

When viewed from a height, the sight of all the pilgrims in their Ihram gathered in the plain of Arafat is striking. Despite differences in language, colour, status, and gender, all individuals appear to be completely unified. At that moment, different nations seem to merge into one great nation. The truth is that Hajj is such a grand display of collectivity that perhaps no other event in the world can compare.

The Ka‘bah is the qibla (direction) of worship for Muslims. Muslims face it during their five daily prayers. In a general sense, this serves as a symbolic reality. However, during the days of Hajj, upon arriving in Makkah, this becomes a tangible reality. When Muslims from all over the world gather here and face the Ka‘bah to perform their prayers, it becomes visibly apparent that the shared qibla of all Muslims is indeed one.

The Ka‘bah is a square-shaped, elevated structure. Around this building, people perform Tawaf—circling the Ka‘bah in a counterclockwise direction in rows. During Hajj, the Ka‘bah remains the focus of all attention. In this way, Hajj becomes an act of worship that, through all its rituals and ceremonies, teaches the lesson of collectivity and centrality.

The History of Hajj

The history of Hajj is closely linked to the lives of Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) and Prophet Isma‘il (Ishmael). These two figures are recognized not only by Muslims as prophets of God but are also acknowledged as great prophets by followers of other major religions. This connection has historically granted the act of Hajj a level of sanctity and greatness that is unparalleled by any other ritual in the world.

Prophet Ibrahim was born in ancient Iraq. Prophet Isma‘il was his son. At that time, Iraq was a land of advanced civilization. Azar, the father of Ibrahim and grandfather of Isma‘il, held a high position in the government system of Iraq. For Ibrahim and Isma‘il, Iraq offered abundant

opportunities for success and prosperity. However, driven by their innate search for the one true God, they left the fertile land of Iraq and journeyed to the barren desert of Arabia, where there was nothing between the Creator and creation to come in the way. Here, they built the House of God (Ka‘bah).

The act of Prophet Ibrahim and Prophet Isma‘il can be described, in other words, as choosing to make One God their focal point rather than multiple gods. For this purpose, they built the Ka‘bah, the House of God, which serves as the global centre for the worship of the One True God. This centre of monotheism is also the focal point for performing the rituals of Hajj.

Consider some of the aspects of the rituals performed during Hajj. One of the most frequently recited phrases by the pilgrim during Hajj is:

“God is the Greatest, God is the Greatest. There is no deity except God. God is the Greatest, God is the Greatest, and all praise is due to God.” (*Al-Mu’jam al-Kabir* by al-Tabarani, Hadith No. 9538)

By repeatedly uttering these words, the pilgrims are psychologically trained to recognize that greatness belongs only to God. All other forms of greatness exist only to be subsumed into this singular, greater greatness. This awareness is the greatest secret of unity. Unity and collectivity are not found where every individual considers themselves to be great. On the contrary, when everyone surrenders their individual greatness in favour of one supreme greatness, only unity and collectivity

prevail. Disunity is the result of being trapped in personal pride instead of humility, while unity is about living not with a sense of personal greatness, but with an awareness of God's greatness.

Similarly, one of the important rituals of Hajj is Tawaf (circumambulation). People from all over the world who gather in Makkah during the Hajj season first perform Tawaf around the Ka'bah. This is a practical acknowledgement that one's efforts should be centred around a single focal point. One should revolve within a single circle. This is the same concept seen at the physical level in the solar system, where all the planets revolve around a single central point, the sun. Similarly, Hajj teaches that one should make One God the focal point of one's life and remain within the sphere of His guidance.

After this, the pilgrim performs Sa'i between Safa and Marwa. They go from Safa to Marwa and then return from Marwa to Safa, repeating this seven times. This act teaches, in the language of action, that human endeavours should be within set limits. If there are no limits to one's efforts, some will run too far in one direction and others in the opposite direction. However, where the bounds of effort are established, everyone stays within those limits, returning again and again to the place where their fellow pilgrims continue their activities.

This principle applies to all the rituals of Hajj. Each ritual of Hajj teaches the importance of unity and collective action from various perspectives. They are practical demonstrations of moving in unison.

Centre of Unity

Hajj, in its true essence, is a journey toward God at an unseen level. While ordinary people will stand before God after death, a believer chooses to present themselves before Him in this life. For others, appearing in God's presence is a matter of compulsion, but for the believer, it is an act of conscious choice. The gathering of pilgrims from across the world in the plain of Arafat symbolizes this profound moment of voluntary submission and unity before God. This is why it is said in the Hadith: "Hajj is Arafat" (*Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 55), meaning the essence of Hajj lies in the gathering at Arafat.

However, Hajj is a comprehensive act of worship. It encompasses various aspects, both directly and indirectly. One of the additional benefits of Hajj is that it serves as a means of global Islamic unity. The Ka'bah can be likened to a central point around which the worshipful circle of God-fearing individuals from all over the world is formed.

The primary aspect of attending Arafat is spiritual, connected to the Hereafter. However, within this gathering lies the deep secret of Islamic unity, for unity is the name of gathering around a centre. When Muslims gather around their Lord during Hajj, they not only discover the secret to their afterlife but also the secret to their worldly existence.

