

Virtues of the Ten Days of Dhul Hijjah

Praise be to Allaah Who has created Time and has made some times better than others, some months and days and nights better than others, when rewards are multiplied many times, as a mercy towards His slaves. This encourages them to do more righteous deeds and makes them more eager to worship Him, so that the Muslim renews his efforts to gain a greater share of reward, prepare himself for death and supply himself in readiness for the Day of Judgement.

This season of worship brings many benefits, such as the opportunity to correct one's faults and make up for any shortcomings or anything that one might have missed. Every one of these special occasions involves some kind of worship through which the slaves may draw closer to Allaah, and some kind of blessing through which Allaah bestows His favour and mercy upon whomsoever He will. The happy person is the one who makes the most of these special months, days and hours and draws nearer to his Lord during these times through acts of worship; he will most likely be touched by the blessing of Allaah and will feel the joy of knowing that he is safe from the flames of Hell. (Ibn Rajab, al-Lataa'if, p.8)

The Muslim must understand the value of his life, increase his worship of Allaah and persist in doing good deeds until the moment of death. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

"And worship your Lord until there comes unto you the certainty." [al-Hijr 15:99] The mufasssireen (commentators) said: "'The certainty' means death."

Among the special seasons of worship are the first ten days of Dhu'l-Hijjah, which Allaah has preferred over all the other days of the year. Ibn 'Abbaas (may Allaah be pleased with him and his father) reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "There are no days in which righteous deeds are more beloved to Allaah than these ten days." The people asked, "Not even jihaad for the sake of Allaah?" He said, "Not even jihaad for the sake of Allaah, except in the case of a man who went out to fight giving himself and his wealth up for the cause, and came back with nothing." (Reported by al-Bukhaari, 2/457).

Ibn 'Abbaas (may Allaah be pleased with him and his father) also reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "There is no deed more precious in the sight of Allaah, nor greater in reward, than a good deed done during the ten days of Sacrifice." He was asked, "Not even jihaad for the sake of Allaah?" He said, "Not even jihaad for the sake of Allaah, except in the case of a man who went out to fight giving himself and his wealth up for the cause, and came back with nothing." (Reported by al-Daarimi, 1/357; its isnaad is hasan as stated in al-Irwaa', 3/398).

These texts and others indicate that these ten days are better than all the other days of the year, with no exceptions, not even the last ten days of Ramadaan. But the last ten nights of Ramadaan are better, because they include Laylat al-Qadr ("the Night of Power"), which is better than a thousand months. Thus the various reports may be reconciled. (See Tafseer Ibn Katheer, 5/412).

You should know, my brother in Islaam, that the virtue of these ten days is based on many things:

Allaah swears an oath by them, and swearing an oath by something is indicative of its importance and great benefit. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): "By the dawn; by the ten nights" [al-Fajr 89:1-2]. Ibn 'Abbaas, Ibn al-Zubayr, Mujaahid and others of the earlier and later generations said that this refers to the first ten days of Dhu'l-Hijjah. Ibn Katheer said: "This is the correct opinion." (Tafseer Ibn Katheer, 8/413)

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) testified that these are the best days of this world,

as we have already quoted above from saheeh ahaadeeth.

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) encouraged people to do righteous deeds because of the virtue of this season for people throughout the world, and also because of the virtue of the place - for the Hujjaaj (pilgrims) to the Sacred House of Allaah.

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) commanded us to recite a lot of Tasbeeh ("Subhan-Allaah"), Tahmeed ("Al-hamdu Lillaah") and Takbeer ("Allaahu akbar") during this time. 'Abdullaah ibn 'Umar (may Allaah be pleased with him and his father) reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "There are no days greater in the sight of Allaah and in which righteous deeds are more beloved to Him than these ten days, so during this time recite a great deal of Tahleel ("La ilaaha ill-Allaah"), Takbeer and Tahmeed." (Reported by Ahmad, 7/224; Ahmad Shaakir stated that it is saheeh).

These ten days include Yawm 'Arafaah (the Day of 'Arafaah), on which Allaah perfected His Religion. Fasting on this day will expiate for the sins of two years. These days also include Yawm al-Nahar (the Day of Sacrifice), the greatest day of the entire year and the greatest day of Hajj, which combines acts of worship in a way unlike any other day.

These ten days include the days of sacrifice and of Hajj. Question: What must the Muslim avoid during these ten days if he wants to offer a sacrifice?

The Sunnah indicates that the one who wants to offer a sacrifice must stop cutting his hair and nails and removing anything from his skin, from the beginning of the ten days until after he has offered his sacrifice, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "When you see the new moon of Dhu'l-Hijjah, if any one of you wants to offer a sacrifice, then he should stop cutting his hair and nails until he has offered his sacrifice." According to another report he said: "He should not remove (literally, touch) anything from his hair or skin." (reported by Muslim with four isnaads, 13/146)

The Prophet's instruction here makes one thing obligatory and his prohibition makes another haraam, according to the soundest opinion, because these commands and prohibitions are unconditional and unavoidable. However, if a person does any of these things deliberately, he must seek Allaah's forgiveness but is not required to offer (an extra) sacrifice in expiation; his sacrifice will be acceptable. Whoever needs to remove some hair, nails, etc. because it is harming him, such as having a broken nail or a wound in a site where there is hair, should do so, and there is nothing wrong with that. The state of ihraam is so important that it is permitted to cut one's hair if leaving it will cause harm. There is nothing wrong with men or women washing their heads during the first ten days of Dhu'l-Hijjah, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) only forbade cutting the hair, not washing it.

