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Sa'y

All the schools agree that *sa'y* follows the *tawaf*, or its *rak'atayn* for those who consider them *wajib*. So also they agree that one who performs *sa'y* before *tawaf* should revert and perform his *tawaf* first and then the *sa'y*. I haven't come across any opinion holding that the *sa'y* must immediately follow the *tawaf* (*muwalat*). [1](#)

The Mustahabbat of Sa'y

According to the book *Fiqh al-Sunnah*, it is *mustahabb* to ascend the hills of Safa and Marwah, and, facing the Holy Ka'bah, to pray to God for some religious or secular matter. It is well known that the Prophet (S), going out from Bab al-Safa until he could see the Ka'bah. Facing it, he thrice declared the Unity of God and magnified Him; then praising God he said:

لا إله إلا الله وحده لا شريك له، له الملك، وله الحمد، يحيي ويميت، وهو على كل شيء قدير

لا إله إلا الله وحده، أنجز وعده، ونصر عبده، وهزم الأحزاب وحده

There is no god except Allah. He is One, and has no partner. To Him belongs the Kingdom and the Praise. He gives life and makes to die, and He is powerful over every thing. There is no god except Allah. He is One. He has fulfilled His promise and granted victory to His slave, vanquishing all the parties (of the infidels). He is One.

The *mustahabbat* of *sa'y* according to the Imamiyyah book *al-Jawahir* are the following: to draw one's hand on the Black Stone; to drink from the water of Zamzam and to sprinkle it on oneself; to leave [al-Masjid al-Haram] through the door facing the Black Stone; to ascend the Safa; to face al-Rukn al-'Iraqi; to praise God (*hamd*) and magnify Him (*takbir*); to prolong one's stay at al-Safa; and, after seven *takbirs*, to say three times:

لا إله إلا الله وحده، لا شريك له، له الملك، وله الحمد، يحيي ويميت

وهو حي لا يموت، بيده الخير، وهو على كل شيء قدير

After this he recites the prayer recommended by tradition (*al-du'a' al-ma'thur*).

As can be seen from the above, there is no divergence in this matter between the Shi'ah and the Sunni schools, except for some difference of expressions used. Also, I have not come across any jurist who regards *taharah* (from *hadath* and *khabath*) as obligatory for *sa'y*; most of the schools have expressly stated its being only *mustahabb* and the same is true (except for the Shafi'i) of the drawing of the hand (*istilam*) on the Black Stone before leaving for *sa'y*.

Also, all the schools are explicit about the *istihbab* of covering the distance between 'the Milayn' (an expression used by the Hanafis and Malikis) or 'the intervening distance' (*wasat al-masafah*, an expression used by Shafi'is) or 'between the Minaret and the Alley of the Pharmacists' (as Imamiyyah say) with a fast pace (*harwalah*).² Without doubt, an informed guide is necessary to enable the pilgrims to recognize the points designated as 'Milayn' or 'the Alley of the Pharmacists' (*Zuqaq al-Attarin*), or 'the Minaret'.

The Way of Performing Sa'y

Although there is agreement between the schools about the necessity of *sa'y*, they disagree about its being an essential part (*rukn*) of the rites of Hajj. According to the Imami, Shafi'i, and Maliki schools, it is a *rukn*; according to Abu Hanifah, it is not a *rukn*, though a *wajib*. Two different traditions are narrated from Ahmad ibn Hanbal. (*al-Tadhkirah, Fiqh al-Sunnah*)

All are agreed on the number of *ashwat* (sing. *shawt*) being seven, and that the performer of *sa'y* (i.e. *sa'i*) should begin at Safa going towards Marwah, and return again to Safa,³ covering this distance seven times. Thus the pilgrim makes four *ashwat* going from Safa to Marwah and three *ashwat* while returning from Marwah to Safa, beginning his first *shawt* from Safa and finishing the seventh at Marwah.

The schools disagree as to the permissibility of making the *sa'y* on a mount in spite of the ability to walk, and all of them, with the exception of the Hanbalis, permit it regardless of whether one can walk or not. The Hanbalis say that it is permissible only for one who cannot walk.

I have not come across any opinion regarding continuity (*muwalat*) between the *ashwat* as *wajib*⁴, with the exception of the Hanbalis, who, as also mentioned by the author of *al-Fiqh 'ala al-madhab al-'arba'ah*, consider it *wajib*. Also, it is said of Malikis that according to them if the gap between the *ashwat* were to become inordinate, one should begin *sa'y* afresh; but if the gap were not prolonged, such as when one discontinues for selling or purchasing something, it is forgivable.