I have a picture of the Ka'bah on the wall before me. The familiar structure of the Ka'bah stands in the centre of a vast mosque, surrounded by thousands of people bowing in worship to their Lord. This is the annual congregational prayer that is performed every year during the month of

Hajj. More than 2.5 million Muslims from all over the world participate in it. This is a completely visible event, and a photograph can be taken of it.

But those who pray around the Ka‘bah are not just the people seen in the Sacred Mosque; the situation is the same for Muslims outside the Sacred Mosque. All the people of Arabia pray facing the Ka‘bah daily. Similarly, Muslims in all of Asia and Africa do the same. This circle continues to expand until it encompasses the entire globe.

If you look with the eyes of imagination, the event that takes place in the courtyard of the Ka‘bah is the same event that happens on a larger scale every day all over the world. Muslims all over the globe stand facing the Ka‘bah five times a day to perform their prayers.

They stand around the Ka‘bah across the entire world. In this way, it is as if, five times a day, a circular formation of Muslims is created across the globe. The Ka‘bah stands in the centre, and Muslims around the world form a circle around it, performing their prayers. This is a great and complete form of unity that has no parallel in any other religious or non-religious group.

This is a grand system established through thousands of years of history. If Muslims have a true awareness of it and can learn the lesson for which this grand system was created, a revolution could come into their lives. Every one of them would be united as part of a worldwide spiritual community.

The truth is that the Ka‘bah is a sign of God on earth, and it is also a symbol of Muslim unity and collectivity.

One visible aspect of this great system of unity is that all individuals are made to remove their garments and don the same simple attire. Here, the distinction between king and subject vanishes. The distinctions between Eastern and Western dress are lost in the air. In the common dress of Ihram, everyone appears as though they have only one identity—that they are all believers in one God, and no other identity exists for anyone.

Although the prescribed rituals of Hajj end in Makkah, most pilgrims, after completing Hajj, also go to Madinah. The ancient name of Madinah was Yathrib. However, the Prophet of Islam made it his centre during the latter part of his life. Since then, it has been known as “Madinat al-Nabi” (the city of the Prophet), and Madinah is the short form of this name. In Madinah is the mosque built by the Prophet Muhammad. Here is his grave. Here are scattered the signs of his prophetic life.

In these circumstances, when pilgrims reach Madinah, it becomes a profound lesson in unity and collective spirit. In the Prophet’s Mosque, they renew their understanding that their religious leader is one. They return with the realization that, despite their geographical and national differences, they must follow the path shown by a single Prophet for their spiritual and intellectual growth. They come to understand that they must accept one sacred personality as the guide of their lives. Regardless of their numbers or diversity, their God is one, and their Prophet is one.

LESSON OF PIETY

One of the verses about Hajj in the Quran states:
“The Hajj is (in) the well-known months. So whoever has made Hajj obligatory upon himself therein (by entering the state of Ihram), there is (to be for him) no sexual relations and no disobedience and no disputing during Hajj. And whatever good you do—God knows it. And take provisions, but indeed, the best provision is fear of God. So fear Me, O you of understanding.”
(Quran 2:197).

Before Islam, Hajj was practised during the era of ignorance (Jahiliyyah), but for those people, it was more of a national festival than the worship of the One God. Hence, during the days of Hajj, all the things that generally happened at national fairs used to occur. Islam abolished all these practices.

One of the commands given in this regard was to refrain from rafath, fusooq, and jidal during the days of Hajj. “Rafath” refers to indecent or obscene talk, “Fusooq” broadly refers to sinful behavior, disobedience, or transgression against God’s commands, and “Jidal” refers to disputes, or argumentation, or quarrels. These things are prohibited even under normal circumstances, but during Hajj, they are particularly emphasized. This is because the journey and gathering during Hajj present more opportunities for

such behaviours. If a person's consciousness is not fully aware of these prohibitions, there is a risk that they may fall into these behaviours knowingly or unknowingly.

A true believer lives for a purpose, not for desires. Such a person strives to avoid disobedience to God in all matters and refrain from disputes in social life. These qualities should always be present in a believer, but during Hajj, they become a special indicator of whether one has truly become a pilgrim. If a person is truly affected by the state of piety that should accompany the journey of Hajj, they cannot engage in these prohibited behaviours. These acts negate piety, and where these acts are present, piety cannot exist. Conversely, where piety is present, these acts will naturally be absent.

Further Emphasis

The actions prohibited during the days of Hajj are the same as those forbidden on other days. However, during Hajj, these prohibitions serve as a form of special spiritual training. During Hajj, one is made to strictly adhere to these prohibitions so that one's awareness of them becomes sharper, and a special capability to avoid them in the future is developed.

When a person is at home or work, they are often entangled in their personal matters, forgetting the greater realities. Therefore, people are brought to the mosque daily for prayer so they can separate themselves from their environment for a while and focus their minds solely on God. The journey of Hajj serves a similar purpose. During the days of Hajj, a person is taken out of their limited environment for a longer period and brought to various places in Hijaz (Arabia). Hajj is essentially a complete

separation from one's worldly environment so that one can focus entirely on one's God.

