

HAJJ: PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOUSE OF GOD - PART 1

"Verily, the first house set for mankind is at Bakkah (Makkah), blessed, and a guidance to the worlds. In it are clear signs; the place where Ibrahim stood up (to pray); and whoever enters it is safe; and pilgrimage to the house is incumbent upon mankind (purely) for Allah; (it is) for those who can afford to go there. And whoever disbelieves, then verily, Allah (the self-subsisting) is independent of the worlds". (3: 96 & 97)

It is clear from the above verse that performance of **Hajj** is obligatory upon all Muslims. Any Muslim who has attained **Buloogh** (puberty) and is **Mustatee'** (capable/having means) must perform **Hajj** and it is obligatory only once during life-time. Infact **Hajj** is one of the basic principles of Islam; its performance is one of its essentials, and its non-performance is a major sin. Furthermore, any one who denies its obligatory nature commits **Kufr** (disbelief/blasphemy).

KA'BAH: THE FIRST HOUSE

Aqa Mahdi Puya has stated a very interesting thing regarding the Holy Ka'bah. He says: The great antiquity of this house is undisputed. It had been throughout the ages, even before Abraham, the object of the greatest veneration.

It is reported on the authority of the Ahlul-Bayt (as) that the valley of Makkah was the first part of the earth which emerged above the surface of the water and cooled down when the heavens and the earth (an integrated mass) were split by Allah's command (*for detail explanation of this refer commentary of verses 30 and 31 of Surah al-Ambiya by S V Mir Ahmad Ali*) in support of which there are a number of geological evidences. many a non-muslim scholar agrees that this holy place, dedicated to the worship of the Lord of the lords, was not only known to the people of semitic origin but also to the ancient inhabitants of India according to the references available in pre-sanskrit literature.

"O our Lord! I have settled some of my offspring in a barren valley near Your sacred house, in order, O our Lord, that they may establish prayer, therefore make the hearts of some of the people yearn towards them, and provide them with fruits, so that they may give thanks". (14:37)

This verse which infact is a supplication of Prophet Ibrahim (as) which he made when he brought his wife Hajar and his son Ismael (as) to Makkah at a time when it was only a barren valley, confirms the antiquity of the Holy Ka'bah.

PROPHET IBRAHIM (AS) AND THE KA'BAH:

Prophet Ibrahim (as) was instructed to renew the foundations of Holy Ka'bah, purify it and establish it as a place of worship of the Almighty Allah.

"And (remember) when We made the house a resort for mankind and a sanctuary (saying): 'Take as your place of prayer where Ibrahim stood (to pray)'. And We covenanted with Ibrahim and Ismael (saying): 'Purify My house for those who circumambulate and those who abide in it for devotion, and those who bow down and those who prostrate (in prayer)'. (2:125)

If we study the two verses (2:125 and 3:97), we will not fail to observe that in both, Allah (SWT) has mentioned about the place where Prophet Ibrahim (as) stood for prayer. This by itself shows the lofty and elevated position of this great prophet in the sight of Allah (SWT). S V Mir Ahmad Ali writes: The standing place of Ibrahim has been made the permanent religious centre of all monotheists, because of his faith (belief in the unity of Allah) was perfect, an ideal for every believer.

Ibrahim (as)-an upright monotheist:

"Say (O Muhammad)! Allah has spoken the truth, so follow the creed of Ibrahim, the upright; and he was not of the polytheists". (3:95)

Ibrahim (as)-his prayer for protection of faith:

"Our Lord! Make us both submissive to You, and of our progeny (make) a group submissive (only) to You, and show us the ways of our devotion, and turn to us (mercifully); verily, You and You (alone), are the oft-turning, the merciful". (2:128)

Ibrahim (as)-guiding his children to One God:

"And the same did Ibrahim enjoin his sons, and (so) did Ya'qub, saying: 'O my sons! Verily Allah has chosen the religion (Islam) for you, therefore you must not die save as Muslims' ". (2:132)

Ibrahim (as)'s prayer for Makkah's security from filth of Kufr:

"And (remember) when Ibrahim said: 'My Lord! Make this city (a place) of security..."

(2:126)

"...And whoever enters it is safe..." (3:97)

S V Mir Ahmad Ali states: It is a sacred sanctuary. Whoso enters it is safe from the clutches of the disbelievers. It is a historical fact that all invaders who attacked this holy precinct were destroyed.