Note

Al-Sayyid Muhsin al-Hakim, in his book on the rites of Hajj, says, "It is obligatory, while going and returning, to keep one's face turned towards one's destination Therefore, if someone were to turn his face away from it or were to walk backwards, or in a lateral way, it is not correct. However, there is nothing wrong in turning the face this way and that way while continuing to face the destination in the course of movement."

He means that it is obligatory that the body should face Marwah while going and should be toward Safa while returning, and it is not permissible to make the approach with only a shoulder facing the direction of the destination—as may happen due to overcrowding of the pilgrims; also, while moving, the face in particular should remain in the right direction.

Al-Sayyid al-Khuli makes a similar statement in his work on the rites of Hajj; his words are: "It is *wajib* to face Marwah while going and to be towards Safa while returning. Thus if one turns his back towards Marwah while going and towards Safa while returning, it does not satisfy (*lam yujzi'*, i.e. the conditions for a correct *sa'y*). Also, one should not turn towards his right or left, neither should he turn back either during the going (*dhahab*) or during the return (*iyab*).

The Ahkam of Sa'y

One who cannot perform the *sa'y*, either on foot or on a mount, may depute another to perform it on his/her behalf, and the Hajj would be correct. There is nothing wrong in looking to the right or the left or turning back to look during the coming and the going.

If someone makes more than seven *ashwat* intentionally, his *sa'y* is invalid, but not if the lapse was unintentional. If one were to have doubts about the number of the *ashwat* performed after finishing his *sa'y*, it is assumed to have been correct and nothing is required of him. The author of *al-Jawahir* bases this *hukm* about the doubt after finishing on the principle of negation of *haraj*, as well as on tradition.

However, if the doubt were to occur before finishing the *sa'y*, the author of *al-Jawahir* says that there is no difference of opinion about, nor any objection against, the invalidity of the *sa'y* in case of any doubt about the number of the *ashwat* performed, whether of having exceeded or fallen short of the required number. In both cases the *sa'y* at hand is invalid. If one suspects one's having begun from Safa, his *sa'y* is correct. But if he thinks that he might have started from some other place, it is invalid. Also if one suspects the number of *ashwat* already performed, and does not know how many one has completed, one's *sa'y* is invalid.

If one has recorded the number of *ashwat* performed, but doubts whether one started the first one from Safa or Marwah, he should consider the number of his present *shawt* and the direction he is facing. If, for instance, the number is an even one (2, 4, or 6) and he is at Safa or facing it, his *sa'y* is correct;

because this shows that he had begun at Safa. Similarly, if the number is odd (3, 5, or 7) and he is at Marwah or facing it. But if the case is reverse, that is in an even *shawt* he is facing Marwah or in an odd one facing towards Safa, his *sa'y* is invalid and should be begun anew. (*al-Jawahir*)

According to the other schools, the rule is to take the minimum one is certain of having performed, as in the case of *salat*. (*Kifayat al-'akhyar*)

According to Abu Hanifah the Hajj is not invalid even if the *sa'y* is omitted altogether, because it is not a *ruk'n* and can be made good by a sacrifice. (al-Shi'rani's *al-Mizan*)

1. Al-Sayyid al-Hakim says: "It is not obligatory to hasten to perform the *sa'y* after finishing the tawaf and its *salat*, but it is also not permissible to delay voluntarily until the next day." Al-Sayyid al-Khu'i says, "It is binding on one not to make a considerable delay without need in performing the *sa'y* after the tawaf and its *salat*, and it is not permissible to delay it intentionally until the next day." I say, these verdicts of the two scholars are supported by *sahih* ahadith.

2. Harwalah is a kind of walk which resembles that of a camel when it wants to pick up speed. According to the Imamiyyah, if the one performing the *sa'y* is riding, he should spur it to make the beast walk faster.

3. The author of *al-Mizan* quotes Abu Hanifah to the effect that he does not see any objection in the converse, i.e. performing of the *sa'y* by starting at Marwah and finishing at Saf'a.

4. Al-Sayyid al-Hakim in his book on the manasik of Hajj says that *muwalat* (continuity of succession) is not required in the *ashwal* of the *sa'y*, and it is permissible to separate or interrupt them—even after a single *shawt*—and to pick up the count again after the break.

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