

18) Piety And the Hajj

Although the Hajj is an important religious obligation, it is especially related to ‘Taqwa’, for it requires the suffering of a long journey by people who live in distant lands. It also requires money, health, and safe route in a way that some scholars have compared to Jihad; the greater Jihad in which people sometimes lose their lives.

Meeting with Muslims from other sects, taking part in world congresses of Muslims on trade and politics, visiting the holy city of Medina, taking off one’s ordinary clothes and getting into the state of Ihram (ritual consecration), observing all religious duties in the Shajarah (tree) Mosque, moving towards the secure city of Mecca, performing Tawaf (circumambulation around the Kaaba), sa’y (running) between the two famous hills of Safa and Marwah, Taqseer (clipping the nails and cutting the hair), going to Mash’ar al-Haram,¹ Arafat, and Mina, returning to Mecca and performing religious obligations are all important and amazing.

Hence, Taqwa has to be observed in all that. In this relation, God says: **“And accomplish the pilgrimage and the visit for Allah, but if you are prevented, (send) whatever offering is easy to obtain, and do not shave your heads until the offering reaches its destination, ... and be careful (of your duty) to Allah, and know that Allah is severe in requiting (evil) ... and make provision, for surely the provision is the guarding of oneself, and be careful (of your duty) to Me, O men of understanding.”**²

On the importance of Taqwa, which is the spirit of offering sacrifice, God says: **“There does not reach Allah their flesh nor their blood, but to Him is acceptable the guarding (against evil) on your part.”**³ That is to say that the offering of sacrifice must be aimed at getting close to God and not to the wall of the Kaaba.

Forbidding certain acts, God says: **“O you who believe! Do not violate the signs appointed by Allah nor the sacred month, nor (interfere with) the offerings, nor the sacrificial animals with garlands, nor those going to Sacred House seeking the grace and pleasure of their Lord, and when you are free from obligations of the pilgrimage, then hunt, and let not hatred of a people –because they hindered you from the Inviolable Mosque (the Kaaba)– incite you to exceed the limits, and help**

one another in goodness and piety, and do not help one another in sin and aggression, and be careful of your (duty to) Allah; surely Allah is severe in requiting (evil).”⁴

About staying in Mina, God says: ***“Then whoever hastens (his departure) in two days, there is no blame on him, and whoever remains behind, there is no blame on him, (this is) for him who guards (against evil), and be careful (of your duty) to Allah, and know that you shall be gathered together to Him.”⁵***

Taqwa, in relation to the Hajj, is a special Taqwa, for the Hajj itself is distinct from other religious obligations in different dimensions. One has to observe piety from the very beginning; that is to say that one must prepare himself for this spiritual journey. One must realize that it is an obligatory duty and any delay in it is a sin. One who denies it, is considered as an unbeliever.

One must take great care in providing the money which must be well-gotten, saying goodbye to his family, getting acquainted with the rituals of the Hajj and how to behave with other co-travelers, choosing a friend of journey, knowing the priorities of the journey like intention, purification of body (Ghusl), supplication, charity, performing a two-rak'a prayer, reciting the sura of al-Hamd, the verse of al-Kursi (throne, 2:255), the suras 113 and 114 beginning with “Say: I seek refuge in the Lord of the dawn” and “Say: I seek refuge in the Lord of people”, and the Sura of Tawheed (112), remembrance, glorifying Allah, saying Tahleel and Takbeer,⁶ taking soil (from the area of the tomb of) of Imam Hussain (AS) with him, wearing a finger-ring of agate and turquoise.

He should ponder on what journey he is going on, a journey that most of the prophets and the imams went on their feet more than twenty times, a journey that one is accompanied by one of the infallibles knowingly or unknowingly. He should have conviction that Imam Mahdi (AS) accompanies the Hajj pilgrims every year.

Ibn Shahrashoob narrated from al-Alqami that someone said: “I was somewhere between Mecca and Medina when a shadow appeared from a distance. It appeared and disappeared until it reached near me. The shadow greeted me and I replied to the greeting.

I asked: “Where are you coming from?”

He said: “From Allah.”

I asked: “Where you are going to?”

He said: “Towards Allah.”

I asked: “To whose presence are you going?”

He said: “To Allah.”

I asked: "What is your provision?"

He said: "Taqwa (piety).."

I asked: "Who are you?"

He said: "I am an Arab man."

I said: "Introduce yourself!"

He said: "I am a man from Quraish."