The land of Arabia is associated with many great religious traditions. For this reason, the geography of Arabia is the most appropriate for performing the rituals of Hajj. Here lies the Ka'bah, which has been revered for thousands of years. Here are the stories of the sacrifices of the prophets. Here are the memorials of God's rewards bestowed upon His righteous believers. This is the land where the life of God's final Messenger and his Companions left their marks.

These historical associations have enveloped the places of Hajj with an extraordinary atmosphere of sanctity and respect. As soon as a person arrives in this environment, an entire religious history comes alive in their mind. It is quite natural for one's religious sensitivity to increase here, leading them to fulfil God's prescribed duties with greater seriousness and devotion. Due to this special historical significance, this area has been chosen by God as the place for a symbolic rehearsal of Islamic life, after which one returns to their previous environment, better equipped to lead a life devoted to God.

During the days of Hajj, pilgrims are required to observe specific prohibitions, with the following being among the most notable:

1. **Avoid Harmful Speech:** Refrain from causing harm to anyone through words, including arguments, insults, or any form of offensive language.
2. **Do Not Harm Living Creatures:** Killing or harming animals is strictly prohibited, preserving

the sanctity of life during this sacred journey.

3. Embrace Simplicity: Pilgrims must uphold simplicity and abstain from luxuries or adornments. This includes avoiding actions such as trimming nails, grooming hair, wearing stitched clothing (for men), applying perfume, engaging in marital relations, and similar acts that contradict the spirit of humility and submission.

Caution in Speech

In communal living, the most frequent interaction between people involves speech. It is through language that one person often causes the greatest harm to another. During the time of Hajj, when a large number of people are together simultaneously, there is a repeated risk of losing control over one's tongue, leading to one Muslim causing distress to another. Therefore, the season of Hajj has been particularly designated as an opportunity to train in caution when speaking. In ordinary times, causing harm through speech is considered a part of Islamic ethics. However, during the days of Hajj, it has been made an essential part of Islamic worship so that people take extra care to protect themselves from this social vice. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said that whoever performs Hajj in such a way that human beings are safe from his tongue and his hands, all of his past sins will be forgiven. (*Tarikh Dimashq* by Ibn Asakir, vol 29, p. 362).

In the Qur'an, it is stated: "Hajj is in well-known months (Shawwal, Dhul-Qa'dah, Dhul-Hijjah). Whoever undertakes Hajj during these months, there should be no obscenity, nor wickedness, nor argument, nor quarrelling during Hajj." (2:197)

The pilgrimage is in the appointed months. Whoever intends to perform it during them must abstain from indecent speech, from all wicked conduct, and from quarrelling while on the pilgrimage. Whatever good you may do, God is aware of it. Make provision for yourselves—but surely, the best of all provision is God-consciousness. Always be mindful of Me, you that are endowed with understanding. (2:197)

These are the three main forms of causing harm through speech. A person may utter obscene words that distress others. They may refer to another person using derogatory language and attempt to disgrace them with inappropriate words. They may resort to arguments and harsh speech during conversations. All of these behaviours are strictly forbidden during Hajj so that one's sensitivity to these issues is heightened. The aim is that when a person returns from the sacred journey of Hajj, the impact of this experience will ensure that their tongue is forever safeguarded against such behaviours.

Avoiding Aggression

Once the pilgrim dons the Ihram for Hajj, it becomes prohibited for them to hunt land animals. This prohibition extends to accepting the meat of hunted animals as a gift, plucking the feathers of a bird, assisting in hunting, or even providing a knife to slaughter the hunted animal—all these actions are forbidden for the pilgrim.

During Hajj, a pilgrim is permitted to kill a harmful animal, such as a snake, or to slaughter a sacrificial animal,

which is part of the Hajj rituals. However, beyond these exceptions, it is forbidden for the pilgrim to kill or harm any animal. While hunting animals is generally permissible in ordinary circumstances, it is not allowed during Hajj.

This is essentially about emphasizing and ensuring the implementation of a Shari'ah command. It is an obligation upon a person not to kill another human being nor to harm any living creature. This is a general directive of Shariah, expected of every individual in all situations. However, during Hajj, this command is extended to include even the hunting of animals, thereby sharpening the individual's awareness of this duty. The intention is that, after returning from Hajj, the pilgrim will be more conscientious in upholding this command and will continue to live among others without being aggressive for the rest of their days.

A Disciplined Life

The essence of an Islamic life can be summarized in one word: living with self-control. The journey of Hajj has been specifically designed as a training ground for this disciplined way of life. The significance of Hajj in this regard is expressed in a Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), where he said: "Whoever performs the rituals of Hajj in such a way that human beings are safe from his tongue and his hands, all of his past sins will be forgiven" (*Tarikh Dimashq* by Ibn Asakir, vol 29, p. 362).