The wisdom behind this prohibition of the one who wants to offer a sacrifice from cutting his hair etc., is so that he may resemble those in ihraam in some aspects of the rituals performed, and so that he may draw closer to Allaah by offering the sacrifice. So he leaves his hair and nails alone until the time when he has offered his sacrifice, in the hope that Allaah will save him in his entirety from the Fire. And Allaah knows best.

If a person has cut his hair or nails during the first ten days of Dhu'l-Hijjah because he was not planning to offer a sacrifice, then he decides later, during the ten days, to offer a sacrifice, then he must refrain from cutting his hair and nails from the moment he makes this decision.

Some women may delegate their brothers or sons to make the sacrifice on their behalf, then cut their hair during these ten days. This is not correct, because the ruling applies to the one who is offering the sacrifice, whether or not he (or she) delegates someone else to carry out the actual deed. The prohibition does not apply to the person delegated, only to the person who is making the sacrifice, as is indicated in the hadeeth. The person who is sacrificing on behalf of someone else, for whatever reason, does not have to adhere to this prohibition.

This prohibition appears to apply only to the one who is offering the sacrifice, not to his wife and children, unless any of them is offering a sacrifice in his or her own right, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) used to sacrifice "on behalf of the family of Muhammad," but there are no reports that say he forbade them to cut their hair or nails at that time.

If a person was planning to offer a sacrifice, then he decides to go and perform Hajj, he should not cut his hair or nails if he wants to enter ihraam, because the Sunnah is only to cut hair and nails when necessary. But if he is performing Tamattu' [whereby he performs 'Umrah, comes out of ihraam and enters ihraam anew for Hajj], he should trim his hair at the end of his 'Umrah because this is part of the ritual.

The things that are described above as being prohibited for the person who is planning to offer a sacrifice are reported in the hadeeth quoted above; the person is not forbidden to wear perfume, have marital relations, wear sewn garments, etc.

Concerning the types of worship to be performed during these ten days: one must understand that these days are a great blessing from Allaah to His slave, which is appreciated properly by the actively righteous. It is the Muslim's duty to appreciate this blessing and make the most of the opportunity, by devoting these ten days to paying more attention to striving hard in worship. Among His blessings to His slaves, Allaah has given us many ways in which to do good and worship Him, so that the Muslim may be constantly active and consistent in his worship of his Lord.

Among the good deeds which the Muslim should strive to do during the first ten days of Dhu'l-Hijjah are:

Fasting. It is Sunnah to fast on the ninth day of Dhu'l-Hijjah, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) urged us to do good deeds during this time, and fasting is one of the best of deeds. Allaah has chosen fasting for Himself, as is stated in the hadeeth qudsi: "Allaah says: 'All the deeds of the son of Adam are for him, except for fasting, which is for Me and I am the One Who will reward him for it.'" (Reported by al-Bukhaari, 1805).

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) used to fast on the ninth of Dhu'l-Hijjah. Hunaydah ibn Khaalid reported from his wife that some of the wives of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) used to fast on the ninth of Dhu'l-Hijjah, on the day of 'Aashooraa', on three days of each month, and on the first two Mondays and Thursdays of each month." (Reported by al-Nisaa'i, 4/205 and by Abu Dawud; classified by al-Albaani as saheeh in Saheeh Abi Dawud, 2/462).

Takbeer. It is Sunnah to say Takbeer ("Allaahu akbar"), Tahmeed ("Al-hamdu Lillaah"), Tahleel ("La ilaha ill-Allaah") and Tasbeeh ("Subhaan Allaah") during the first ten days of Dhu'l-Hijjah, and to say it loudly in the mosque, the home, the street and every place where it is permitted to remember Allaah and mention His name out loud, as an act of worship and as a proclamation of the greatness of Allaah, may He be exalted. Men should recite these phrases out loud, and women should recite them quietly.

Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

"That they might witness things that are of benefit to them (i.e., reward of Hajj in the Hereafter, and also some worldly gain from trade, etc.), and mention the name of Allaah on appointed days, over the beast of cattle that He has provided for them (for sacrifice)..." [al-Hajj 22:28]

The majority of scholars agree that the "appointed days" are the first ten days of Dhu'l-Hijjah, because of the words of Ibn 'Abbaas (may Allaah be pleased with him and his father): "The 'appointed days' are the first ten days (of Dhu'l-Hijjah)."

The Takbeer may include the words "Allaahu akbar, Allaahu akbar, la ilaaha ill-Allaah; wa Allaahu akbar wa Lillaahi'l-hamd (Allaah is Most Great, Allaah is Most Great, there is no god but Allaah; Allaah is Most Great and

to Allaah be praise)," as well as other phrases.

Takbeer at this time is an aspect of the Sunnah that has been forgotten, especially during the early part of this period, so much so that one hardly ever hears Takbeer, except from a few people. This Takbeer should be pronounced loudly, in order to revive the Sunnah and as a reminder to the negligent. There is sound evidence that Ibn 'Umar and Abu Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with them) used to go out in the marketplace during the first ten days of Dhu'l-Hijjah, reciting Takbeer, and the people would recite Takbeer when they heard them. The idea behind reminding the people to recite Takbeer is that each one should recite it individually, not in unison, as there is no basis in Sharee'ah for doing this.