I said: "Introduce yourself more!"

He said: "I am a Hashemite."

I said: "Reveal your identity!"

He said: "I am an Alawite."

Then he recited a poem eulogizing Ahl al-Bayt and their truthfulness. Finally, he said: "I am Muhammad ibn Ali ibn al-Hussain." He then disappeared and I did not understand whether he went up to heaven or went under the earth.[7](#)

A Hajji has to observe Taqwa in visiting the tomb of the holy prophet (SAW), the light of the worlds, the master of the worlds, and the seal of prophets as well as in visiting the tombs of the infallible Imams in the Baqee' Cemetery. He should realize that he has been honored by having the chance of visiting the land of the revelation, the descending place of angels, the place of the holy prophet (SAW) and the imams, the birthplace of the holy lights, the place of the five pure ones, the place of the shining suns, and the fountain of the perfect virtues and knowledge.

A Hajji should realize what honorable people he is going to visit, who are observing his speech and deed, and who are his hosts. His hosts are those whose knowledge has not disappeared by the veil of death, whose life and death are equal, and who are quite different from other human beings. In the Supplication of Rajab, we read: "There is no difference between You and them save they are Your servants. Whatever they have, comes from You. Their power and knowledge are acquired but Your knowledge is inherent. You have given them such a power!"

In this holy land, one must engage in character building, serving people, increasing one's knowledge, exercising piety, and acquiring divine wisdom. Idle sport, mammonism, egoism, opportunism, love of position, backbiting, slandering, treason, indecency, and impiety must be avoided.

A Hajji should remember what endeavors were undertaken by the holy prophet of Islam (SAW), the Imams of guidance, and their honorable companions. He should see what sacrifices were made, what

battles were fought, which people offered their lives for Islam and were martyred to safeguard the holy prophet (SAW) and Islam.

In Medina, he should realize what sacrificial deeds Lady Fatima (a.s.) did to help Islam and to defend Imam Ali (AS), what oppression and injustice she suffered and how she, who had been wronged, was buried at night. What plots the enemy had hatched in Medina, what scandals they brought about, what innovations in religion they introduced, how Imam Ali's right was usurped, which people hurt the holy prophet (SAW), which people diverted the path of Imamate, and who were the people thinking of their passions and Satanic objectives.

Truly, Medina is like a book of history, religion, politics, ethics, and knowledge which has to be studied carefully. Medina is like a divine book which has to be pondered on. Medina is like a book in one of whose pages you will see divine knowledge and revelation, on another page the holy prophet's mission, and on the next pages, the advice of the Ahl al-Bayt, kindness, friendship, love, assistance, hospitality, good behavior, counseling, equality, honor, respecting the elderly, feeding the poor, restraining of anger, patience, endurance, pardoning, observing the believers' rights, shaking hands (with others), hugging others, love of kinship, reciting the holy Quran, supplication, weeping in the heart of night, and spending the night in worshipping.

You will see how the Imams made pilgrimage to Mecca from Medina. You will see how they got into the state of Ihram in the ash-Shajarah Mosque and their saying Labbayk (Talbiyah).⁸ You will see their move from Medina to Mecca, their reciting of Takbeer on the way, their entry into Mecca, and you will see how they performed circumambulation, how they did Sa'y (ritual running) between Safa and Marwa, Taqseer (cutting of nails and hair), their prayers and supplications.

In Mecca, one has to look at the past. A Hajji must know what kind of people lived in Mecca, what evil deeds they committed, what they worshiped, what they were interested in, what the Arabs were doing before Islam, what their creeds were, what changes Islam brought about, how the holy prophet of Islam (SAW) was deputed, what reactions he faced, what calamities he suffered, what battles he fought, how the messenger of Allah (a.s.) invited the idolaters to Islam, how he saved the wretched and misled people, how the only savior of humanity, the seal of the prophets and the Imam of the pious attracted people's hearts, and how he cleansed and purified the sacred House (the Kaaba), the Rokn (the corner of the Kaaba), and the Maqam⁹ from the idols.

In Mecca, you can think of the shining sun of the universe, the seal of prophets and the Imam of the pious. You can call to your mind the Night Journey of the holy prophet (SAW) as well as the supplications and moaning of the Imam of guidance and ponder on the Hajj rituals.

When Ash-Shabliyy had returned from the Hajj and went to meet Imam Sajjad (AS), the Imam said to him: "Have you performed the Hajj, Shably?"

