



باسمہ تعالیٰ

Lessons from Hajj

Obligation:

At this very moment, hundreds of thousands of the lovers of Allah Ta'ala are either making their way, or have already made their way, to the house of their Beloved. Hajj is such a great obligation that Rasulallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) mentioned:

« مَنْ مَلَكَ زَادًا وَرَاحِلَةً تُبَلِّغُهُ إِلَى بَيْتِ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ يَحْجَّ ، فَلَا عَلَيْهِ أَنْ يَمُوتَ يَهُودِيًّا أَوْ نَصْرَانِيًّا ، وَذَلِكَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُقُولُ فِي كِتَابِهِ : وَلِلَّهِ عَلَى النَّاسِ حِجُّ الْبَيْتِ مَنْ اسْتَطَاعَ إِلَيْهِ سَبِيلًا » . (« سنن الترمذي » ٨١٢)

“Whoever possesses the provisions (for the journey) and the means of transport to bring him to the House of Allah Ta'ala, yet he does not perform hajj, then there is no difference in him dying as a Jew or as a Christian.” To substantiate this, Rasulallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) recited the verse: “Hajj of the Baitullah is a duty which man owes to Allah, upon those who are able to undertake the journey.”

This hadeeth highlights the importance of hajj and the severe warning for neglecting it without a valid reason.

Hence, those who possess the means and have not yet fulfilled this great obligation should take the necessary steps to carry out this important pillar of Islam as soon as possible.

Many Lessons:

Being an important pillar of Islam and a great act of worship, the benefits of hajj are not confined to those undertaking this sacred journey. Rather, there are many lessons to be learnt from hajj which apply to those remaining behind as well. Every aspect of this blessed journey is filled with lessons and points for us to reflect on.

Remembering Death:

From the moment a person leaves his home for the airport, a vivid illustration of life after death begins to unfold before him:

1. The loved ones who see him off at the airport remind him of the moment his soul will depart from this world to the next. Boarding the aircraft resembles him being carried upon the shoulders of men on his bier. The further the plane travels from the airport, the clearer becomes the reality of leaving his loved ones behind.
2. When he approaches the meeqaat and dons the ihraam, the kafan in which his body will one day be wrapped comes to mind.
3. Upon arriving in a foreign country, he is reminded of his transition to the Hereafter, where everything will seem unfamiliar.
4. At customs, he is required to give an account of whatever he has brought, and in some cases, his bags are even searched. On the Day of Qiyaamah, the angels will question him in a far stricter manner.
5. When he enters the Haram of Makkah Mukarramah, he sees crowds of people, distinct from one another, gathered behind their respective guides. This will resemble the scene on the Day of Qiyaamah, when the various nations will stand behind their respective Ambiyaa ('alahimus salaam).

Remembering death is extremely beneficial in helping a person abandon sins and reform his life. Hence, Rasulallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) commanded us to frequently remember death.¹

¹ عن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه قال : قال رسول الله ﷺ : « أَكْثَرُوا ذِكْرَ هَازِمِ اللَّذَاتِ » يَعْنِي الْمَوْتَ . (« سنن الترمذي » ٢٣٠٧)

Tauheed:

From the moment the Haaji dons his ihraam, he recites the talbiyah — the special zikr of the person in ihraam — which should be recited in abundance. Talbiyah is, in reality, a profound expression of tauheed. Thus, the Haaji repeatedly proclaims the oneness of Allah Ta'ala, saying:

لبيك اللهم لبيك ، لبيك لا شريك لك لبيك ، إن الحمد والنعمة لك والملك ، لا شريك لك

"I am present, O Allah, I am present. I am present; You have no partner, I am present. Verily, all praise, all bounty and the entire kingdom belong solely to You. You have no partner whatsoever."

We need to develop this tauheed deep within our hearts and continue strengthening it, so that not even the slightest trace of shirk remains within us. Shirk does not only refer to ascribing partners to Allah Ta'ala; rather, even carrying out actions for show has been described in the hadeeth as a form of shirk.

Love and Submission:

Perhaps among the greatest lessons of hajj are those of love and submission. At every step of his journey, the Haaji sets aside his own logic and reasoning, submitting wholeheartedly to the Prophetic teachings regarding the manner of performing hajj, whilst displaying immense love for his Creator.