It could also mean that whoso focuses towards this holy house with his mind and spirit, shall not be influenced by the disbelievers and will always remain steadfast in his belief in the concept of **Tawheed** i.e. Oneness of God.

HAJJ: PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOUSE OF GOD - PART 2

"And proclaim among people the Pilgrimage; they will come to you on foot and on every lean camel coming from every remote path. That they may witness advantages for them and mention the name of Allah during the stated days over what He has given them of the cattle quadrupeds, then eat of them and feed the distressed one, the needy". (22: 27 & 28)

Hajj is a great Islamic conference. It is an ideal demonstration of faith in which diverse groups of every race, class and nationality join together at a given time and in a specific place. They repeatedly recite a single call, and proclaim the same slogan. They gather for one purpose and that is to declare their servitude and loyalty to Allah (SWT) alone, freeing themselves from any trace of polytheism and ignorance, in a deeply effective, collective way, which fills the soul with feelings of faith and uniterism.

As the Holy Quran proclaims, and the Prophetic traditions bespeak, Hajj is not only worship and a way of getting closer to Allah (SWT), but it is a way of granting the pilgrim social, educational, economic and political benefits. Combined together, these bounties are conducive to improvement within an Islamic society, increase its awareness, rectify the problems and activate its movements.

During Hajj, Muslims witness the most excellent example of equality, submissiveness and human brotherhood. This is accomplished by removing the outer difference and donning the dress of unity, the *ihraam*. The result is that all feel a oneness among the human race, brotherhood and equality.

While performing Hajj, Muslims feel a oneness with the earth and the people. It invalidates all the artificial boundaries established by human, regional, national and racial superiority complexes and egoism. Travelling across thousand of miles, they penetrate all barriers, and rise above all man-made hurdles, in order to respond to Islam's call of faith.

During Hajj, Muslims meet each other in a magnificent communion. They relate to each other's domestic and regional affairs. They consult each other concerning their life and

religion. They exchange experiences, opinions and good habits. They become acquainted with each other's problems. They learn of each other's viewpoints. This interchanging of ideas increases their awareness, knowledge grows, and the impetus to reform is invigorated. As a result, plans are proposed, projects designed, educational, political, social and economic centers are established. The Muslims support each other, as if they are one body and one soul.

Since Hajj is a large and impressive human gathering, it attracts millions of Muslims from different countries. It also stimulates an economic movement which is beneficial to the world of Islam.

During Hajj, the pilgrim imbibes ethical and educational lessons which reduce his faults. He acquires patience through hardship. He becomes humble, generous and tender. He renounces lying, backbiting, animosity and pride. He learns from his journey through mixing with others. Within him, positive social tendencies grow and morals are refined.

(The Hajj as Worship and Education)

Hisham bin al-hakam once asked Imam Ja'ffar as-Sadiq (as), "Why does Allah order His servants to perform Hajj and circumambulate around the Ka'bah?" Imam (as) replied, "Allah has created His servants and instructed them how to obey Him through the performance of religious duties. He has made (Hajj) a gathering in which people from the east and the west participate and become acquainted with one another. Every single one of them benefits from the experiences of others who come from different places. Memories of the Messenger of Allah and his life will never be forgotten....."

(al-Hur al-Amili)

HAJJ: PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOUSE OF GOD - PART 3

"The Hajj is in well-known months, so whoever undertakes the pilgrimage in it, then let there be no sexual intercourse, nor fornication, nor quarrelling among one another; and whatever good you do, Allah knows it. So take provision (for your journey), and surely the best provision is safeguarding oneself with fearful awareness of divine laws, so, be careful of (your duties to) Me, O men of understanding" (2:197)

S V Mir Ahmad Ali in his tafseer states:

Shawwal, Dhilqad and Dhilhajj are the well known months. One can start the pilgrimage in these months but the principle performance of *Hajj* has been prescribed in the month of Dhilhajj. During these days the pilgrim enters the state of purity in which he is entirely absorbed with Allah. *Taqwa* is the best provision, because by resigning oneself to Allah and abstaining from all that which connects with worldly matters, devotion to Allah becomes total. Everything which pertains to '*rafath*' (sexual intercourse), *fasaq* (fornication), and '*jidaal*' (quarrelling with one another) are forbidden.