Ash-Shabliyy said: "Yes, O son of the messenger of Allah!"

The Imam (AS) asked: “Did you go to Miqat (the place where the pilgrims intend to perform the hajj or the Umrah) and took off your sewed clothes and performed Ghusl?”

Ash-Shabliy said: “Yes, I did.”

The Imam (AS): “Did you intend to take off the clothes of disobedience and sin and put on the garment of obedience?”

Ash-Shabliy: “No, I did not!”

The Imam (AS): “Did you intend to do away with hypocrisy and doubt?”

Ash-Shabliy: “No, I did not.”

The Imam (AS): “When you performed Ghusl, did you intend to purify yourself from lapses and sins?”

Ash-Shabliy: “No.”

The Imam (AS): “Then, you have neither gone to Miqat, nor taken off your sewn clothes, nor performed Ghusl!”

The Imam (AS): “Did you purify yourself? Did you get into the state of Ihram (consecration)? Did you have the intention of performing the Hajj?”

Ash-Shabliy: “Yes, I did.”

The Imam (AS): “When you purified yourself, got into the state of Ihram and intended to perform the Hajj, did you intend to purify yourself with the cleansing medicine of repentance for the sake of God Almighty?”

Ash-Shabliy: “No.”

The Imam (AS): “When you got into the state of Ihram, did you intend to observe all what God Almighty has made unlawful as unlawful for yourself?”

Ash-Shabliy: “No.”

The Imam (AS): “When you intended to perform the Hajj, did you intend to cut your relation with anyone (or anything) other than God?”

Ash-Shabliy: “No.”

The Imam (AS): “Then, you have neither purified yourself, nor got into the state of Ihram, nor intended for the Hajj!”

The Imam (AS): “When in the Miqat, did you perform a two-rak’a prayer of Ihram? Did you say the “talbiyah”?”

Ash-Shabliy: “Yes, I did.”

The Imam (AS): “When in the Miqat, did you have the intention of Ziyara (visiting)?”

Ash-Shabliy: “No.”

The Imam (AS): “When you performed the two-rak’a prayer, did you intend to get close to God with the prayer which is the best deed of servants?”

Ash-Shabliy: “No.”!

The Imam (AS): “Then, you have neither entered the Miqat, nor performed the prayer, nor have said “Labbayk”!”

The Imam (AS): “Did you enter the Sanctum, see the Kaaba, and offer the prayer?”

Ash-Shabliy: “Yes, I did.”

The Imam (AS): “When you entered the Sanctum, did you intend to refrain from backbiting any Muslim and consider it unlawful?”

Ash-Shabliy:” No!”

The Imam (AS): “When you arrived in Mecca, did you intend in your heart that you have turned loyally to God?”

Ash-Shabliy: “No.”

The Imam (AS): “Then, you have not entered the Sanctum, nor have you seen the Ka’ba, nor have you offered the prayer.”

The Imam (AS): “Have you circumambulated the Kaaba, touched the corners (of the Kaaba), and gone between Safa and Marwa?”

Ash-Shabliy: “Yes, I did.”

The Imam (AS): “Once, you performed Sa’y, did you have the Niyyah (intention) that you are escaping towards God? Was the Knower of the unseen aware of this?”

Ash-Shabliy: “No.”

The Imam (AS): “Then, you have not circumambulated the Kaaba, nor touched the corners, nor

performed Sa'y."

The Imam (AS): "Did you extend your hand towards the Black Rock and touched it? Did you stop at the Maqam of Abraham and perform a two-rak'a prayer?"

Ash-Shabliy: "Yes, I did."

The Imam made a loud cry in a way that his soul was departing from his body. He then drew a sigh, saying: "One, who touches the Black Rock, is as if he has shaken hand with God Almighty. O you wretched one! You should not waste the reward of an act whose sanctity is so great, for you might change the act of shaking hand into disobedience and commitment of what is forbidden." Then, the Imam (AS) said: "Once, you stopped at the Maqam (station) of Abraham, did you have a Niyah (intention) that you are ready for any act of obedience and to give up any act of disobedience?"

Ash-Shabliy: "No."

The Imam (AS): "Once, you performed a two-rak'a prayer in that place, did you have the Niyah of doing so to adhere to (Prophet) Ibrahim so as to knock down Satan?"

Ash-Shabliy: "No."

The Imam (AS): "Then, you have not touched the Black Rock, nor have you stopped at the Maqam of Abraham, nor have you performed a two-rak'a prayer!"

