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# Hajj: The pilgrimage to Mecca

## Introduction

The pilgrimage to Mecca (*hajj*) is one of the fundmental obligations in Islamic laws. The holy Qur'an has clearly mentioned this obligation. Almighty Allah says in His holy Book:

"And it is for the sake of Allah [a duty] upon the people to do the pilgrimage of the House—whosoever has the ability [to travel] to it. And whosoever is ungrateful, then surely Allah is free from need of the universe." (2:196)

The Almighty has compared the negligence of *hajj* to ingratitude because of its importance.

Hajj is one of the five pillars on which Islam is based. In a noble hadith, Imam al-Baqir (a.s.) said, "Islam is based on five pillars: on prayer (salat), alms (zakat), pilgrimage (hajj), fasting (sawm), and devotion [to the Ahlul Bayt] (wilaya)."1

Imam 'Ali bin Abi Talib (a.s.) advised about *hajj* by saying, "Do not neglect the pilgrimage to the House of your Lord; otherwise you will perish." Imam as–Sadiq (a.s.) said, "If the people neglect the pilgrimage to the House, the chastisement will overwhelm them and they would not be warned [about it]." This is so because neglecting *hajj* while the person is in a position to fulfill all its conditions is a great sin. A *hadith* says, "When a person is capable of doing the pilgrimage but does not do it, he has indeed flouted a law from the laws of Islam." Another noble *hadith* says, "One who keeps postponing *hajj* until he dies, Allah will resurrect him on the Day of Judgement as a Jew or a Christian."

# **General Rules**

124. When a Muslim becomes capable, *hajj* becomes obligatory upon him. By "**capability**" we mean the following:

a. Availability of enough time to travel to the holy places and stay there for performing the obligatory

rites.

- b. Physical health and strength, observing to travel to the holy places, and staying there for the obligatory rituals.
- c. The road through which one has to pass for performing the rituals be open and secure, in the sense that it does not place the life or property or honour of the pilgrim in undue danger.
- d. Financial ability: One should be able to get whatever is necessary for the pilgrim in his journey; e.g., food, drink, clothes, including the means of transportation according to his status by which he can cover the distance for *haij*.
- e. The financial position of the person should be such that by travelling for *hajj* or by spending from his wealth for it, he would not be putting himself and his dependents in need and poverty.
- 125. *Hajj Tamattu*: This is a kind of pilgrimage that is obligatory upon those who live in other countries i.e. far away from Mecca. *Hajj Tamattu*' consists of two rituals: the first is known as *'umrah*, and the second *hajj*.
- 126. In 'umrah, five things are obligatory:'
- a. (a) Putting on the pilgrim's dress (*ihram*) from one of the *miqats. Mawaqit* (plural of *miqat*) are locations [around the holy territory of Mecca] that *shari'a* has specifically fixed for putting on the *ihram*.
  - b. Circumambulating (tawaf) around the Ka'ba seven times.
  - c. The salat of tawaf.
  - d. Sa'i (i.e., brisk walking) between the hills of Safa and Marwa seven times.
  - e. Tagsir: cutting off a little bit of your hair or cutting the nail.
- 127. The obligatory acts of *hajj tamattu* are thirteen as follows:
- a. Putting on the *ihram* from Mecca.
- b. Staying in 'Arafat on the 9th of Dhu 'I-Hijja.
- c. Staying a part of the night (eve of 10th Dhu 'l-Hijja) until sunrise in Muzdalifa.
- d. Stoning the smaller pillar in Mina on the day of 'Eid (i.e., 10th of Dhu 'l-Hijja).
- e. Sacrificing an animal in Mina on the day of 'Eid or during the days of *tashriq* [i.e., 11th to 13th of Dhu 'I-Hijja].

- f. Shaving one's head or doing *taqsir* in Mina. By doing this, the pilgrim is free from the restrictions of *ihram*, except the use of perfume and sexual contact with women. Based on obligatory precaution, the restriction of hunting continues even after shaving or *taqsir*.
- g. Tawaf of Ziyarat seven times after returning to Mecca.
- h. Salat of Tawaf.
- i. Sa'i between Safa and Marwa seven times. With this, the restriction of using perfume is also lifted.
- j. Tawaf of Nisa' seven times.
- k. Salat of Tawat of Nisa'. With this, sexual contact with women becomes permissible.
- I. Staying during over night in Mina on the eve of 11th and 12th Dhu 'l-hijja. And also, under some circumstance, the eve of 13th Dhu 'l-hijja.
- m. Stoning the three pillars in Mina on the 11th and the 12th of Dhu 'l-hijja. And also, under some circumstance, on the day of 13th Dhu 'l-hijja.