Reviving aspects of the Sunnah that have been virtually forgotten is a deed that will bring an immense reward, as is indicated by the words of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him): "Whoever revives an aspect of my Sunnah that is forgotten after my death, he will have a reward equivalent to that of the people who follow him, without it detracting in the least from their reward." (Reported by al-Tirmidhi, 7/443; this is a hasan hadeeth because of corroborating asaaneed).

Performing Hajj and 'Umrah. One of the best deeds that one can do during these ten days is to perform Hajj to the Sacred House of Allaah. The one whom Allaah helps to go on Hajj to His House and to perform all the rituals properly is included in the words of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him): "An accepted Hajj brings no less a reward than Paradise."

Doing more good deeds in general, because good deeds are beloved by Allaah and will bring a great reward from Him. Whoever is not able to go to Hajj should occupy himself at this blessed time by worshipping Allaah, praying (salaat), reading Qur'an, remembering Allaah, making supplication (du'aa'), giving charity, honouring his parents, upholding the ties of kinship, enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil, and other good deeds and acts of worship.

Sacrifice. One of the good deeds that will bring a person closer to Allaah during these ten days is offering a sacrifice, by choosing a high-quality animal and fattening it, spending money for the sake of Allaah.

Sincere repentance. One of the most important things to do during these ten days is to repent sincerely to Allaah and to give up all kinds of disobedience and sin. Repentance means coming back to Allaah and foregoing all the deeds, open and secret, that He dislikes, out of regret for what has passed, giving it up immediately and being determined never to return to it, but to adhere firmly to the Truth by doing what Allaah loves.

If a Muslim commits a sin, he must hasten to repent at once, without delay, firstly because he does not know when he will die, and secondly because one evil deed leads to another.

Repentance at special times is very important because in most cases people's thoughts turn towards worship at these times, and they are keen to do good, which leads to them recognizing their sins and feeling regret for the past. Repentance is obligatory at all times, but when the Muslim combines sincere repentance with good deeds during the days of most virtue, this is a sign of success, in sha Allaah. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): "But as for him who repented, believed and did righteous deeds, then he will be among those who are successful." [al-Qasas 28:67]

The Muslim should make sure that he does not miss any of these important occasion, because time is passing quickly. Let him prepare himself by doing good deeds which will bring him reward when he is most in need of it, for no matter how much reward he earns, he will find it is less than he needs; the time of departure is at hand, the journey is frightening, delusions are widespread, and the road is long, but Allaah is ever watchful, and to Him will we return and render account. As the Qur'aan says (interpretation of the meaning):

"So whosoever does good equal to the weight of an atom, shall see it,

And whosoever does evil equal to the weight of an atom, shall see it." [al-Zalzalah 99:7-8]

There is much to be gained, so make the most of the opportunity afforded by these invaluable and irreplaceable ten days. Hasten to do good works, before death strikes, before one can regret one's negligence and failure to act, before one is asked to return to a place where no prayers will be answered, before death intervenes between the hopeful one and the things he hopes for, before you are trapped with your deeds in the grave.

O you whose hard heart is as dark as the night, is it not time that your heart was filled with light and became soft? Expose yourself to the gentle breeze of your Lord's mercy during these ten days, for Allaah will cause this breeze to touch whomever He wills, and whoever is touched by it will be happy on the Day of Judgement. May Allaah bless our Prophet Muhammad and all his Family and Companions.

Rulings of Udhiyah (Sacrifice)

Shaikh Mohammad Almunajid

Praise be to Allaah and peace and blessings be upon the Messenger of Allaah, Muhammad, and upon his family and companions.

Udhiyah is one of the great rituals of Islam, in which we remember the Unity of Allaah, His blessings upon us and the obedience of our father Ibraaheem to his Lord, and in this act of udhiyah there is much goodness and blessing. So the Muslim must pay attention to its great importance. The following is a brief look at this important ritual.

Udhiyah refers to the animal (camel, cattle or sheep) that is sacrificed as an act of worship to Allaah, in the country in which the person offering the sacrifice lives, during the period from after the Eid prayer on the Day of Nahr (Eid al-Adhaa) until the last of the Days of Tashreeq (the 13th day of Dhu'l-Hijjah), with the intention of offering sacrifice. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

"Therefore turn in prayer to your Lord and sacrifice (to Him only)." [al-Kawthar 108:2]

"Say (O Muhammad): 'Verily, my prayer, my sacrifice, my living and my dying are for Allaah, the Lord of the 'Aalameen (mankind, jinns and all that exists).'" [al-An'aam 6:162]

"And for every nation We have appointed religious ceremonies, that they may mention the Name of Allaah over the beast of cattle that He has given them for food. And your God is One God, so you must submit to Him Alone (in Islam)..." [al-Hajj 22:34]

Udhiyyah is a confirmed Sunnah according to the majority of scholars (some scholars say that it is waajib or obligatory; this will be discussed in more detail below). The basic principle is that it is required at the appointed time from one who is alive on behalf of himself and the members of his household, and he may include in the reward for it whoever he wishes, living or dead. With regard to udhiyah on behalf of one who is dead, if the deceased bequeathed up to one third of his wealth for that purpose, or included it in his waqf (endowment), then these wishes must be carried out, otherwise, if a person wishes to offer a sacrifice on behalf of someone who has died, this is a good

deed and is considered to be giving charity on behalf of the dead. But the Sunnah is for a man to include the members of his household, living and deed, in his udhiyah, and when he slaughters it, he should say, "Allaahumma haadha `anni wa `an aali bayti (O Allaah, this is on behalf of myself and the members of my household" – he does not have to make a separate sacrifice on behalf of every deceased person.

