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Obligations of Tawaf

There are eight obligations to be fulfilled in tawaf :

1. It must be commenced at Hajar-ul-Aswad (The Black Stone) and, as a matter of recommended precaution the entire body of the pilgrim must pass in front of the entire Stone. It is recommended to stop a little distance away from the Stone, so that one is certain to be standing opposite it; the extra distance should provide an assurance for a proper start.

2. Each round is completed at the Hajar-ul-Aswad. In the last round, it is recommended to proceed a little further from the Stone so that the extra distance covered may provide assurance for its proper completion.

3. At all times, during the tawaf, the Holy Ka'ba must be to the left of the pilgrim. If, in order to kiss a corner of the Holy Ka'ba, one faces it, or because of rush of pilgrims, one finds himself facing it, or giving it his back or right sides, the distance covered in such a pose will not count as part of tawaf.

4. This rule is basic common sense as is also evident from the tawaf of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) when he did so riding. So there is no need for special effort to be made at the Hijr Ismail and at the corners.

5. Hijr Ismail must be included in tawaf; that is to say, a pilgrim must turn around the Hijr without entering it or climbing its wall.

6. One must circumambulate keeping clear of the Holy Ka'ba and its projection it known as Shadharwaan.

7. One must circumambulate seven times continuously. Less than seven rounds will invalidate the tawaf; if more than seven rounds are made deliberately, the tawaf will be invalid too, as will be discussed below.

8. The seven rounds must follow each other without considerable interruption between them.

9. The tawaf must be performed by free movement of the pilgrim. If he was made to move by being

pushed by the crowd tawaf will not be acceptable.

Rule 303: As is widely held, tawaf is performed between the Holy Ka'ba and Maqame (the station) of Ibrahim (a.s.) – a distance of twenty six and a half arm lengths (about 12 meters). As one has to go around the wall of Hijr Ismail, the distance is reduced to six and a half arm lengths (about 3 meters).

However, if one moves outside this ambit, it is acceptable, though makrouh, particularly if one is unable to remain within the limits, or harm could befall him, if he did so. Nevertheless, where possible, observing ihtiyat is recommended.

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