The Imam (AS): "Did you go to the Zamzam Well and drink from it?"

Ash-Shabliy: "Yes, I did."

The Imam (AS): "Did you have the Niyah (intention) to turn to obedience and give up disobedience?"

Ash-Shabliy: "No, I did not."

The Imam (AS): "Then, you have not gone to the Zamzam Well, nor have you drunk from it."

The Imam (AS): "Did you perform Sa'y between Safa and Marwah, and commute between them?"

Ash-Shabliy: "Yes, I did."

The Imam (AS): "Did you have the Niyah that you were between fear and hope?"

Ash-Shabliy: "No, I did not."

The Imam (AS): "Did you go to Mina?"

Ash-Shabliy: "Yes, I did."

The Imam (AS): “Did you have the Niyyah that you would keep people safe from your tongue, heart, and hand?”

Ash-Shabliy: “No.”

The Imam (AS): “Then, you have not gone to Mina!”

The Imam (AS): “Did you have a stop at Arafat, go up the Mount of Rahmah (mercy), know the desert of Namirah, and call God near the pebbles?”

Ash-Shabliy: “Yes, I did.”

The Imam (AS): “Once, you stopped at Arafat, did you recognize God’s knowledge over everything and know that your record of deeds is with Him? Did you get to know your inner secrets?”

Ash-Shabliy: “No.”

The Imam (AS): “Once, on the top of the Mount of Rahmah (Mercy), did you realize that every believing man and believing woman will receive God’s mercy and He will assist every Muslim man and Muslim woman?”

Ash-Shabliy: “No.”

The Imam (AS): “Near Namirah, did you have the Niyyah (intention) that you do not enjoin something unless you yourself are ready to observe it, and do not forbid anything unless you yourself refrain from it?”

Ash-Shabliy: “No.”

The Imam (AS): “Once, you stood near the Alam (emblem) and the Namirat, did you have the Niyyah that they should bear witness to your obedience and that they together with the guarding angels would do so by the order of the Lord of heavens?”

Ash-Shabliy: “No.”

The Imam (AS): “Then, you have not stopped at Arafat, nor have you gone up the Mount Rahmah, nor have you recognized the Namirah, nor have you called God, nor have you prayed to Him, and nor have you been near the Alam and the Namirat.”

The Imam (AS): “Did you perform a two-rak’a prayer between Arafat and Muzdalifah, pick up pebbles, and go to the al-Mash’ar al-Haram (the hill in Arafat)?”

Ash-Shabliy: “Yes, I did.”

The Imam (AS): “Once, you performed a two-rak’a prayer, did you have the Niyyah that the thanksgiving

prayer on the tenth night of Dhul Hijjah would take away all hardships and bring about ease?”

Ash-Shabliy: “No.”

The Imam (AS): “Once, you passed between the two emblems and had no deviation to the right or left, did you have the Niyah not to be deviated from the religion of God?”

Ash-Shabliy: “No.”

The Imam (AS): “While collecting pebbles in Muzdalifah, did you have the Niyah to keep disobedience and ignorance away from yourself and to be steady with knowledge and good deeds?”

Ash-Shabliy: “No.”

The Imam (AS): “In the al-Mash’ar al-Haram, did you have the intention to awaken your heart like that of the pious and those who are fearful of God?”

Ash-Shabliy: “No.”

The Imam (AS): “Then, you have not passed between the two emblems, nor have you performed a two-rak’a prayer, nor have you gone to Muzdalifah, nor have you collected pebbles, nor have you been to the al-Mash’ar al-Haram.”

The Imam (AS): “Did you arrive in Mina? Did you throw pebbles at Satan? Did you shave your head? Did you offer sacrifice? Did you perform a two-rak’a prayer in the al-Khayf Mosque? Did you return to Mecca and perform the last circumambulation?”

Ash-Shabliy: “Yes, I did.”

The Imam (AS): “When you were throwing pebbles in Mina, did you have the Niyah that you have achieved your goals and that your Lord has fulfilled all your needs?”

Ash-Shabliy: “No, I did not.”

The Imam (AS): “When you were throwing pebbles, did you intend to throw your enemy Iblis, and by completing the rituals of the hajj, to disobey and faraway from him?”

Ash-Shabliy: “No.”

The Imam (AS): “When you shaved your head, did you have the Niyah that you have been cleansed from all pollutions and have been purified from sins as if you were born just then?”

