

# Hajj - The Journey of Hearts

Written by : **Muhammad AlShareef**

## **Arafah – 10 Years After Hijrah**

The man was standing with Rasul Allah – sal Allahu alayhi wa sallam – when he was thrown from his camel. The camel stomped and the man's neck was snapped. Dead .....

"Bathe his body with water and Sidr and bury him with both garments," said Allah's Messenger. "Do not cover his head, nor touch him with Camphor ... for verily he will be returned (to Allah) on the day of resurrection in the state of Talbiyah! (Labbayk Allahaahumma labbayk)" – Al-Bukhari and Muslim 'Amr ibn Al-'Aas narrates, "When Islam entered my heart, I went to the Messenger of Allah and said, 'Give me your hand so that I may pledge allegiance to you.' The Prophet spread his hand, but I withdrew mine. He said, 'What is wrong 'Amr?' I said, 'I want to make a condition.' 'And what is that?' he said. I said, 'That Allah will forgive me.' Then the Messenger of Allah said, 'Did you not know that Islam wipes out what came before it, and that Hijrah wipes out what came before it and that Hajj wipes out what came before it!'" - Sahih Muslim

## **The Ultimate Reward**

Rasul Allah – sal Allahu alayhi wa sallam - said, "And there is no reward for an accepted Hajj ... except Jannah!" What is the first verse that you read in Surah Al-Hajj? It does not speak of Arafah, nor does it pronounce the pillars of Nahr day. It simply says ... [O Mankind! Fear your Lord, indeed the eruption of the (final) Hour is a horrific event. On that day that you shall see it, every nursing mother will be engrossed away from that (child) she was nursing, and every pregnant woman will abort her pregnancy, and you will see the people (appearing) intoxicated, while they are not intoxicated; rather it is the punishment of Allah, severe.]

Hajj is not a journey of the body such as one may take to a vacation spot or tourist attraction. It is a journey of the soul and heart. When one pays a careful eye to the verses speaking of Hajj, they will find that verse after verse concludes with a commandment of being conscious of Allah's presence, or a reminder of Allah's bounteous favor upon us, or a link between Hajj and the final day.

## **The Destination**

In the not-so-far-away days of old, whenever a journey was to be undertaken proper provisions had to be prepared. The deserts were long, hot, and harsh. Unmerciful. There were no gas stations to fill up with chips and refreshments, or rest stops to slurp water from a fountain. In fact, there was not a human in sight for miles upon miles of barren sand dunes. Losing the way meant losing your life. Thus, you had to have the provision with you before you made the journey. Enough food, enough water, enough everything to carry you to your destination. From here, in the verses dealing of Hajj, when everyone shall have to make some sort of journey to reach the Ka'bah, Allah tuned the attention of His slaves to another journey, a journey every soul is traveling, whether they know it or care to just remain heedless. Allah turned their attention to the journey to the Hereafter, to Paradise or Hell. [And take sustenance (with you) for the journey; verily the best sustenance is Taqwa (piety and righteousness).] – Al Baqarah 2:197

On the day Buhaym Al-'Ajlee set out with his companion for Hajj, he looked toward the endless desert awaiting them both and wept, his chest soaking from the tears. "This is something," said Buhaym, "that has made me understand the most certain journey I must one day take to Allah!"

## Hajj – The Journey Of Hearts

### The Provider

There is debate over whether someone who performs Hajj should be called a Hajji. It is not something found in the Sunnah; rather it has an interesting background in our cultural history. In antique days, when someone decided to perform the journey for Hajj, it was synonymous with bidding farewell to life on earth. This was due to the treacherous obstacles of traveling in the desert - trials such as sickness, starvation, and the struggles of the separate situations. An entire village might gather to bid those people farewell. When someone would go through such a remarkable journey and return alive, they would dedicate their lives to the worship and obedience of Allah. Gone was the cheating, or the lying, or the missed Salah. He was now a Hajji. Today, with the Jumbo jets and ocean liners and Mercedes busses, the facilitation of performing Hajj has taken away the luster of the title Hajji.

Some might complain that there are no queen-size mattress beds in Mina, or that the air conditioning motor is a tad too loud. But dear brothers and sisters, who is it that provided us with all the blessing that we are living in? It is the same Allah that has tested us here on the plains of Arafah. The slave of Allah can only truly understand the favor of Allah upon him when it is taken away. [There is no blame upon you for seeking bounty from your Lord (during Hajj). But when you depart from Arafat, remember Allah at AlMash'ar AlHaram. And remember Him as He has guided you, for indeed you were before that among those astray.] Alhamdulillah.

