

Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem

The Concepts of Hajj

Hajj is an obligatory act of worship required of a Muslim to perform once in lifetime. It consists of visiting Kaba, the house of God in Mecca, Saudi Arabia in a defined ritualistic way. A Muslim who is indigent, ill, or has other mitigating factors is exempt from making Hajj until the situation changes.

Importance of Hajj. Allah swt says this in the Qur'an about Hajj: "And proclaim among men the pilgrimage; they will come to you on foot and on every lean camel, coming from every remote path that they may witness the advantages for them, and mention the name of Allah during stated days. 22:27"

Hadith. Addressing Imam Ali A.S. the Holy Prophet (pbuh&p) said: "O Ali, any one who delays Hajj, and then dies, Allah will raise him as a Jew or a Christian (a non-Muslim) on the Day of Judgment.

Hajj is a spiritual trip. Most people overlook this aspect, and fail to benefit from it spiritually. One of the criteria to gauge the spiritual benefit from Hajj is attaining spiritual purity, God consciousness, and greater control over base desires.

God's Grace to man. By inviting to His House for Hajj, God bestowed Grace on his devotee, by giving him/her dignity, and preventing the person from falling into degradation.

Blessings of Hajj. Intention of Hajj opens the gates of God's Mercy.

Imam Baqir A.S. said: "When a Muslim intends to go for Hajj, for each step he/she takes in preparation for the journey, Allah will write ten good deeds for him/her, and write off ten of the wrongdoings,"

Imam Sadiq A.S. said; "The Hajj pilgrims who return home belong to one of the three groups; [a] they are saved from the fire of Hell; [b] they are cleansed of their sins, as if they were just born, and [c] they return home with security to their family and their wealth. The first one is the best reward.

Hajj Pilgrims are Allah's Guests. Imam Sadiq A.S. said: "The performers of Hajj and Umrah are Allah's guests. If they ask, they will be given; if they pray, they will be answered; if they intercede, their intercession will be accepted; if they keep silent, they will be blessed; ..."

Hajj Consolidates Faith. Imam Ali A.S. said: "Allah has made obligatory upon you ... the pilgrimage (Hajj), for it consolidates faith."

Hajj Consummates the Relationship. Ali Shariati in his Book “Hajj” says that Hajj consummates the relationship between the Creator (God) and the servant.

Three Stages of Hajj:

Stage One. Purification of intentions and purifying the heart. Hajj is done for the pure pleasure of Allah, and not for any worldly gain, for status, or for fun.

Stage Two. Purification of Soul through repentance. Pay back the debts, Zakat, Khums, etc. Ask forgiveness from those who have been wronged by backbiting, slander, and in any other way. Seek pleasure of the parents, relatives and neighbors.

Stage Three. Say farewell to the world, comfort, and people. One of the requirements of Hajj is to detach oneself from worldly concerns, worries about job, financial matters, and attach oneself to God alone. One must assume that he/ she will not return from the journey.

Imam Sajjad's (A.S.) reference to inner aspects of Hajj. (This is a summary of a dialog between Shibli who had just returned from Hajj, and Imam Sajjad A.S.)

Imam A.S. asked Shibli if he did the following:

- **At Miqat**, when putting off clothes, did he intend to put off the garment of disobedience to Allah, and put on the garment of obedience?
- **As he washed (performed Ghusl)**, did he intend to wash himself of sins and offenses?
- **When entering into Ihram** with intention to perform Hajj, did he intend to wash himself with pure repentance to Allah? To abstain from unlawful, get rid of all pledges from any one other than Allah?
- **As he performed two Rakaat prayers**, did he seek nearness to Allah through the best deeds?
- **As he said Labbayk**, did he intend to speak only of obedience to Allah, and avoid talk of disobedience to Allah
- **As he entered Mecca**, did he intend to direct only towards Allah?
- **As he entered the sacred precinct**, did he intend to abstain from backbiting?
- **As he performed circumambulation (Tawaf)**, caressed the black stone (akin to shaking hands with Allah), did he seek refuge in Allah from Satan’s trickeries?
- **While performing two Rakaat prayers** at the standing place of Ibrahim, and drinking water of the well of **Zamzam**, did he intend to pray like the prayer of Ibrahim in obedience to Allah and to get rid of disobedience to Allah?