This implies that while fulfilling the obligation of Hajj, a pilgrim must be especially mindful to avoid causing harm to others through their words or actions. The Hajj that wipes

out all sins is one from which a person returns with a tongue that has not hurt others and hands that have not caused harm.

Self-Forgotten

During Hajj, indulgence in luxuries and adornments is prohibited. The pilgrimage begins with entering the state of ihram, a simple attire comprising a white lower garment (izar) and a white upper sheet (rida), which becomes obligatory for every pilgrim upon crossing into the sacred boundaries (haram). The ihram symbolizes an ascetic dress, reflecting humility and detachment from worldly pleasures, worn specifically for the sacred visit to the Ka‘bah.

This is the first symbolic measure through which God reminds His believers that all human beings are equal. The external attributes that people use to boast over one another or to consider someone superior or inferior are utterly meaningless in the eyes of God. God views everyone equally, just as during Hajj, millions of pilgrims appear the same due to wearing identical garments. The Ihram of Hajj is thus a practical demonstration of Islam’s principle that all human beings are equal. Those who wish to become true believers in God must remove all other “garments” from themselves and be clothed in a divine garment—the Ihram.

When asked who the true pilgrim is, the Prophet Muhammad replied, “The one with dishevelled hair and a dust-covered body” (Sunan al-Tirmidhi, Hadith No. 3243). These words describe the true pilgrim. Dishevelled

hair and a body covered in dust signify a person devoted to a purpose. When someone wholeheartedly dedicates themselves to a specific task, they have no time for adornment and embellishment. The directive in Hajj to intentionally adopt this appearance is essentially a strong lesson in leading a purposeful life. It means that a person should be so absorbed in fulfilling God's purpose that they forget about their appearance and luxuries. They should forget temporary pleasures and become so engrossed in pursuing the higher purpose that their personal needs fade from their consciousness.

Regarding the command to perform Hajj, the Quran states: "And take provision with you for the journey, but the best provision is piety. So fear Me, O people of understanding." (2:197)

The pilgrimage is in the appointed months. Whoever intends to perform it during them must abstain from indecent speech, from all wicked conduct, and from quarrelling while on the pilgrimage. Whatever good you may do, God is aware of it. Make provision for yourselves—but surely, the best of all provision is God-consciousness. Always be mindful of Me, you that are endowed with understanding. (Quran 2:197)

In ancient Arabia, it was believed that taking provisions for the Hajj journey was a worldly act. A person who set out for Hajj without carrying any worldly goods was considered pious and devout. Such people would say about themselves, "We are those who rely solely on God" (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1523). This meant

that they claimed to rely on nothing but God. However, the Quran clarified that such external displays do not constitute piety.

Religiosity is rooted in the heart and mind, not in outward displays. What truly matters is that a person's heart and mind remain free from strong attachment with anything other than God (Quran 2:165), rather than whether they appear to lack food or provisions.

SECTION 3

THE RITUALS OF HAJJ

Hajj is the fifth pillar of Islam. It is obligatory for every Muslim, male or female, who has the means, to perform Hajj once in their lifetime. The Hajj rituals are observed over five days, from the 8th to the 12th of Dhul-Hijjah.

Before reaching Makkah for Hajj, pilgrims must don the Ihram (the ritual garment for Hajj) at a designated location called Miqat. The Miqat for pilgrims coming from Yemen, southern directions, or countries such as India and Pakistan, is the Yalamlam mountain, approximately 92 km (57 miles) south of Makkah. For those coming from or passing through Madinah, it is Dhul-Hulayfah (modern name: Abyar Ali), about 450 km (280 miles) north of Makkah. For pilgrims traveling from Iraq and areas to the east, such as Kufa, Basra, and Baghdad, it is Dhat Irq, approximately 94 km (58 miles) northeast of Makkah. Pilgrims from the Levant (Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, and Palestine) or northern regions, including Turkey, use Al-Juhfah (modern-day Rabigh), located about 190 km (118 miles) northwest of Makkah. It is essential to wear the Ihram at the Miqat before entering Makkah.

The 8th of Dhul-Hijjah is also known as the Yawm al-Tarwiyah (Day of Tarwiyah). On this day, after performing Ghusl (ritual purification) at night or after the Fajr prayer, pilgrims should wear Ihram, which consists of two unstitched garments: a lower garment (Izar) and an upper garment (Rida). They should apply perfume

and, upon entering the Haram, perform the Tawaf of the Ka‘bah. After completing the Tawaf, they should offer a two-unit prayer (Rak‘atain) of Salah al-Tawaf near Maqam Ibrahim. After supplicating and seeking forgiveness, they should perform two Rakats of prayer with the intention of Ihram. During this prayer, the head should be covered with the Ihram sheet. Upon completion of the prayer, the pilgrim should uncover their head and make the following intention: “O Allah, I intend to perform Hajj; make it easy for me and accept it from me” (*Musannaf Abd al-Razzaq*, Hadith No. 9703).

