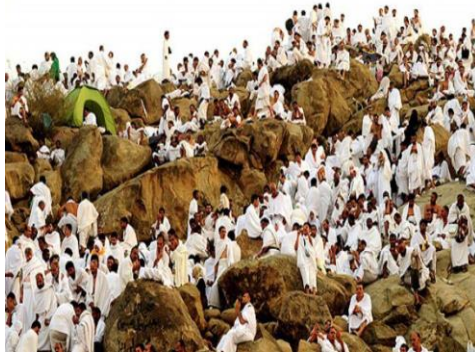


Hajj - The Return To God

BY: MUZAMMIL SIDDIQI AND OTHERS AUG 31, 2017



By the Break of Day; By the Ten Nights; By the Even and Odd (contrasted); And by the Night when it passes away; Is there (not) in these an adjuration (or evidence) for those who understand? ([Surah al-Fajr 89:1-5](#))

"And proclaim the Pilgrimage among people; they will come to thee on foot and (mounted) on every kind of camel, lean on account of journeys through deep and distant mountain highways. That they may witness the benefits (provided) for them, and celebrate the name of Allah, through the Days Appointed, over the cattle which He has provided for them (for sacrifice). So eat you thereof and feed the distressed ones in want. Then let them complete the rites prescribed for them, perform their vows, and (again) circumambulate the Ancient House." ([Surah al-Hajj 22:27-29](#))

The first House (of worship) appointed for people, was that at Bakkah; full of blessing and of guidance for all beings. In it are Signs manifest; the Station of Abraham; whoever enters it attains security; pilgrimage thereto is a duty men owe to Allah, those who can afford the journey; but if any deny faith, Allah stands not in need of any of His creatures. ([Surah Al 'Imran 3:96-97](#))

The first ten days of Dhul Hijjah are the most sacred days of the year. They are mentioned as special days in Surah al-Fajr. These are the days of special blessings. Muslims are urged to do more Dhikr, charity and good deeds during this time. Fasting in these days is prescribed as Nafil from first to the ninth day of Dhul Hijjah. The Prophet -peace be upon him- said:

"There are no days in which righteous deeds are more beloved to Allah than these ten days." The people asked, "Not even Jihad for the sake of Allah?" He said, "Not even Jihad for the sake of Allah, 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-Tirmidhi 688)

At this time millions of Muslims are gathering in and around the sacred city of Makkah. They are coming from every corner of the globe to perform the sacred rites of Hajj. Many members of our own community are there. We pray to Allah to bless all Muslims and accept their Hajj and devotions.

Hajj is an important rukn of Islam. It has many benefits. It is a command of Allah. It is obligatory once in life on every adult Muslim male or female who can afford it physically and financially. Muslims perform Hajj every year in millions in number. They go there with great love and devotion.

Hajj has a form and a spirit. Its form is to have Ihram, perform Tawaf and Sa'y, go to Mina, 'Arafat, Muzdalifah, do the ramy at the Jamarat and make sacrifice of a sheep, goat or camel. There are detailed rules that Pilgrims learn. Here we want to discuss few points about the spirit of Hajj for our benefit and let us think about it in these days. This will help us here also.

1. Hajj is a ceremony of love and devotion to Allah. A Muslim's relation with Allah is that of deep love, devotion and obedience. We love Allah, because He loves us. "He loves them and they love Him ..." (al-Ma'idah 5:54). Prophet Ibrahim -peace be upon him- loved Allah and Allah took him as a Friend (Khalil). "Allah took Ibrahim as a friend ." ([al-Nisa' 4:125](#)). Hajj is deeply associated with Prophet Ibrahim and his life-story. Hajj gives us a sense of History. Our faith is deep rooted in History. This is the religion of Allah given to us by His many

prophets: Adam, Noah, Ibrahim, Ismael and finally Prophet Muhammad -peace be upon them all. These were the people who loved Allah and Allah loved them and made them the guides of humanity.