Ash-Shabliy: “No.”

The Imam (AS): “Once you performed the prayer in the al-Khayf Mosque, did you have the Niyah that

you should not fear anyone except God Almighty for your sins and that you do not hope but for the mercy of Allah?”

Ash-Shabliyy: “No.”

The Imam (AS): “When you offered your sacrifice, did you have the Niyyah that you have cut off the throat of greed due to piety, and did you have the Niyyah to follow the tradition of Abraham when trying to sacrifice his dear son? This is the tradition of one who seeks Allah’s nearness.”

Ash-Shabliyy: “No.”

The Imam (AS): “When returning to Mecca and performing the last circumambulation, did you have the Niyyah to return to obedience with the mercy of God Almighty, do what is obligatory, and seek His nearness?”

Ash-Shabliyy: “No.”

The Imam (AS): “Then, you have not arrived in Mina, nor have you thrown pebbles at Satan, nor have you shaven your head, nor have you performed the rituals, nor have you prayed in the al-Khayf Mosque, nor have you performed Efadhah (the hurrying of the hajjis in masses from Arafat to Mina) circumambulation, nor have you become close to God. Go and perform another Hajj, for you have not done it!”

Ash-Shabliyy started weeping for what he had lost in his Hajj and kept on learning about the Hajj rituals until he went to perform the Hajj the following year with certainty and acknowledgement. [10](#)

Abdurrahman ibn Katheer reports: “I was performing the Hajj with Imam Sadiq (AS). He went up the mountain to have a view. The Imam cast a look at people and said: “How great is the number of those who weep and wail and how few is the number of (true) Hajjis.” [11](#)

Abu Baseer has reported: “I was performing the Hajj with Imam Sadiq (AS). When we were engaged in the circumambulation around the Kaaba, I said: “May I be sacrificed for you, O the son of the messenger of Allah! Does God forgive this people?” The Imam said: “O Abu Baseer! Most of the people you are watching are monkeys and pigs.” I said: “Can I see them as you see them?” The Imam uttered certain words and rubbed his hand on my eyes. Immediately, I saw them as monkeys and pigs. This was hard to me. The Imam rubbed his hand on my eyes again and I saw people as they were.” [12](#)

I will bring this topic to an end with a tradition on the virtue of the Hajj. Imam Ali (AS) has been reported by Imam Sadiq (AS) and Mo’awiya ibn Ammar as saying: “A Bedouin came to the messenger of Allah and said: “I lost the chance of performing the Hajj. I am a rich man. Tell me what I should do with my wealth which has the same reward as the Hajj does.” Turning to him, the messenger of Allah (SAW) said: “Look at Mount Abu Qubais. If this mountain turns into red gold, and you will give it as charity, you will not attain what a Hajji attains.”

Then, the holy prophet (SAW) said: “Surely, if one sets out for the Hajj, he does not lift or put down anything, except that God will write ten rewards for him, write off ten of his bad deeds, and exalt for him ten degrees . When he rides on his camel, God will do the same for every step he takes. When he performs the circumambulation around the Kaaba, he will come out of his sins, and when he does Sa’y between Safa and Marwah, he will come out of his sins. When he throws pebbles (at Satan), he shall be free of his sins.”

The messenger of Allah (SAW) then said: “Whenever a Hajj pilgrim stops, he will come out of sins.” Turning to the man, the holy prophet (SAW) said: “How can you attain what a Hajj pilgrim has attained?”

[13](#)

- [1.](#) A hill in Muzdalifah where the hajjis should supplicate Allah earnestly.
- [2.](#) Qur'an, 2:196–197.
- [3.](#) Qur'an, 22:37.
- [4.](#) Qur'an, 5:2.
- [5.](#) Qur'an, 2:203.
- [6.](#) Tahleel is the reciting of “la ilaha illallah: there is no god but Allah” and takbeer is the reciting of “allahu akbar: Allah is greater (than all)”.
- [7.](#) Kashf al-Ghummah, vol.2, p. 353.
- [8.](#) “Labayk allahumma” means: my Lord, here I am at Your service.
- [9.](#) The station of Abraham about thirty meters from the gate of the Kaaba where he used to stand when he was building the Kaaba.
- [10.](#) Mustadrak al-Wasa'il, vol. 2, pp. 186,187.
- [11.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 27, p. 181.
- [12.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 47, p. 79.
- [13.](#) The Fourteen (traditions) of Sheikh Baha'ee, p. 92.

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