From the moment the Ihram is worn until the completion of the Hajj, the following supplication, known as Talbiyah, is repeatedly recited while standing, sitting, and performing the rites of Hajj. Men should say the Talbiyah aloud, while women should say it softly:

“Labbayka Allahumma Labbayk, Labbayka La Sharika Laka Labbayk, Inna’l-Hamda wa’n-Ni‘mata Laka wa’l-Mulk, La Sharika Laka.”

“Here I am, O Allah, here I am. Here I am; You have no partner, Here we are. Truly, all praise, blessings, and sovereignty belong to You. You have no partner.” (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1549; *Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 1184).

During Hajj, it is obligatory to perform Sa‘i once between Safa and Marwah. This Sa‘i can be performed before going to Arafat, after an optional Tawaf, or after the Tawaf al-Ziyarah. It is preferable to perform the Tawaf al-Ziyarah after returning from Mina. However, those who are weak may discharge this duty earlier to avoid the crowd.

The Tawaf of the Ka‘bah consists of seven rounds. Begin

by kissing or gesturing towards the Black Stone (Hajar al-Aswad). Then, perform the Idtiba' by placing the upper garment of the Ihram under the right shoulder and draping both ends over the left shoulder, and walk briskly in the first three rounds, known as Raml (women are not required to perform Idtiba' or Raml). The remaining four rounds should be performed at a normal pace. Supplicate throughout the Tawaf, and after completing it, offer two Rakats of prayer at the Maqam Ibrahim. Then, proceed to the Multazam and make heartfelt supplications.

After drinking Zamzam water and offering prayers, proceed to Safa to begin Sa'i, entering through Bab al-Safa. Begin by walking from Safa to Marwah, completing one round. Continue back and forth between Safa and Marwah until you complete a total of seven rounds, with the seventh round ending at Marwah.

During Sa'i, it is recommended to recite Takbir (Allahu Akbar), Tahleel (La ilaha illallah), and various supplications. Men are encouraged to briskly walk or run between the two green markers along the pathway between Safa and Marwah. Ensure all seven rounds are completed properly, with the final round ending at Marwah.

On the morning of the 8th of Dhul-Hijjah, after this, pilgrims should proceed to Mina, aiming to arrive before noon to perform the Dhuhr prayer there. Pilgrims are to stay in Mina for five days in total. In Mina, it is recommended that five prayers be offered from the Dhuhr of the 8th to the Fajr of the 9th of Dhul-Hijjah, preferably in Masjid Khaif. On the 9th of Dhul-Hijjah, pilgrims proceed to Arafat, where they will perform the standing (Wuquf) at Arafat, the most essential pillar of Hajj. The Dhuhr and Asr prayers are combined and offered together at Arafat.

After returning from Arafat on the 9th of Dhul-Hijjah, pilgrims stay overnight in Muzdalifah. On the morning of the 10th of Dhul-Hijjah, before sunrise, pilgrims leave Muzdalifah and return to Mina. Throughout this period, the Talbiyah and supplications should continue. One such supplication is:

“La ilaha illallahu wahdahu la sharika lahu, lahu al-mulku wa lahu al-hamdu, yuhyi wa yumitu wa huwa ‘ala kulli shay’ in qadeer.”

“There is no deity but Allah, alone, without any partner. To Him belongs all sovereignty, and to Him belongs all praise. He gives life and causes death, and He has power over all things.”

It is recommended that you remain in the plain of Arafat until sunset. On the 10th of Dhul-Hijjah, after performing the Maghrib prayer in Arafat, pilgrims head to Muzdalifah, where they combine the Maghrib and Isha prayers. This journey allows for rest at every place except the valley of Muhassir. On the 10th of Dhul-Hijjah, pilgrims return to Mina. Between Muzdalifah and Mina are three locations known as Jamarat al-Ula, Jamarat al-Wusta, and Jamarat al-Aqaba, where pilgrims throw seven pebbles each at three different times.

After the Rami (stoning), the pilgrims perform the sacrifice. Following the sacrifice, they shave or trim their hair (Halaq or Taqsir). After this, they may perform Ghusl and wear their normal clothes. The sacrifice must be performed at the designated slaughtering area, and a few members of a group may be appointed as representatives to perform the sacrifice on behalf of everyone. Not every pilgrim needs to go to the slaughtering area. After the haircut, all Ihram’s restrictions are lifted except for

marital relations.

Next, the pilgrim must perform Tawaf al-Ziyarah. If possible, it is better to go to Makkah and perform this Tawaf on the 10th before sunset and return. Otherwise, it can be performed until the 12th before sunset. During Tawaf al-Ziyarah, it is recommended that we engage in much remembrance of God and supplication.

After completing Tawaf al-Ziyarah, return to Mina and perform the Rami (stoning) at Jamarat on the 11th and 12th of Dhul-Hijjah. While throwing the pebbles, say:

“Rajman Li'l-Shaytan wa Ridhan Li'l-Rahman.”

“To stone the Devil and to seek the pleasure of the Most Merciful.”