The scholars agreed that sacrificing the animal and giving its meat in charity is better than giving its value in charity, because the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) used to make the sacrifice, and he did not do anything but that which is best and most befitting. This is the opinion of Abu Haneefah, al-Shaafa'i and Ahmad.

The virtues of udhiyah and the best of udhiyah

A sheep is good enough as a sacrifice for one man and the members of his household and his children, because of the hadeeth of Abu Ayyoob: "At the time of the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), a man would sacrifice a sheep on behalf of himself and the members of his household, and they would eat from it and give some to others." (Reported by Ibn Maajah and al-Tirmidhi, who classed it as saheeh)

The kinds of animals prescribed for sacrifice are camels, cattle and sheep. Some of the scholars said that the best sacrifice is camels, then cattle, then sheep, then a share in a she-camel or cow, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said concerning Friday prayers: "Whoever goes to [Friday prayers] early, it is equivalent to him sacrificing a camel." This is the opinion of the three imaams Abu Haneefah, al-Shaafa'i and Ahmad. On this basis, a sheep is better than one-seventh of a camel or cow. Maalik said that the best is a young sheep, then a cow then a camel, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) sacrificed two rams, and he never did anything but that which was the best. The response to that is that he (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) always chose what was more appropriate out of kindness towards his ummah, because they would follow his example, and he did not want to make things difficult for them. (Fataawa al-Shaykh `Abd al-`Azeez ibn Baaz).

A camel or cow is enough for seven people, because of the report narrated by Jaabir (may Allaah be pleased with him) who said: "We sacrificed at al-Hudaybiyah with the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), a camel for seven and a cow for seven." According to one version: "The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) commanded us to share camels and cattle, each seven men sharing one animal." According to another version: "So a cow would be sacrificed on behalf of seven men and we would share it." (Reported by Muslim)

Ruling of udhiyah:

Udhiyah is one of the rituals of Islam. It is mentioned in Jawaahir al-Ikleel Sharh Mukhtasar Khaleel that if the people of a city or country neglect udhiyah, they should be fought, because it is one of the rituals of Islam. (Rasaa'il Fiqhiyyah by Shaykh Ibn `Uthaymeen, p. 46). There are two scholarly opinions on udhiyah:

that it is waajib (obligatory). This is the opinion of al-Oozaa'i, al-Layth and Abu Haneefah, and it is one of the two opinions narrated from Imaam Ahmad. It was also the opinion of Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah, and is one of the two opinions in the madhhab of Maalik, or is what seems to be the madhhab of Maalik. Those who favour this opinion take the following as evidence:

The aayah: "Therefore turn in prayer to your Lord and sacrifice (to Him only)." [al-Kawthar 108:2]. This is a command, and a command implies that something is obligatory.

The hadeeth of Jundub (may Allaah be pleased with him), reported in al-Saheehayn and elsewhere, who said: "The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: 'Whoever slaughtered his sacrifice before he prays, let him slaughter another one in its place, and whoever did not slaughter a sacrifice, let him do so in the name of Allaah.'" (Reported by Muslim, 3621)

The hadeeth: "Whoever can afford to offer a sacrifice but does not do so, let him not approach our place or prayer." (Reported by Ahmad and Ibn Maajah; classed as saheeh by al-Haakim from the hadeeth of Abu Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him). It says in Fath al-Baari that its men are thiqaat).

(B) that it is a confirmed Sunnah (sunnah mu'akkadah). This is the opinion of the majority, and it is the madhhab of al-Shaafa'i and the better-known opinion of Maalik and Ahmad. But most of those who favour this opinion stated that it is makrooh (disliked) for the one who is able to offer a sacrifice to neglect to do so. They base their opinion on the following:

The hadeeth of Jaabir (may Allaah be pleased with him) in Sunan Abi Dawood, where he said: "I prayed on Eid al-Adhaa with the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), and when he finished (the prayer), he was brought two rams, and he sacrificed them. He said, 'In the Name of Allaah, Allaah is Most Great. This is on behalf of myself and any member of my ummah who did not offer a sacrifice.'" (Sunan Abi Dawood bi Sharh Muhammad Shams al-Haq Abaadi, 7/486)

The hadeeth reported by all the famous muhadditheen apart from al-Bukhaari: "Whoever among you wants to offer a sacrifice, let him not take anything from his hair or nails." Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen, may Allaah preserve him, said, following his discussion of those who say it is obligatory and those who say it is Sunnah, "Each point of view has its evidence, but to be on the safe side, the one who is able to offer a sacrifice should not neglect to do so, because of what is involved in this act of reverence towards Allaah, remembering Him, and making sure that one has nothing to be blamed for.