"Take provision" means to plan and carry sufficient provisions for the journey so as not to be a burden on others.....Making provision may also mean making provision for the journey of life with piety and righteousness. Surely the best provision is '*taqwa*'-guarding against evil or safeguarding with full awareness of divine laws. If the men of understanding desire increase in provision, here and in the hereafter, then they should know the boundaries and fortify them.

The intention of the pilgrims to the House of God should not be simply to perform the Hajj rites. They must make good use of the opportunity to reform themselves for better and to acquire close proximity to Allah (SWT). For this, they must prepare themselves physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually before they proceed for Hajj and during Hajj they should abstain from all worldly matters and other things which can distract them from reaching their ultimate goal.

The following are the instructions and guidance of Imam Ja'ffar ibn Muhammad al-Sadiq (as) to the Hujjaj:

When you make the intention of performing Hajj, empty your heart for the sake of Allah, the Glorified, of any pre-occupation which makes you unmindful of Him. Entrust all your affairs to the Creator and rely on Him in all that you do and do not. Submit yourself to the divine fate, decision and destiny. Say farewell to the world, the comfort, and the people.

Repay what you owe others. Do not rely on your provision, means of transportation, friends, physical power, youth, and wealth, for Allah may turn all of them as your enemies so that you realize that there is no power or option but with Allah without whose help no one can succeed.

Then prepare for Hajj like one who has no hope of returning home. Behave well with the co-travelers. Observe prayer timings and the traditions of the Holy Prophet (saww), perform what is your duty on courtesy, patience, tolerance, gratitude, compassion, generosity, and self-sacrifice all the time.

Then purify yourself with the water of repentance, put on the garment of truthfulness, sincerity, humbleness and modesty.

Get rid of whatever keeps you away from Allah's remembrance and obedience to Him.

Say 'Labbayk' to Allah with pure, flawless, and chaste heart while you have laid hold on the firmest handle.

Circumambulate the throne with your heart among the angels in the same way as you circumambulate the House with other Muslims.

Perform '*Harwala*' (fast pace); that is escape from carnal desires with all your power and strength.

Come out of your ignorance and wrongdoings when leaving Makkah for Mina and never desire what is not lawful for you or not worthy of.

Confess your wrongdoings in Arafat, renew your covenant with Allah, the Exalted, on His Oneness and approach Him.

Fear Him in Muzdalifah and make your soul ascend to heaven by climbing up the mountain.

Cut the throat of carnal desires and greed by offering animal sacrifice.

Throw away lust, miserliness, meanness and all blameworthy acts through 'RamyilJamaraat' (stoning the pillars).

Do away with the internal and external flaws when shaving your head.

Enter the sanctuary of Allah, the Exalted, by ridding yourself of all desires when entering the sacred precinct.

Visit the house in order to honor its Owner and to know His glory and magnanimity.

Caress the Black Stone while you are content with what He has given you and you have become humble before His greatness.

Say farewell to everything save Allah in the last circumambulation.

Purify your soul and prepare for meeting Allah by staying in Safa. Be fair minded and dissolve yourself in Allah's Attributes when you are in Marwa.

Be firm on and faithful to the pledge you have given to Allah by which you have performed your Hajj until the Day of Judgement.

Be it known to you that what the reason Allah has made Hajj obligatory and has allocated it to Himself by saying, "and pilgrimage to the House is incumbent upon men for the sake of Allah, upon every one who is able to undertake the journey to it " (3:97) and the Holy Prophet (saww) has devised its rites in this way, is to remind us of death, grave, being raised to life, and the Day of Judgement.

(Misbaah al-Sharia'h)

We pray and wish all the Hujjaj (pilgrims to the House of God) a safe journey. May Allah (SWT) accept their act of worship, forgive their sins and bless them with a new life which is purely in His cause -Ameen.

HAJJ: PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOUSE OF GOD - PART 4

IMAM AL-SAJJAD (AS) & SHIBLI

Imam Al-Sajjad, Ali ibn al-Hussayn (as) was received by Shibli when he was back from Hajj and the following dialogue occurred between them:

The Imam (as): Did you perform Hajj, Shibli?

Shibli: Yes, son of Allah's messenger.

The Imam (as): You stopped at Miqat, put off your sewn clothes, and washed yourself, did you not?

Shibli: Yes, I did.

The Imam (as): As you stopped in Miqat, did you intend to put off the garment of disobedience (to God) and put on a garment of obedience (to Him)?

Shibli: No, I did not.