Upon returning to Mina, perform the Rami first at the small Jamarat, then the middle Jamarat, and finally at the large Jamarat. This is the prescribed method. Upon returning from Muzdalifah, it is recommended that you spend three nights in Mina. However, one may leave Mina on the 12th of Dhul-Hijjah before sunset after spending two nights.

Now, you have completed Hajj. For the remaining days in Makkah, perform the Tawaf of the Ka'bah and supplicate daily. Before departure, perform the Farewell Tawaf (Tawaf al-Wada') before leaving Makkah.

Visiting Madinah

While visiting Madinah, offering prayers in Masjid al-Nabawi, and reciting Salat (blessings and peace) at the Prophet's grave are not obligatory parts of Hajj; they are highly rewarding, and every pilgrim is encouraged to visit. After completing the Farewell Tawaf (Tawaf al-Wada'), the pilgrim should depart from Makkah for Madinah.



Throughout the journey to Madinah, the pilgrim should continuously send blessings and peace upon the Prophet Muhammad. Upon arrival in Madinah, the pilgrim should perform Ghusl (ritual purification), then enter Masjid al-Nabawi and offer two Rak'ahs (units) of prayer, followed by supplication. After the prayer, approach the Noble Rawdah (Rawdah al-Sharifah), a small enclosure, inside the Prophet's Mosque, where Prophet Muhammad and two of his Companions, Abu Bakr and Umar, are buried, with the utmost respect and recite Salat and Salam (blessings and peace) for the Prophet. During the stay in Madinah, it is recommended that as many prayers be offered as possible in Masjid al-Nabawi.

After completing prayers and reciting Salat in Masjid al-Nabawi, pilgrims should visit the significant historical sites of Islam in Madinah, such as Jannat al-Baqi, where many Companions of the Prophet are buried, Masjid Quba, where the Prophet offered his first prayer after arriving in Madinah; Mount Uhud, the site of the second major battle in Islam; and Masjid al-Qiblatayn, where the command to change the Qiblah (direction of prayer) was revealed during a prayer.

PROHIBITIONS DURING HAJJ

After donning the Ihram, the following actions become prohibited for a pilgrim:

1. Engaging in fights or quarrels.
 2. Lying.
 3. Backbiting and speaking ill of others.
 4. Accusing someone falsely.
 5. Using foul language or making obscene remarks.
- Note: These actions are forbidden at all times, but their severity increases significantly during Hajj.
6. Hunting land animals or encouraging others to hunt.
 7. Shaving any part of the body, cutting nails, or trimming the moustache.
 8. Wearing socks or footwear that covers the middle bones of the feet.
 9. Wearing a turban or any form of headgear.
 10. Wearing stitched clothing or breaking branches from trees.
 11. Applying or smelling perfume or oil.
 12. Having intimate relations with one's spouse or engaging in affectionate conversation.

THE SEQUENCE OF HAJJ RITUALS

1. Departure from Home: Begin the journey towards Makkah.
2. Wearing Ihram at the Miqat: Upon reaching the Miqat, assume the state of Ihram.
3. Entering Makkah: Enter the city of Makkah after performing ritual purification, Ghusl or Wudu.
4. Entering Masjid al-Haram and Performing Tawaf: Enter Masjid al-Haram and perform the Tawaf of the Ka'bah as prescribed.
5. Performing Sa'i between Safa and Marwah: After completing Tawaf, perform Sa'i by walking between the hills of Safa and Marwah seven times.
6. 8th of Dhul-Hijjah: Perform the Tawaf al-Qudum (arrival Tawaf) and proceed to Mina.
7. 9th Dhul-Hijjah: Travel to Arafat, combine Dhuhr and Asr prayers, and spend the day in supplication and devotion.
8. The Night of the 9th Dhul-Hijjah: Travel to Muzdalifah, combine Maghrib and Isha prayers, and spend the night there.
9. 10th Dhul-Hijjah: Depart Muzdalifah for Mina and perform the stoning of Jamarah al-Aqaba with seven pebbles.

10. Perform the Sacrifice and Shave the Head: After stoning, perform the sacrificial ritual and shave your head.
11. 10th of Dhul-Hijjah: After shaving, go to Makkah, perform Tawaf al-Ziyarah, and complete Sa'i if it was not done earlier. Return to Mina afterward.
12. 11th–12th Dhul-Hijjah: Stay in Mina and perform the stoning ritual at all three Jamarat each day.
13. You Have Now Completed All Rituals of Hajj: On the 12th of Dhul-Hijjah, return to Makkah, perform Tawaf al-Wada (Farewell Tawaf), drink Zamzam water, and thank God for His blessings. May Allah accept your Hajj and grant you its full reward.

GLOSSARY OF HAJJ TERMS

Miqat: The designated location one has to enter Makkah in the state of Ihram.

Ihram: The sacred state entered with the intention of performing Hajj or Umrah, involving the wearing of prescribed specific simple attire and adherence to special rules.

Talbiyah: The prayer recited during Hajj or Umrah:

“*Labbayk Allahumma Labbayk*” —

Here I am, O Allah, here I am.

Tahleel: The declaration of faith: “La ilaha illallah Muhammadur Rasoolullah” (There is no god but God, and Muhammad is His Messenger).

