

Stages of Hajj

[Beginning of the journey and going through different stages](#)

After we have become familiar with the philosophy of Hajj and its sublime goals, we should go on two parallel journeys, namely the journey of body (the physical journey) and the journey of soul (the spiritual journey). We should be keen about the inner state, the spiritual effect, and its acceptance.

Stage One: Pure Intention

إِذَا أَرَدْتَ الْحَجَّ فَجَرِّدْ قَلْبَكَ لِلَّهِ تَعَالَى مِنْ كُلِّ شَاغِلٍ

“When you intend for Hajj, purify your heart from what keeps you away from Allah.” ¹⁷⁹

Men of heart and pilgrims of the House of God, after getting to know the meaning of Hajj and before taking provisions with them, purify their hearts and see whether their motivation in this journey is godly or not. The aim of Hajj is to express the submission to God. Hence, a pilgrim must keep away from physical desires and aims at obeying God, obtaining the rewards of the Hereafter, and escaping from the punishment of the Hereafter.

If Hajj is made for fun, amusement, business, social prestige, and escape from people’s blame, its true aim—devotion is lost. To test his pure intention, a pilgrim should see whether he wants to perform Hajj for the above-mentioned purposes or he goes on Hajj for sake of God alone.

If, for instance, a jurisprudent dissuades him from going on Hajj by telling that the money should be spent on a more urgent case, it should not be painful for him. But if he sees that not going on Hajj is painful for him; that he feels ashamed before people, then his intention of Hajj is not pure, and he must ask forgiveness for the same.

Stage Two: Repentance

ثُمَّ اغْتَسِلْ بِمَاءِ التَّوْبَةِ الْخَالِصَةِ مِنَ الذَّنُوبِ

“Then purify yourself of sins by water of repentance.”²⁸⁰

Beyond doubt, the impure have no place among the pure. Purification is a prerequisite for the beginning of the Hajj pilgrimage in the same way that prayer is not valid without purification. Hajj, too, which is the circumambulation of the Kaaba and prayer being a part of it, requires purification that, too, with water of repentance from defaulted duties and violation of people’s rights.

People’s rights, if financial like religious tax, atonement, and personal debts must be fully paid, and for adventitious rights like backbiting, slander, dishonor, and nuisance, one must beg pardon for every right that people have to him would be like a debtor who asks him: Are you going to God’s House while you have ignored His instructions at home?

He must seek the pleasure of his parents, relatives, and neighbors, too. He must also repent for the faults he has had so as to enter into the company of the purified:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ وَيُحِبُّ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ

“Surely, Allah loves those who turn much to Him, and He love those purify themselves. (The Holy Qur’an; 2:222)”

It is appropriate for him to do repentance according to the instructions reportedly coming from the Holy Prophet (saw) as mentioned in the book titled *Mafateeh ul-Jinan*.

Stage Three: Detachment From What Is Not Godly

وَوَدَّعِ الدُّنْيَا وَالرَّاحَةَ وَالْخَلْقَ

“Say farewell to the world, comfort, and people.”³⁸¹

One of the requirements of Hajj being a journey towards God is the detachment from what is non-godly. It must be assumed that one will never return from this journey. It is unwise for a pilgrim who wishes to visit God’s House to be preoccupied with his business, home, wife, and children.

He must write his last will and testament so that if he passes away during the journey, his financial affairs will be clear and trouble no one. In the same way that he takes with him a provision for the

journey and a means of transportation to Mecca, in the journey of death, too, he needs provision and means of transportation to the grave.

آه آه مِنْ قَلَّةِ الزَّادِ وَطُولِ الطَّرِيقِ وَبُعْدِ السَّفَرِ

“Alas! The provision is little, the way is long, the journey is far and the goal is hard to reach.”⁴⁸²

Then he entrusts his family to the true Guardian.

قَالَ اللَّهُ خَيْرٌ حَافِظًا وَهُوَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ

“But Allah is the best Keeper, and He is the Most Merciful of the merciful ones. (The Holy Qur’an; 12:64)”

Imam Sajjad (as) used to say:

مَا أَبَالِي إِذَا قُلْتُ هَذِهِ الْكَلِمَاتِ لَوْ اجْتَمَعَ عَلَيَّ الْإِنْسُ وَالْجِنُّ

“When I recite these words (of supplication), I am not afraid of anything even if jinn and men are banded together against me.”⁵⁸³

These words are:

“In the Name of Allah, with Allah, from Allah, to Allah, and for the sake of Allah. O Allah, to You I have yielded myself, to You I have turned my face, and to You I have submitted all my affairs; so, guard me with the guard of faith from ahead of me, from beyond me, from my right side, from my left side, from above me, and from beneath me. And protect me with Your power and might—surely, all power and might belong to You alone. You are the Most High, the Most Great.”

Choosing A Co-Traveler

Another important point to be observed is to choose a co-traveler in this spiritual journey. In the same way that any cause of preoccupation in this journey is harmful, any cause of remembrance of God, attention to the philosophy of Hajj, and a spiritual state is extremely useful for a pilgrim. Hence, he must choose a co-traveler who is truly reminder of God and keeps him in a permanent spiritual state. A pilgrim should refuse to associate with those who, during this spiritual journey, which might happen only once a lifetime, think of eating, sleeping, and joking all the time. A pilgrim should stop complaining about the quantity and quality of the food as well as spending time in shopping.

إِنْتَهِزُوا الْفُرْصَ فَإِنَّهَا تَمُرُّ مَرَّ السَّحَابِ

“Seize the opportunities, for they are like transient clouds.”⁶⁸⁴

Good Temperament

وَأَحْسِنِ الصُّحْبَةَ

“Keep good company.”⁷⁸⁵

Good temperament is recommended but during Hajj, it is more praiseworthy, for the journey is towards God and all pilgrims are God’s guests. To honor the guests is to honor the host. Imam Sadiq (as) says:

إِنَّ الْخُلُقَ الْحَسَنَ يُمِيتُ الْخَطِيئَةَ كَمَا تُمِيتُ الشَّمْسُ الْجَلِيدَ

“Good temperament diminishes the sins in the same way as the sun thaws ice.”⁸⁸⁶

Having good temperament means not only to avoid nuisance to anyone but also to tolerate other people’s bad behaviors and to serve them with respect. A pilgrim should be careful not to utter an indecent word. He should know that whatever he does is for the sake of God. Only then all hardships will be easy for him to tolerate.

- ^{1.} See Misbah ul-Shariah; chapter 21
- ^{2.} See Misbah ul-Shariah; chapter 21
- ^{3.} See Misbah ul-Shariah; chapter 21
- ^{4.} See Nahjul Balagha; maxim 77
- ^{5.} See Taraa’if ul-Hikam; Vol. 2
- ^{6.} See Safinatol-Bihar, Vol. 2
- ^{7.} See Misbah ul-Shariah; chapter 21
- ^{8.} See al-Mahajjatol Beizaa; vol. 3

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