Conditions of udhiyah

The animal should have reached the required age, which is six months for a lamb, one year for a goat, two years for a cow and five years for a camel.

It should be free of any faults, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "There are four that will not do for sacrifice: a one-eyed animal whose defect is obvious, a sick animal whose sickness is obvious, a lame animal whose limp is obvious and an emaciated animal that has no marrow in its bones ." (Saheeh, Saheeh al-Jaami', no. 886). There are milder defects that do not disqualify an animal, but it is makrooh to sacrifice such animals, such as an animal with a horn or ear missing, or an animal with slits in its ears, etc. Udhiyah is an act of worship to Allaah, and Allaah is Good and accepts only that which is good. Whoever honours the rites of Allaah, this has to do with the piety (taqwa) of the heart.

It is forbidden to sell it. If an animal has been selected for sacrifice, it is not permissible to sell it or give it away, except in exchange for one that is better. If an animal gives birth, its offspring should

be sacrificed along with it. It is also permissible to ride it if necessary. The evidence for this is the report narrated by al-Bukhaari and Muslim from Abu Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him), who said that the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) saw a man leading his camel and told him, "Ride it." He said, "It is for sacrifice." He said, "Ride it" a second or third time.

It should be sacrificed at the specified time, which is from after the prayer and khutbah of Eid – not from when the time for the prayer and khutbah starts – until before sunset on the last of the days of Tashreeq, which is the 13th day of Dhu'l-Hijjah. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Whoever sacrifices before the prayer, let him repeat it." (Reported by al-Bukhaari and Muslim). 'Ali (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: "The days of Nahr (Sacrifice) are the day of al-Adhaa and the three days following it." This is also the opinion of al-Hasan al-Basri, 'Ata' ibn Abi Rabaah, al-Oozaa'i, al-Shaafa'i and Ibn al-Mundhir, may Allaah have mercy on them all.

What should be done with the sacrifice?

It is mustahabb (liked, preferable) for the one who has made a sacrifice to not eat anything on that day before he eats from it, if this is possible, because of the hadeeth, "Let every man eat from his sacrifice." (Classed as saheeh in Saheeh al-Jaami', 5349). This eating should be after the Eid prayer and khutbah. This is the opinion of the scholars, including 'Ali, Ibn 'Abbaas, Maalik, al-Shaafa'i and others. The evidence for this is the hadeeth of Buraydah (may Allaah be pleased with him): "The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) would not go out on the day of Fitr until he had eaten, and he would not eat on the day of Adhaa until he had slaughtered (his sacrifice)." (Al-Albaani said: its isnaad is saheeh. Al-Mishkaat, 1/452).

It is better for a person to slaughter the sacrifice himself, but if he does not, it is mustahabb for him to be present when it is slaughtered.

It is mustahaab to divide the meat into three: one third to be eaten, one third to be given as gifts and one third to be given in charity. This was the opinion of Ibn Mas'ood and Ibn 'Umar (may Allaah be pleased with them). The scholars agreed that it is not permissible to sell anything from its meat, fat or skin. In a saheeh hadeeth, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Whoever sells the skin of his udhiyah, there is no udhiyah for him (i.e., it is not counted as udhiyah)." (Classed as hasan in Saheeh al-Jaami', 6118). The butcher should not be given anything of it by way of reward or payment, because 'Ali (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: "The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) commanded me to take care of the sacrifice and to give its meat, skin and raiment (covering used for protection) in charity, and not to give anything of it to the butcher as a compensation. He said, 'We will give him something from what we have.'" (Agreed upon). It was said that it is permissible to give the butcher something as a gift, and that it is permissible to give some of it to a kaafir if he is poor or a relative or a neighbour, or in order to open his heart to Islam. (Fataawa al-Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azeez ibn Baaz).

Question: what should the Muslim avoid in the first ten days of Dhu'l-Hijjah if he wants to offer a sacrifice?

The Sunnah indicates that the one who wants to offer a sacrifice must refrain from taking anything from his hair, nails or skin from the first day of Dhu'l-Hijjah until he offers his sacrifice, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "When you see the new moon of Dhu'l-Hijjah, if any one of you wants to offer a sacrifice, let him not remove anything from his hair or nails

until he has offered his sacrifice." According to another report: "Let him not touch any part of his hair or nails." (Reported by Muslim with four isnaads, 13/146). This command implies obligation and the prohibition implies that it is forbidden, according to the most correct opinion, because these are absolutes with no exceptions. If a person deliberately takes something (from his hair or nails), he must seek the forgiveness of Allaah, but he does not have to pay any fidyah (penalty), and his udhiyah is still valid. Whoever needs to remove some of his hair or nails because leaving it will cause him harm, such as a torn nail or a wound in a site covered by hair, should remove it, and there is no sin on him if he does so. This is not more serious than the muhram (person in ihraam for Hajj or 'Umrah) who is allowed to shave if not doing so will cause him harm. There is nothing wrong with men and women washing their hair during the first ten days of Dhu'l-Hijjah, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) only forbade removing hair, and because the muhram is allowed to wash his head.