Tawaf: The act of walking around the Ka‘bah seven times in a counterclockwise direction. Types of Tawaf include:

Tawaf al-Qudoom: Arrival Tawaf.

Tawaf al-Ziyarah: Visitation Tawaf (performed on the 10th of Dhu al-Hijjah).

Tawaf al-Wada’: Farewell Tawaf.

Mataf: The open area surrounding the Ka‘bah where pilgrims perform Tawaf.

Umrah: The lesser pilgrimage, involving Ihram, Tawaf, and Sa‘i between Safa and Marwah, but without standing at Arafat.

Hajj al-Ifrad: Performing Hajj alone without combining it with Umrah. A person performing this is called a Mufrid.

Qiran: Performing Hajj and Umrah together in one Ihram. A person performing this is called a Qarin.

Tamattu’: Performing Umrah during the Hajj season, exiting Ihram, and later re-entering Ihram for Hajj. A person performing this is called a Mutamatti.

Raml: Walking briskly with short steps and moving the shoulders during the first three rounds of Tawaf.

Idtiba’: The practice of uncovering the right shoulder by passing the upper sheet of Ihram under the right armpit and placing it over the left shoulder during Tawaf.

Sa’i: The ritual of walking seven times between the hills of Safa and Marwah.

The Two Green Markers: The two green indicators marking the area between which one must walk briskly during Sa’i.

Shawt: One round of Tawaf around the Ka‘bah or one round between Safa and Marwah.

Istilam: The act of touching, kissing, or gesturing towards the Hajar al-Aswad (Black Stone) during Tawaf.

Wuquf: The act of standing in devotion at Arafat or Muzdalifah, a pivotal ritual of Hajj.

Rami: The ritual of throwing pebbles at the three pillars (Jamarat al-Aqabah, middle, and first Jamarah) in Mina.

Halq: The act of shaving the head after performing the sacrificial rites.

Taqsir: The Act of trimming the hair after the sacrifice.

Hatim: A semi-circular area adjacent to the Ka'bah that was originally part of the structure but is now outside of it.

Hajar al-Aswad: The Black Stone embedded in the southeastern corner of the Ka'bah, touched or kissed or gestured towards during Tawaf as a symbolic act of devotion.

Afaqi: A pilgrim who travels from outside the Miqat boundaries to perform Hajj or Umrah.

Ahl al-Hill: Meaning "the people of the permissible area." It denotes those living in areas outside the Haram boundaries but within the Miqat boundaries.

Ahl al-Haram: Meaning "the people of the sacred precinct." refers to the people who reside within the Haram, the sacred precinct surrounding Makkah.

Hadi: An animal brought by a pilgrim for sacrifice as part of the Hajj rituals.

Taqleed: The act of placing a rope or collar around the neck of a sacrificial animal to mark it as an offering for Hajj or Umrah.

Nahr: The ritual sacrifice performed in Mina after the Rami (stoning of the Jamarat) on the 10th of Dhu al-Hijjah.

Rafath: Engaging in idle, inappropriate, or offensive talk, which is strictly prohibited during the sacred days of Hajj.

Jamarat: The three pillars used in the stoning ritual during Hajj, symbolizing the rejection of evil. They are:

Jamarat al-Ula (the first pillar),

Jamarat al-Wusta (the middle pillar), and

Jamarat al-Aqabah (the last pillar),

Note: They are located near Masjid al-Khaif in Mina.

Multazam: The area between the Black Stone and the door of the Ka‘bah, where pilgrims make heartfelt supplications and special prayers.

Rukn al-Aswad: The corner of the Ka‘bah where the Black Stone (Hajar al-Aswad) is located. Tawaf begins by touching or gesturing towards this corner.

Maqam Ibrahim: The stone upon which Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) stood while constructing the Ka‘bah.

Kaffarah: An expiation for mistakes made during Hajj rituals. It involves offering a sacrifice, fasting, or giving charity to compensate for the error.

IMPORTANT LOCATIONS OF HAJJ

Makkah (Makkah): A famous city in Arabia where Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) constructed the House of God (Ka‘bah). Approximately 450 km from Masjid an-Nabawi (Madinah).

Medina (Madinah): Originally named Yathrib, it was renamed Medina after the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) migrated there—approximately 450 km from Makkah.

Badr: The location where the first battle between the early Muslims and their opponents took place. Approximately 330 km from Makkah and approximately 150 km from Madinah.

Al-Shumaisi: The site where the Prophet Muhammad took the Pledge of Ridwan from his Companions and where the peace treaty with the Quraysh, known as the Treaty of Hudaibiyah, was signed. It is situated approximately 24 kilometres from Masjid Al-Haram.

Yalamlam: This Miqat is for pilgrims coming from the south regions such as India, Pakistan, and Yemen.

Al-Juhfah: It is located 17 kilometers southeast of Rabigh, near the Red Sea coast. It serves as the Miqat for pilgrims coming from Egypt, Syria, Europe, and other western regions. It is primarily used by pilgrims traveling from the north and west.