2. Hajj gives the universal spirit of Islam. People of all races, colors and nationalities go there. They become one people without any class or distinction. They look alike and do the same things. The spirit of Hajj is to foster unity and universal brotherhood and sisterhood among the believers.

3. Hajj gives us a focus, center and orientation. We have one Qiblah and that is our direction for worship. But we should not have only one Qiblah for worship; we should also have unity of purpose and mission in our life. Muslims should be the people of a focus and direction, not a confused people or a people without any orientation and direction. Our focus of life is Allah and House of Allah, the Ka'bah on this earth. We have with us Allah's book that we must hold fast together. "And hold fast all together Allah's rope and be not divided... (Al 'Imran 3:103).

4. Hajj is the ceremony of peace and harmony. The pilgrims come in peace and spend their time together in the most peaceful and respectful manner. They respect every person and everything. They do not harm anyone or anything. This is also the spirit of Islam. Islam is a total commitment to care, compassion and kindness. Hajj is symbol of this commitment and it must manifest in our daily life.

5. Hajj is also a movement, action and sacrifice. The pilgrim keeps on moving all the time, with Tawaf, Sa'y, going to Mina, 'Arafat, Muzdalifah, Mina again, around the Jamarat and other places. It is a dynamic ceremony and this is the way a Muslim's life should be. Motion, action, and sacrifice -these things bring success in this life and salvation in the Hereafter.

6. Hajj is Five in One: Hajj combines all the pillars of our Deen, the culmination and compendium of all Islamic deeds. The testimonial of faith is an action of the tongue that represents submitting to Almighty Allah and accepting His Lordship of this universe. When one is intending to take up such a beautiful journey. Your tongue starts stressing the will of your heart when you utters the Talbiyah (the announcement of answering) which is chanted by all pilgrims from all parts of the world in the same wording and the same amazing tone: *Labbayka allahuma labbayk, labbayka la sharika laka labbayk innal hamda wan ni`mata laka wal mulk la sharika lak.*

Here I am O my Lord, here I am. I am answering the call testifying that there is no associate with You. Truly, all praise is due to You, all blessings are coming from You, the whole Dominion belongs to You. Truly, there is no associate with you!.

Prayer: We can also see the essence of prayer represented in every action of hajj as Muslims will be praying beside the Ka`bah and while in Tawaf (circumambulating the Ka`bah) they avoid engaging in speech or any form of talk and confine themselves to the remembrance of Allah and using certain words of supplication in the same way they do in normal prayer. It also represents a small meeting of a congregation of the larger Muslim nation five times every day to celebrate their unity on that small level.

Zakah is a representation of sacrifice. People sacrifice time and some of their money to show that they trust the reward of Allah and prefer it to all the gains of the world. As you intend to go to Hajj, you realize that there is a financial responsibility to be taken, you have to pay a certain amount of your money or savings towards the making of that journey; something that requires sacrifice and resembles zakah in many aspects.

Fasting is another representation of avoiding certain things which are allowed at other times as a token of showing devotion to Allah and sharing the sufferings of the poor and the needy as well as training oneself on how to control one's desires and lead one's body towards spiritual refinement.

Above all, hajj is the time when a male pilgrim is not allowed to wear perfumes, sewn clothes, pluck or trim any of his hair as if he is in another form of fasting avoiding what is originally allowed as a token of full obedience and total devotion to the Lord.

In addition to this, hajj is the season when Muslims meet with their fellow Muslims to celebrate the sense of belonging to one nation and to discuss the issues that concern all of them and glorify Almighty Allah in congregation. Muslims give to show solidarity with their brothers and sisters and their care for their want and need, to show that they are not enslaved by money. Rather, they use it for the benefit of the society and the welfare of the community. I hope those who have gone to Hajj, will learn good lessons from this journey and we here also should keep these lessons in our minds and lives.