### **Questions and Answers**

128. **Question:** Is it permissible to put on the *ihram* for hajj **from** the city of **Jeddah**? If it is not permissible, what should one do since the plane lands in Jeddah?

**Answer**: Jeddah is neither a *miqat* nor parallel to any of the *miqats*; therefore, it is not in order to put on the *ihram* from there for '*umrah* or *hajj*. However, if one knows that between Jeddah and the *Haram* [the holy territory around Mecca], there is a place which is parallel to one of the *miqats* —this is not improbable, if one looks for a parallel of Juhfah— he can put on the *ihram* from there by offering *nadhr*. [*Nadhr* means making a vow in the name of Allah that he will put on the *ihram* from place x.]

129. **Question**: While shaving the head in Mina, if the pilgrim's head is injured and blood flows out, what should he do in that case? And what are the implications [as far as penalty is concerned]?

**Answer:** If the injury was not intentional, there is nothing upon him.

130. **Question**: It is recommended to perform *hajj* every year. However, there are many poor Muslims who are in dire need of food and clothing in various Muslim countries. If it comes to making a choice between spending the money for *hajj* repeatedly or *ziyarat* (pilgrimage to the shrine of one of the Infallibles [a.s.]) and between giving in charity for those believers—which is more meritorious?

**Answer**: In principle, helping those needy Muslims is better than a recommended *hajj* or *ziyarat* of the holy shrines. However, at times the *hajj* or the *ziyarat* is associated with certain other issues that can

elevate them to the same or even higher status of virtue.

131. **Question**: The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia assigns the places for pilgrims in 'Arafat and Mina. We do not know whether or not those appointed places are within the boundaries required by the *shari'a?* Are we obliged to inquire and ask about the matter?

**Answer:** If it is within the known boundaries and the signs that are normally known for religious rites from generation to generation, it is not necessary to inquire about it.

132. **Question**: It has been said that some parts or the entire area of slaughtering in Mina is outside the boundary. Is it therefore obligatory upon us to ascertains the fact before the slaughtering? Knowing that ascertaining about one area and then going towards the other and again ascertaining about it is a difficult task, especially on the day of *Eid*, as you yourself know, where the time is also a factor. So what is the solution?

**Answer**: It is obligatory to ascertain in order to do the slaughtering inside Mina. If it is not possible because of overcrowding in Mina, it is permissible to do it in the valley of Muhassar. Moreover, the timing of slaughtering is not restricted to the day of Eid; it can be done till the last day of the days of *tashriq* [i.e., till the 13th of Dhu 'l-Hijja].

133. **Question**: Pilgrims are faced with one more problem regarding slaughtering, which poses more of a mental anguish: the animals slaughtered [in Mina] are wasted in spite of the fact that there are many poor people amongst us spread all over the Muslim countries who go without tasting meat for days! So is it acceptable for us to do the slaughtering in our own cities; or is there a religious solution that you can suggest for the people?

**Answer:** It is necessary to fulfill the religious duty by doing the slaughtering in Mina. As for the sin of wasting the meat of the animals slaughtered, if it actually happens, it is on the shoulders of the authorities in charge.

134. **Question**: If the exam schedule for a student conflicts with the timing of the *hajj*, is it permissible for him to postpone the hajj that year especially if the exam was very important for him?

**Answer**: If he is sure that he will be able to perform *hajj* in the following year, it is permissible for him to postpone it; otherwise, it is not permissible. However, if postponing the exam will cause difficulty to such an extent that it is normally unbearable, it is not obligatory on him to perform *hajj* that year.

135. **Question**: A person on whom *hajj* had become obligatory but he has not yet fulfilled it—is such a person allowed to go for *'umrah* in the month of Rajab? What if *hajj* became obligatory on him in Ramadhan, can he go for *'umrah* [before performing *hajj*]?

**Answer:** The 'umrah mufrada (minor pilgrimage done off-season) is permissible for him. However, if going to 'umrah would financially prevent him from going for hajj, then it is not permissible for him to do

'umrah.

136. **Question**: A single young man has become capable to perform *hajj*; he is also thinking about marriage. Now if he goes for *hajj*, his marriage ceremony will be delayed for a while. Which of the two is preferable [marriage or pilgrimage]?

**Answer**: He should perform the *hajj* and postpone the marriage unless postponing the marriage entails difficulty to the extent that it becomes unbearable. And Allah knows the best.

- 1. Tafsilu Wasa'ili 'sh-Shi'a, vol. 1, p. 20.
- 2. Ibid, vol. 11, p. 23.
- 3. Ibid, p. 22.
- 4. Ibid, p. 28.
- 5. Shaykh as-Sadûq, Muhammad bin 'Ali Ibn Babwayh, Man La Yahdhuruhu 'I-Faqih, vol. 4, p. 266.

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