The Imam (as): As you put off your sewn clothes, did you intend to get rid of ostentation, hypocrisy and intrusion in suspicious matters?

Shibli: No, I did not.

The Imam (as): As you washed yourself, did you intend to wash yourself from sins and offenses?

Shibli: No, I did not.

The Imam (as): In that case, you did not really stop at Miqat, put off your sewn clothes, and wash yourself.

You washed yourself thoroughly, entered the state of Ihram, and intended to perform hajj, did you not?

Shibli: Yes, I did.

The Imam (as): As you washed yourself thoroughly, entered the state of Ihram, and intended to perform hajj, did you intend to wash yourself thoroughly with pure repentance to Allah?

Shibli: No I did not.

The Imam (as): As you entered the state of Ihram, did you intend to abstain from every matter that Allah deems unlawful?

Shibli: No, I did not.

The Imam (as): As you intended to perform Hajj, did you intend to get rid of any pledge that you took with anyone other than Allah?

Shibli: No, I did not.

The Imam (as): In that case, you did not wash yourself thoroughly, enter the state of Ihram, or intend to perform hajj.

Did you enter Miqat, offer the two-rakat prayer of Ihram and say labbayk?

Shibli: Yes, I did.

The Imam (as): As you entered Miqat, did you intend to meet all the qualifications of the visitation of the Sacred House of Allah?

Shibli: No, I did not.

The Imam (as): As you offered the two-rakat prayer, did you intend to seek nearness to Allah through the best deeds such as prayers and the deeds by which servants of Allah can obtain His rewards?

Shibli: No, I did not.

The Imam (as): As you said labbayk, did you intend to utter any statement of obedience to Allah and shut your mouth against any statement of disobedience to Him?

Shibli: No, I did not.

The Imam (as): In that case, you did not enter Miqat, offer the two-rakat prayer of Ihram, or say Labbayk.

You entered the sacred Precinct, saw the kaaba, and offered, did you not?

Shibli: Yes, I did.

The Imam (as): As you entered the Sacred Precinct, did you intend to abstain from backbiting any individual of Islam?

Shibli: No, I did not.

The Imam (as): As you arrived in Mecca, did you intend to direct towards Allah and no one else?

Shibli; No, I did not.

The Imam (as): In that case, you did not really enter the Sacred Precinct, see the kaaba, or offer prayers.

You circumambulated the Holy House, touched the corners, and performed the Sa'ee, did you not?

Shibli: Yes, I did.

The Imam (as): As you performed the Sa'ee, did you intend to seek refuge of Allah (from the trickeries of Satan and evil temptations) and that He, the Knower of the unseen, knew this from you?

Shibli: No, I did not.

The Imam (as): In that case you did not really circumambulate the Holy House, touch its corners, or perform the Sa'ee. You caressed the Black Stone, stopped at the standing-place of Ibrahim (as), and offered a two-rakat prayer there, did you not?

Shibli: Yes, I did.

The Imam (as) then cried so loudly and said: To caress the black Stone is to shake hands with Allah. Look, poor man, do not ever waste the reward for the thing that is greatly sacred and do not breach your caressing by the act of violation (of God's Instructions) and seizure of illegal things, just like the sinful.

As you stopped at the standing place of Ibrahim (as), did you intend to stop at every act of obedience (to God) and leave every act of disobedience (to Him)?

Shibli: No, I did not.

The Imam (as): As you offered the two-rakat prayer, did you intend to offer the same prayer that was offered by Ibrahim (as) and to disappoint Satan?

Shibli: No, I did not.

The Imam (as): In that case, you did not really caress the Black Stone, stop at the standing place of Ibrahim (as), or offer the two-rakat prayer there.

You came near the well of Zamzam and drank from its water did you not?

Shibli: Yes, I did.

The Imam (as): As you did, did you intend to come near to acts of obedience (to God) and cast your sight down acts of disobedience (to Him)?

Shibli: No, I did not.

The Imam (as): In that case, you neither really came near that well nor did you drink from its water. You roamed, walked and frequented to Mount Safa and Mount Marwa, did you not?

Shibli: Yes, I did.

The Imam (as): As you did, did you intend to be between hope and fear (of God)?

Shibli: No, I did not.

The Imam (as): In that case, you did not really roam, walk or frequent between Safa and Marwa.

You then left for Mina, did you not?

Shibli: Yes, I did.