The wisdom behind the prohibition on removing hair and nails is because the one who is going to offer a sacrifice is like the one who is in ihraam for Hajj and 'Umrah with regard to some rituals, which is the offering of a sacrifice in order to draw closer to Allaah. Thus some of the rulings of ihraam apply to the one who wants to offer a sacrifice, so he should not touch his hair and nails until he has slaughtered his sacrifice, in the hope that Allaah will release him from the fire of Hell. And Allaah knows best.

If a person removes some of his hair and nails during the first ten days of Dhu'l-Hijjah because he is not planning to offer a sacrifice, then he decides to sacrifice, he should refrain from cutting his hair or nails from the moment he takes the decision.

There are some women who delegate their brothers or sons to do the sacrifice on their behalf so that they can cut their hair during the first ten days of Dhu'l-Hijjah. This is not correct, because the ruling applies to the one who is making the sacrifice, whether he or she delegates someone else to do the actual slaughter or not. The prohibition does not apply to the person appointed, it applies to the person who wants to offer a sacrifice on behalf of himself, as is indicated by the hadeeth. As for the person who is doing the sacrifice on behalf of another, whether because of a will or because he has been delegated to do so, the prohibition does not apply to him.

It is apparent that this prohibition applies to the one who is offering the sacrifice, and does not extend to his wife or children, unless one of them is offering a sacrifice on his or her own behalf. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) used to sacrifice on behalf of the family of Muhammad, and it was not reported that he forbade them to remove anything of their hair or nails.

Whoever is planning to offer a sacrifice, then decides to go for Hajj, should not remove anything of his hair or nails when he wants to enter ihraam, because this is Sunnah only when there is a need for it. But if he is doing Hajj "tamattu'" [where one performs 'Umrah, then ends ihraam and enters a new state of ihraam for Hajj], he should shorten his hair when he finishes 'Umrah because that is part of the ritual.

The things that are forbidden for the person who wants to offer a sacrifice are reported in the hadeeth quoted above. It is not forbidden for him to wear perfume or to have intercourse with his wife or to wear sewn garments and so on . And Allah knows best.

Hajj: its virtues and benefits

Praise be to Allaah and peace and blessings be upon the Messenger of Allaah.

This is a brief discussion of Hajj – its virtues, benefits and a little about its rulings.

1. When Hajj was prescribed

According to the correct view, Hajj was made obligatory in 9AH, the year of the Delegations (*al-Wufood*), in which *Soorat Aal 'Imraan* was revealed, in which Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And Hajj (pilgrimage to Makkah) to the House (Ka’bah) is a duty that mankind owes to Allaah, those who can afford the expenses (for one’s conveyance, provision and residence).” [Aal ‘Imraan 3:97]

2. The ruling on Hajj

Hajj is a *fareedah* (obligatory duty), one of the pillars of Islam. The evidence (*daleel*) for this is the aayah mentioned above, and there is also evidence in the Sunnah which indicates the same thing.

Ibn ‘Umar (may Allaah be pleased with them both) said: the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Islam is built upon five (pillars): testifying that there is no god but Allaah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allaah, establishing regular prayer, paying zakaah, Hajj and fasting Ramadaan.” (Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 8; Muslim, 16).

3. Is Hajj obligatory straight away?

Yes, it should be done straight away. The evidence for this is the aayah referred to above. This (doing things straight away) is the guiding principle concerning the commands of sharee’ah. The evidence in the Sunnah which indicates this is as follows:

- a. Abu Hurayrah said: The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) gave a sermon (*khutbah*) and said: “O people, Allaah has enjoined Hajj upon you so do Hajj.” (Narrated by Muslim, 1337).
- b. Ibn ‘Abbaas (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Whoever wants to go for Hajj, let him hasten to do it, because he may fall ill or some other problems may arise.” (Narrated by Abu Dawood, 1732, without the phrase “because he may...” also narrated by Ibn Maajah, 2883 and Ahmad, 1836).

According to a report narrated by Ahmad “Hasten to do Hajj –i.e., the obligatory Hajj – for none of you knows what may happen to him.”

These two reports strengthen one another. (See *Irwaa’ al-Ghaleel* by al-Albaani, 4/168).

The Shaafa’is say that Hajj may be delayed, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) delayed his Hajj until 10 AH. But the answer to this is as follows:

- a. He only delayed it for one year, but they say it may be delayed indefinitely!
- b. He (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) wanted to purify the House (the Ka'bah) of the Mushrikeen and those who performed Hajj naked.
- c. He was kept busy with the delegations who had started to come to Madeenah one after another to announce their Islam.

(See *al-Sharh al-Mumti* by Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen, 7/17, 18)

4. It is obligatory to do Hajj once in one's lifetime

Abu Hurayrah said: The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) gave a sermon (*khutbah*) and said: "O people, Allaah has enjoined Hajj upon you so do Hajj." A man said, Is it every year, O Messenger of Allaah? He remained silent until the man had said it three times, then he said, "If I say yes, it will become obligatory and you will not be able to do it." Then he said, "Do not push me to tell you more than what I have left you with, for those who came before you were destroyed because they asked too many questions and argued with their Prophets. If I command you to do a thing, do as much of it as you can, and if I forbid you to do something, then avoid it." (Narrated by Muslim, 1337)

5. The virtues of Hajj

There are many ahaadeeth which speak of the virtues of Hajj, including the following:

- a. From Abu Hurayrah, that the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was asked which deed is best. He said, "Belief in Allaah and His Messenger." He was asked, then what? He said, "Jihaad for the sake of Allaah." He was asked, then what? He said, "An accepted Hajj." (Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 26; Muslim, 83).