Indeed the greatest blessing that Allah has favored us with is Islam, and it alone suffices as favor. Allah knows we are going to get dusty during Hajj, Allah knows it. So don't be surprised when that dust blows, instead turn to Allah and hit back with patience and a whisper of gratitude to Allah. [Then let them end their untidiness, fulfill their vows, and perform Tawaf around the ancient House.] – Surah Hajj 22/29

Ibn Al-Qayyim wrote a Qasidah about this journey of the hearts, here is only a glimpse of some of the Arabic verses:

[He says, My slaves have come to Me (for Hajj) out of love for Me

And I am merciful to them, bounteous and loving

Glad tidings O participants of that stand (on Arafah)

a moment when Allah forgives all sins and showers His mercy]

Abu Hurayrah narrates: I heard the Prophet say, "Whoever performs Hajj and does not commit any Rafath (obscenity) or Fusooq (transgression), he returns (free from sin) as the day his mother bore him" – Al-Bukhari

### Getting The Heart In Shape

Many years ago, as the Hujjaj swept through the valley of Muzdalifah, a man remarked out loud, "My look at the number of Hujjaj!" The wise man replied, "Nay, the passengers are many, but the Hujjaj are few." I once heard the story of a man who was blessed with the opportunity to

join the caravan for Hajj regularly. However, his shortcoming was that he could never control his anger during the days of Hajj, and would snap cursing others. Well, one person had an idea for him. His inspiration: Instead of cursing Muslims during Hajj, write all your bad comments on a piece of paper - fold it - and then when you get mad at someone, just hand him the paper. On the top of the tiny envelope write, 'Do not open until after Hajj'. The man agreed. As incident after incident assailed him, the man would simply smile, then frown and hand out the tiny envelopes to the provoking party. Everything was going smoothly until the day when he was walking to the Jamarat and someone stomped his toes. He lost all control. Teeth gritting, he snarled and took out his briefcase of envelopes and dumped it on that poor guys head.

In Hajj I have seen people who snatch for patience and the reward of Allah during those trying moments, like a man pan handles for gold. I asked myself, what is different from them and those who spend their breath in criticism and argumentation? It finally dawned that it was not the body of Zayd or 'Amr that I was witnessing, but it was the hearts of Zayd and 'Amr. Some people come to Hajj prepared financially. Others come with a prepared heart – that is what's essential. Whether the grindstone grinds us to dust or polishes us up depends on what we are made of.

### **Now - How To Get That Heart In Shape For Hajj?**

**Firstly:** Attend lectures and workshops dealing with Hajj Hajj is one of the pillars that Islam is built on. When someone intends to perform this rite it a must upon them that they learn it well. Rasul Allah – sal Allahu alayhi wa sallam – said, "Seeking knowledge is obligatory on every Muslim." Imam Al-Bukhari writes in his Saheeh, 'Chapter: knowledge comes before statements and actions.' He then quoted the verse of Allah: [So Know, that there is no deity except Allah and ask forgiveness for your sin.] - Surah Muhammad, 47/19

**Secondly:** Establish Salah and Perform Qiyaam ul-Layl

When Rasul Allah – sal Allahu alayhi wa sallam – was preparing his heart for the mission of conveying this Deen, Allah ordered him to prepare using Qiyam ul-Layl. Allah ta'ala says: [O you who wraps himself / Arise (to pray) the night, except for a little] – Surah Muzzammil, 73/1,2

A student once slept over at Imam Ahmad's house, rahimahullah. Imam Ahmad had left a vessel of water for him, and upon arriving at Fajr time, found the vessel still full of water. He was shocked and remarked, "How can a person be a Talib Al-'Ilm (student of Islam) and not stand for Qiyam ul-Layl!" Some said to Ibn Mas'ood, may Allah be pleased with him, "We are unable to wake up to perform Qiyam ul-Layl." He told them, "You are distancing yourselves from it by your sins."

**Thirdly:** Repentance to Allah and Dua

It was during the days of Tashreeq when Jibreel – alayhis salam – came to Rasul Allah – sal Allahu alayhi wa sallam – with the words of Allah: [When the victory of Allah has come and the conquest / And you see the people entering into the religion of Allah in multitudes / Then exalt Him with praise of your Lord and ask forgiveness of Him. Indeed, He is ever Accepting of repentance.] Surah An-Nasr

This was the culmination of 23 years of Da'wah, Jihad, and work; here now was the farewell pilgrimage. What did it end with? [Then exalt Him with praise of your Lord (Tasbeeh) and ask forgiveness of Him], Subhaanak Allaahumma wa bihamdika, Allahumma ighfir-lana / Glory be to you O Allah, and may You be praised. O Allah, forgive us!