Dhat Irq: This Miqat is for pilgrims coming from Iraq.

Qarn al-Manazil: A mountain and the Miqat for the people of Najd.

Dhul-Hulaifah: Now known as Abyar Ali, it is the Miqat for those coming from Medina.

Hira: A cave near Makkah where the Prophet Muhammad received the first revelation, approximately 5 km from Makkah.

Uhud: A mountain near Medina where the famous Battle of Uhud took place. Approximately 5 km from Masjid an-Nabawi and 450 km from Makkah.

Safa: A small hill near the Ka'bah where pilgrims begin the ritual of Sa'i, located within Masjid al-Haram.

Marwah: A hill where the Sa'i ritual ends, located within Masjid al-Haram.

Jabal al-Nur: A mountain near Makkah, on top of which is the Cave of Hira, approximately 5 km from Makkah.

Jabal Thawr: A mountain where the Prophet Muhammad stayed for three nights during his migration from Makkah to Medina, approximately 8 km from Makkah.

Jabal al-Rahmah: A hill in the plain of Arafat where the Prophet Muhammad delivered the Farewell Sermon during his final pilgrimage, approximately 22 kilometres from Makkah.

Jabal al-Takbir: A mountain located in Mina.

Jabal Qazah: A mountain situated in Muzdalifah.

Jannat al-Mu'alla: The cemetery in Makkah where Khadijah (RA) and other notable figures are buried.

Jannat al-Baqi: The main cemetery in Medina. Adjacent to Masjid an-Nabawi.

Masjid Quba: A mosque near Medina recognized as the first mosque built in Islam, approximately 6 km from Masjid an-Nabawi.

Masjid al-Qiblatain: A mosque near Wadi Al-Aqiq was revealed, where the command to change the direction of prayer (Qibla) was given. Distance to Masjid an-Nabawi is approximately 4 km.

Masjid al-Khaif: A mosque in Mina where pilgrims stay on the 8th of Dhu al-Hijjah. Distance to Makkah is approximately 5 km.

Masjid Namirah: A mosque on the edge of Arafat where the combined Dhuhur and Asr prayers are performed on the 9th of Dhu al-Hijjah. Distance to Makkah is approximately 22 km.

Masajid al-Khamsah: The five mosques in Medina believed to be near the location where the trench was dug during the Battle of the Trench.

Muzdalifah: A plain located between Mina and Arafat, where pilgrims gather after sunset on the Day of Arafah to pray and collect pebbles for the stoning ritual. Distance to Makkah: Approximately 10 km.

Mash'ar al-Haram: Meaning “the sacred monument” or “the sacred site,” it is located in Muzdalifah, between Mina and Arafat. Pilgrims perform Wuquf (standing) here, engaging in devotion and reflection as part of the Hajj rituals.

Valley of Muhassir: A historical valley located

between Muzdalifah and Mina on the Hajj route near Makkah, where God destroyed the Army of the Elephant led by Abraha.

Bir Uthman: The Well of Uthman is an ancient well near Madinah, attributed to Uthman ibn Affan (RA). He purchased it to provide free water to the Muslim community.

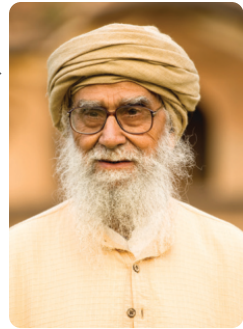
Mina: A valley located about 7 kilometres northeast of Makkah, where the ritual of Ramy al-Jamarat (stoning of the pillars) and sacrifice is performed.

Arafat: A vast plain located about 20 kilometres southeast of Makkah where pilgrims stand on the 9th of Dhu al-Hijjah. Standing at Arafat is a mandatory part of Hajj rituals.

THE SPIRIT OF HAJJ

Hajj is a journey toward God—a profound meeting with the Almighty. While other acts of worship serve as a remembrance of God, Hajj represents reaching directly to His presence. Suppose ordinary acts of worship involve devotion at the level of faith in the unseen. In that case, Hajj elevates this experience, in the words of Hadith Jibreel, to the level of ka'annaka tarāh (as if you see God).

Maulana Wahiduddin Khan (1925-2021) was an Islamic scholar, spiritual guide, and ambassador of peace. His English translation of the Quran and its Commentary are widely appreciated for their simplicity, clarity, and ease of understanding. He has authored over 200 books; and two magazines, Spirit of Islam and Al-Risala; and recorded thousands of video and audio lectures. Demonstrating the relevance of Islam in the modern idiom, this material delves into Islam's spiritual wisdom, the Prophet's non-violent approach, its relationship with modernity, and other contemporary issues. For his seminal contributions to world peace, Maulana received numerous national and international awards. The Government of India honoured him with the 'Padma Vibhushan Award' (2021), and the 'Padma Bhushan Award' (2000) for his contributions to spirituality. In 2001, Maulana founded the Centre for Peace and Spirituality International which is actively carrying his legacy forward by distributing copies of the Quran and peacefully conveying the spiritual message of Islam at a global level.



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