An accepted Hajj means:

1. It must be paid for with halaal money
 2. One should keep away from evil, sin and unjust disputes during Hajj.
 3. One should observe all the rituals according to the Sunnah.
 4. One should not show off by doing Hajj; it should be purely and sincerely for the sake of Allaah.
 5. One should not follow it with acts of disobedience and sin.
- a. Abu Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: I heard the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) say: "Whoever does Hajj for the sake of Allaah and does not have sexual relations (with his wife), commit sin, or dispute unjustly during the Hajj, will come back like the day his mother gave birth to him. (Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 1449; Muslim, 1350)
 - b. Abu Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: " 'Umrah is an expiation for the time between it and the previous 'Umrah, and an accepted hajj has no less a reward than Paradise." (Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 1683; Muslim, 1349).

- c. ‘Aa’ishah, the Mother of the Believers (may Allaah be pleased with her) said: I said, O Messenger of Allaah, can we not go out on campaigns and fight in jihaad with you? He said, “But the best and most beautiful of jihaad is Hajj, an accepted pilgrimage.” ‘Aa’ishah said, I never stopped going for Hajj after I heard that from the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). (Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 1762).
- d. ‘Amr ibn al-‘Aas (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Hajj wipes out whatever (sins) came before it.” (Narrated by Muslim, 121).
- e. ‘Abd-Allaah ibn Mas’ood said: the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Keep on doing Hajj and ‘Umrah, for they eliminate poverty and sin just as the bellows eliminate impurities from iron and gold and silver.” (Narrated by al-Tirmidhi, 810; al-Nasaa’i, 2631. The hadeeth was classed as saheeh by al-Albaani – may Allaah have mercy on him – in *al-Silsilah al-Saheehah*, 1200).
- f. Ibn ‘Umar reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “The one who fights for the sake of Allaah and the pilgrim who goes for Hajj or ‘Umrah are all guests of Allaah. He called them and they responded; they ask of Him and He will give them.” (Narrated by Ibn Maajah, 2893. The hadeeth is hasan and was classed as such by Shaykh al-Albaani in *al-Silsilat al-Saheehah*, 1820).

6. The benefits of Hajj

Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“That they may witness things that are of benefit to them” [al-Hajj 22:28]

The benefits are both worldly and religious (spiritual).

With regard to the religious benefits, the one who goes for Hajj earns the pleasure of his Lord, and comes back with all his sins forgiven. He also earns the immense reward which he cannot earn anywhere else than in these places. One prayer in al-Masjid al-Haraam, for example, is equal to a hundred thousand prayers elsewhere, and Tawaaf and Saa’ee cannot be done anywhere except in these places.

Other benefits include meeting other Muslims and discussing their circumstances, and meeting scholars, learning from them and asking them about one’s problems.

Worldly benefits include trade and business, and other kinds of earnings that have to do with Hajj.

7. The ruling on Hajj and its spiritual effects on a person

There are many virtues of the rituals of Hajj, and much wisdom behind them. Whoever is blessed with proper understanding of them is blessed with much goodness. For example:

- a. When a person travels to carry out the rituals of Hajj, he is reminded of his journey to Allaah and the Hereafter. When he travels, he leaves behind his dear friends, wife, children and homeland, and the journey to the Hereafter is like that.
- b. The one who goes on this journey equips himself with enough provision to help him reach the sacred land, so let him remember that for his journey to his Lord, he needs to have

sufficient provision to help him get there safely. Concerning this, Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): “*And take a provision (with you) for the journey, but the best provision is At-Taqwaa (piety, righteousness, etc.).*” [al-Baqarah 2:197]

- c. Travelling is a kind of torment, and the same is true of the journey to the Hereafter, only much more so. Ahead of man there is his dying, death, the grave, the gathering, the accounting, the scales and *al-Siraat*, followed by either Paradise or Hell. The blessed one will be the one whom Allaah saves.
- d. When the pilgrim puts on the two garments of his ihraam, he cannot help but be reminded of the shroud in which he will be wrapped [after he dies]. This prompts him to give up disobedience and sin. Just as he has given up his regular clothing [for Hajj], so he has to give up sin. Just as he has put on two clean, white garments, he has to make his heart clean and white [pure], and keep his faculties clean and pure, uncontaminated by the stain of sin and disobedience.
- e. When he says “*Labbayk Allaahumma labbayk*” at the *Meeqaat* [station of entering ihraam], he means that he has responded to his Lord, so how can he insist on still sinning and not respond to his Lord’s call to give it up? When he says “*Labbayk Allaahumma labbayk*”, he means, “I am responding to Your prohibition of it and this is the time I am giving it up.”
- f. When he gives up haraam things during his ihraam, and keeps himself busy with the *talbiyah* and *dhikr*, this shows him how the Muslim should be. He trains himself to give up some things which in principle are halaal, but Allaah has forbidden them to him at this time [during his ihraam], so how can he violate the prohibitions of Allaah by doing things which are haraam at all times and in all places?
- g. When he enters the Sacred House of Allaah, which Allaah has made a sanctuary for mankind, he remembers the sanctuary of the Day of Resurrection, which no one can reach without striving hard and making a concerted effort. The greatest thing which will keep a person safe on the Day of Resurrection is Tawheed and avoiding Shirk (associating others with Allaah). Concerning this, Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): “*It is those who believe (in the Oneness of Allaah and worship none but Him Alone) and confuse not their Belief with Zulm (wrong, i.e. by worshipping others besides Allaah), for them (only) there is security and they are the guided.*” [al-An’aam 6:81].