The Imam (as): Did you intend to save people from your tongue (words), heart (ill intention), and hand (deeds)?

Shibli: No, I did not.

The Imam (as): In that case, you did not really leave for Mecca.

You halted in Arafat, mounted Jabal-al-Rahma (Mount Mercy), recognised Nemira Valley and supplicated to Allah at al-Mil and Jamarat, did you not?

Shibli: Yes, I did.

The Imam (as): As you halted in Arafat, did you intend to recognise Allah, Glorified is He, and His knowledge, and recognise that He is holding on the the record of your deeds and that He has full acquaintance with your hiddens and secrets?

Shibli: No, I did not.

The Imam (as): AS you mounted jabal-al-Rahma, did you recognise that Allah would have mercy upon every believing man and woman and see to every Muslim male and female?

Shibli: No, I did not.

The Imam (as): As you were on Nemira, did you recognise that your advices and warnings to people are fruitless unless they are originated from Allah's intructions?

Shibli: No, I did not.

The Imam (as): As you stopped at al-Alam and an-Nemirat, did you recognise that these signs would testify for your acts of obedience (to God) and would keep you like the Keeping Angel's whose mission is to keep you according to Allah' instructions?

Shibli: No, I did not.

The Imam (as): In that case, you did not really stop on Arafat, mount Jabal-al-Rahma, recognise Nemira, supplicate to Allah, or stop at an-Nemira. You passed by the two signs (Al-Alamain), offered a two-rakat prayer before so, walked in Muzdalifa, picked up pebbles there, and passed by al-Mash'ar al-haram, did you not?

Shibli; Yes, I did

The Imam (as): As you offered the prayer, did you intend it to be thanksgiving...that saves from every hardship and alleviates all difficulties?

Shibli: No, I did not.

The Imam (as): As you walked between the two signs without turning to right or left, did you intend not to turn away from the right religion with heart, tongue, or other organs?

Shibli: No, I did not.

The Imam (as): As you walked in Muzdalifa and picked up pebbles, did you intend to get rid of every act of disobedience and every item of ignorance and to fix in your behaviours every item of knowledge and good deed?

Shibli: No, I did not.

The Imam (as): As you passed by al-Mash'ar al-haram, did you intend to carry in heart the slogan of the pious people and the God-fearing ones?

Shibli: No, I did not.

The Imam (as): In that case, you did not really pass by the Two signs, offer a two-rakat prayer, walk in al-Muzdelifa, pick up pebbles there, or pass by Mash'ar -al-haram. You reached in Mina, threw the pebbles (i.e performed the Ramy-al-jamarat), had your hair cut, slaughtered your sacrificed animal, offered prayer in Kheif Mosque, returned to Mecca, and performed Tawaf al-Ifadha, did you not?

Shibli: Yes, I did.

The Imam (as): As you arrived in Mina and threw these pebbles, did you feel that you achieved your aim and that your Lord would settle all your needs?

Shibli: No, I did not.

The Imam (as): As you threw these pebbles, did you intend to stone Eblis, your enemy and challenge him through your precious Hajj?

Shibli: No, I did not.

The Imam (as): As you shaved your head, did you intend to purify yourself from all filth and liabilities of people that lie on your shoulders, and to get rid of sins as if your mother had just given birth to you?

Shibli: No, I did not.

The Imam (as): As you offered prayer in Kheif Mosque, did you intend that you would never fear anything except Allah and the responsibilities of your (past) sins and that you would hope for nothing except Allah's mercy?

Shibli: No, I did not.

The Imam (as): As you slaughtered your sacrificial animal, did you intend to cut off the throat of greed by clinging to the reality of piety, and to follow the exemplary tradition of Ibrahim (as) who intended to slaughter his dear son (so as to carry out God's order)?

Shibli: No, I did not.

The Imam (as): As you returned to Mecca and performed Tawaf-al-Ifadha, did you intend to supply yourself with Allah's mercy, return to the obedience to Him, cling to His love, perform all His precepts, and seek nearness to Him?

Shibli: No, I did not.

The Imam (as): In that case, you neither reached Mina, nor did you throw these pebbles on Satan, nor did you shave your head, nor did you perform the rituals of the Hajj, nor did you offer prayer in Kheif Mosque, nor did you perform Tawaf-al-ifadha, nor did you offer sacrifice for the Lord. Go back, you did not perform Hajj.

Mulla Mujaheedali Sheriff