1. The simple garb of love which he adopts — regardless of how wealthy he may be — expresses his willingness to abandon his own choice of clothing for that which Allah Ta'ala has chosen for him. This is a lesson that ought to be implemented in every facet of our lives.
2. As he draws closer to Makkah Mukarramah, his yearning and love intensify as he eagerly anticipates entering the Divine presence. At the very first glance of the Ka'bah Shareef, he is overwhelmed with love and his eyes cannot believe the sight before them.
3. He then circles the house of his Beloved seven times, expressing his deep love for Allah Ta'ala, without questioning why there must be seven circuits. In the first three rounds, he walks briskly in emulation of Rasulallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam), who did so in order to demonstrate to the mushrikeen that the Muslims were not weak. The Haaji does not question why he should do the same when that circumstance no longer exists.
4. He then makes istilaam of the Hajr Aswad, despite it being merely a stone that can neither harm nor benefit. Why does he do so? Simply because Rasulallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) did so. Therefore, Sayyiduna 'Umar (radhiyallahu 'anhu) once kissed the Hajr Aswad and addressed it saying, "Had I not seen Rasulallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) kissing you, I would not have kissed you."²
5. Next, the Haaji walks between Safaa and Marwah, increasing his pace between the two green lights. All of this is done in emulation of Sayyidah Haajar (radhiyallahu 'anha) when she searched for water for her thirsty child. The Haaji does not reason, "I am not searching for water, so why should I tire myself in this manner?"
6. When the 8th of Zul Hijjah arrives, the Haaji leaves the blessed precincts of the Ka'bah Shareef and proceeds to the tented village of Mina, then to the desert of 'Arafah and next to the empty plains of Muzdalifah. He visits these places at prescribed times and remains there only for fixed durations. These places exist throughout the year, yet they become significant only at a particular time. Why? Because it is the command of the Beloved.
7. On the auspicious day of 'Arafah, he does not perform his Maghrib Salaah at its usual time; rather, he delays it and combines it with 'Esha in Muzdalifah. Although he may have not missed a single salaah throughout his life, on this occasion he sets aside his own emotions and reasoning and submits to the instruction of his Beloved.
8. Thereafter, in Mina he pelts stones at a lifeless structure.

² زيد بن أسلم عن أبيه رضي الله عنه قال : رأيت عمر بن الخطاب رضي الله عنه قَبَلَ الْحَجَرَ وَقَالَ : لَوْلَا أَنِّي رَأَيْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَبَلَكَ مَا قَبَلْتُكَ . (« صحيح البخاري » ١٦١٠)

In all of the above, the Haaji simply submits to the command of Allah Ta'ala and the teachings of Rasulallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) without subjecting them to his own logic and reasoning. What a profound lesson this is!

Unity:

Hujjaaj from various countries, diverse backgrounds, different ethnicities and numerous languages all journey to the Holy Lands with one common purpose: to fulfil the obligation of Allah Ta'ala upon them. Whether rich or poor, black or white, educated or uneducated, Arabic speaking or otherwise, all these differences fade away once the Haajis don their ihraam and stand on the plains of Mina, 'Arafah and Muzdalifah. At that moment, every individual is dressed identically in two simple pieces of white cloth and engaged in the very same rites of hajj. Here there is no 'First Class', 'Business Class' or 'Economy Class'. Rather, all stand side by side, crying before Allah Ta'ala for forgiveness and begging Him to fulfil their needs. One of the greatest lessons demonstrated throughout this journey is undoubtedly the lesson of unity — the lesson that beneath all outward appearance and worldly distinction, we are all Muslim brothers forming one Ummah.

This lesson of unity should not merely make an annual appearance during the season of Hajj. Rather, the importance of unity must be realised by Muslims throughout the world and become an objective that we continuously strive to achieve. Creating unity amongst Muslims — whilst remaining within the boundaries of Deen — is not merely an effort that leads to a stronger and more prosperous society. Rather, it is an injunction of Deen that carries tremendous reward in the sight of Allah Ta'ala.