Kissing the Black Stone, which is the first ritual to be undertaken, teaches the visitor to honour the Sunnah and not to oppose the laws of Allaah with his feeble reasoning. He recognizes that there is wisdom and goodness behind the laws and rituals which Allaah has prescribed for mankind, and he trains himself to submit himself totally to his Lord, may He be exalted. Concerning this, ‘Umar (may Allaah be pleased with him) said, after he kissed the Black Stone: “I know that you are only a stone and that you can neither benefit nor harm. If I had not seen the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) kiss you, I would not have kissed you.” (Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 1520; Muslim, 1720).

- h. When he does Tawaaf, he is reminded of his father Ibraaheem (peace be upon him), who built the House to be a place of resort for mankind and a place of safety, and that he called them to perform pilgrimage to this House. And our Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) also called them to perform pilgrimage to this House. Moosa, Yoonus and ‘Eesaa (peace be upon them) also performed pilgrimage to this House. This

House was a symbol and a meeting place for these Prophets; how could it be otherwise, when Allaah had commanded Ibraheem (peace be upon him) to build it and venerate it?

- i. When he drinks the water of Zamzam, he is reminded of the blessing which Allaah has bestowed upon mankind in the form of this blessed water, from which millions of people have drunk throughout the long ages, but it has never dried up. He is encouraged to make du'aa' when he drinks it by the hadeeth which has been reported from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)" "The water of Zamzam is for whatever it is drunk for." (Narrated by Ibn Maajah, 3062; Ahmad, 14435. This is a hasan hadeeth; classed as hasan by Ibn al-Qayyim – may Allaah have mercy on him – in *Zaad al-Ma'aad*, 4/320).
- j. When he does al-Saa'ee, running between al-Safaa' and al-Marwah, he is reminded of the trial endured by Haajir, the mother of Ismaa'eel and the wife of al-Khaleel [Ibraaheem] (peace be upon him), and how she ran back and forth between al-Safaa' and al-Marwah, searching for water which would save her from what she was suffering, and especially so that she could give her little son – Ismaa'eel – water to drink. Since this woman was patient in the face of this adversity and turned to her Lord, this teaches man that doing this is better and more appropriate. When a man remembers the struggle and patience of this woman, it makes it easier for him to bear his own problems, and a woman who is of her own kind will find her problems easier to bear.
- k. The standing (wuqoof) in 'Arafaah reminds the pilgrim of the throngs of people on the Day of Gathering. If the pilgrim feels tired from being in a crowd of thousands, how will it be in the crowds of barefoot, naked, uncircumcised people, standing for fifty thousand years?
- l. When he throws the pebbles at the Jamaraat, the Muslim trains himself to obey Allaah unquestioningly. Even if he does not understand the reason and wisdom behind this throwing (*ramy*), and cannot make the connection between rulings and their purpose, this is a manifestation of complete submission ('uboodiyyah) to Allaah.
- m. When he slaughters his sacrifice (*hady*), he is reminded of the great event when our father Ibraaheem submitted to the command of Allaah to sacrifice his only son Ismaa'eel, after he had grown up and become a help to him. He is also reminded that there is no room for emotions which go against the commands and prohibitions of Allaah. This teaches him to respond to what Allaah commands, as Ismaa'eel said (interpretation of the meaning): " 'O my father! Do that which you are commanded. In shaa Allaah (if Allaah wills), you will find me of al-saabireen (the patient ones). ' " [al-Saaffaat 37:102].
- n. When he comes out of his ihraam and things that had been forbidden to him once again become permissible, this teaches him about the consequences of patience and that after hardship comes ease. The one who responds to the call of Allaah will have joy and happiness, and this joy cannot be known by anyone except those who have tasted the sweetness of obedience, such as the joy felt by the one who fasts when he breaks his fast, or by the one who prays Qiyaam during the last part of the night, after he has finished praying.
- o. When he has finished performing all the rituals of Hajj as they were prescribed by Allaah and in the manner that Allaah loves, he has the hope that his Lord will forgive him all his sins, as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) promised in the hadeeth, "Whoever does Hajj for the sake of Allaah and does not have sexual relations (with his wife), commit sin, or dispute unjustly during the hajj, will come back like the day his mother gave birth to him. (Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 1449; Muslim, 1350). This invites him to start a new page in his life, free of sin.

- p. When he comes back to his wife and children, and experiences the joy of meeting them again, this reminds him of the greater joy of meeting them in Paradise. This also teaches him that the greatest loss is losing oneself and one's family on the Day of Resurrection, as Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): *"The losers are those who will lose themselves and their families on the Day of Resurrection. Verily, that will be a manifest loss!"* [al-Zumar 39:15].

We ask Allaah to help us to obey Him and to reach His House and to do all that He has enjoined upon us. May Allaah bless our Prophet Muhammad.