- **When walking between Safa and Marwa**, did he intend to be between hope and fear of Allah?
- **At Arafat** did he intend to recognize Allah, glorified Him, recognized His knowledge, and that Allah holds the records of deeds and is fully aware of the hidden secrets?
- **At Muzdalfa**, while praying two Rakaat Salaat, and while picking pebbles, did he intend to get rid of disobedience, ignorance, and did he take corrective measures?
- **At Mina**, as he threw pebbles did he feel that he achieved his aim and that God will settle all his need? Did he intend to stone Iblis, his enemy, and challenge him through Hajj?
- **As he shaved his head**, did he intend to purify himself from all filth and liabilities of people on his shoulders, and to get rid of sins, as if his mother had just given birth to him?
- **As he returned to Mecca** to perform Tawaf, did he intend to rely on Allah’s Mercy, turn to His obedience, cling to His Love, be dutiful to Him, and seek His nearness?

Shibli’s answer was “**NO**” to all the questions. The Imam A.S. said that Shibli did not perform any of the precepts of Hajj, he did not go to Mecca, did not perform Tawaf, or Sa’ee, he did not go to Arafat, or Muzdalfa. He did not throw stones on Iblis, or shave his head or offer sacrifice. In short, Imam A.S. said he did not perform Hajj, and advised him to go back again to perform Hajj.

(For full details, please refer to the book “Hajj” by Ayatullah Sayyid Mohammad Zia Abadi, chapter six, “Conclusions of Hajj Rites.”)

Imam Sadiq’s (A.S.) Instructions to those going for Hajj. (Summarized and rephrased)

When you intend to go on Hajj:

- ❖ Empty your heart of any preoccupation other than Allah.
- ❖ Entrust all affairs to the Creator and rely on Him for everything.
- ❖ Submit yourself to Divines fate, destiny and decision.
- ❖ Say farewell to the world, worldly comforts and the people
- ❖ Discharge what you owe to others.
- ❖ Do not rely on power, Wealth, friends, etc. There is no power but Allah, only He can make you succeed.
- ❖ Prepare as if you have no hope to return. Behave well with co-travelers in the tradition of the Holy Prophet (pbuh&p). Observe courtesy, patience, tolerance, compassion, generosity, and gratitude at all times.
- ❖ With Ghusl (Ritual bath). Purify yourself with water of repentance. On entering into Ihram, put on the garment of truthfulness, sincerity, humility and modesty.

- ❖ At Miqaat, Rid whatever distracts you from Allah’s remembrance and obedience.
- ❖ After coming into Ihram, Say Labbayk (I am here) to Allah with pure, flawless, and chaste heart, while you have laid hold on to the firmest handle.
- ❖ In the Haram, Circumambulate the throne with your heart among angels (in the heaven), as you are Circumambulating the House (Kaba).
- ❖ At Safa and Marwa, Perform Sa’ee and Harwala (fast pace), to escape from carnal desires with all your power and strength.
- ❖ While leaving Mecca for Mina, shed ignorance, wrongdoings, and desires of all things that are unlawful and unworthy.
- ❖ In Arafat, confess your wrongdoings (sins), renew your covenant with Allah, His Oneness, and seek His approach.
- ❖ In Muzdalfa, fear Allah, and make your soul ascend to the heaven by climbing up the mountain.
- ❖ In Mina, by offering the animal sacrifice, cut the throat of carnal desires and greed.
- ❖ At the Jamaraat (devils), through Ramy, the act of throwing stones at them, cast out lust, miserliness, meanness, and all blame worthy acts.
- ❖ By shaving the head, do away with external and internal flaws.
- ❖ When entering Allah’s sacred precinct (Haram), rid yourself of all (worldly) desires.
- ❖ Caress the Black Stone, and humble yourself before the Lord’s greatness. Feel content with what He has given you.
- ❖ In the final Circumambulation, say farewell to everything except Allah.
- ❖ At Safa, prepare to meet Allah by purifying your soul
- ❖ When at Marwa, dissolve yourself in Allah’s Attributes.

Finally, be firm and faithful (forever) to the pledge you gave to Allah by performing Hajj.

(The End)

Ref: - “Hajj” by Ayatullah Sayyid Mohammad Zia Abadi

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