39524 - Ruling on ‘Umrah

the question

Is ‘Umrah obligatory or Sunnah?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

The scholars are agreed that ‘Umrah is prescribed in Islam and is an act of virtue.

They differed as to whether it is obligatory. Imam Abu Haneefah and Imam Maalik were of the view that it is Sunnah and mustahabb, but not obligatory; this was also the view favoured by Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah.

They quoted as evidence for that the hadeeth narrated by al-Tirmidhi (931) from Jaabir, who said that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was asked whether ‘Umrah is obligatory. He said, “No, but if you do ‘Umrah it is better.”

But this hadeeth is da’eef (weak); it was classed as da’eef by al-Shaafa’i, Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, Ibn Hajar and al-Nawawi; by al-Albaani in Da’eef al-Tirmidhi, and by others.

Al-Shaafa’i (may Allah have mercy on him) said: It is da’eef and cannot be used as evidence. There is nothing proven that says that ‘Umrah is a voluntary act of worship.

Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr said: This was narrated with isnaads that are not valid, and such reports cannot be used as evidence.

Al-Nawawi said in al-Majmoo’ (7/6): the scholars of hadeeth are agreed that it is da’eef.

One of the things that indicate that this is da’eef is the fact that it was proven that Jaabir was of the view that ‘Umrah is obligatory, as we shall see below.

Imam al-Shaafa'i and Imam Ahmad were of the view that it is obligatory. This view was also favoured by Imam al-Bukhaari. (May Allah have mercy on them all).

Those who say that it is obligatory quoted a number of things as evidence:

1 – The report narrated by Ibn Maajah (2901) from 'Aa'ishah who said: "I said, 'O Messenger of Allah, do women have to engage in jihad?' He said, 'Yes, they must do jihad in which there is no fighting: Hajj and 'Umrah,'"

Al-Nawawi said in al-Majmoo' (7/4): Its isnaad is saheeh according to the conditions of al-Bukhaari and Muslim. It was also classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Saheeh Ibn Maajah.

The point in this hadeeth is that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said alayhinna i.e., they must do, which means that it is obligatory.

2 – The famous hadeeth of Jibreel (peace be upon him) in which he asked the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) about Islam, eemaan (faith) and ihsaan, and about the Hour and its signs. This was narrated by Ibn Khuzaymah and al-Daaraqutni from 'Umar ibn al-Khattaab (may Allah be pleased with him), in which 'Umrah was mentioned along with Hajj: "Islam means to bear witness that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah; to establish regular prayer; to pay the zakaah; to perform Hajj and 'Umrah to the House; to do ghusl to cleanse oneself from janaabah (impurity following sexual activity) and to do wudoo' perfectly; and to fast Ramadaan." Al-Daaraqutni said, "This isnaad is proven and saheeh."

3 – The hadeeth narrated by Abu Dawood (1799) and al-Nasaa'i (2719) from al-Subay ibn Ma'bad who said: "I was a Christian Bedouin… I came to 'Umar and said, 'O Ameer al-Mu'mineen, I have become Muslim and I found that Hajj and 'Umrah are prescribed for me, so I entered ihraam for them.' 'Umar said, 'You have been guided to the Sunnah of your Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).'"

4 – The opinion of a group of the Sahaabah, including Ibn 'Abbaas, Ibn 'Umar and Jaabir ibn 'Abd-Allah (may Allah be pleased with them all). Jaabir said, There is no Muslim for whom 'Umrah is not

obligatory. Al-Haafiz said: This was narrated by Ibn Jahm al-Maaliki with a hasan isnaad.

Al-Bukhaari (may Allah have mercy on him) said: “Chapter: The obligation of ‘Umrah and its virtues.” Ibn ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) said: There is no one who does not have to do Hajj and ‘Umrah. Ibn ‘Abbaas said: It is mentioned together with Hajj in the Book of Allah (interpretation of the meaning):

“And perform properly (i.e. all the ceremonies according to the ways of Prophet Muhammad), the Hajj and ‘Umrah (i.e. the pilgrimage to Makkah) for Allah” [al-Baqarah 2:196]

Because it is mentioned together with Hajj, this means that it is obligatory like Hajj.

Shaykh Ibn Baaz said: The correct view is that ‘Umrah is obligatory once in a lifetime, like Hajj. Fatawa Ibn Baaz, 16/355.

Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen said in al-Sharh al-Mumti’ (7/9): The scholars differed concerning ‘Umrah and whether it is obligatory or Sunnah. It seems to us that it is obligatory.

It says in Fatawa al-Lajnah al-Daa’imah, 11/317

The correct one of the two scholarly views is that ‘Umrah is obligatory, because Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And perform properly (i.e. all the ceremonies according to the ways of Prophet Muhammad), the Hajj and ‘Umrah (i.e. the pilgrimage to Makkah) for Allah” [al-Baqarah 2:196]

And because of the ahaadeeth which say that.

And Allah knows best.

See: al-Mughni, 5/13; al-Majmoo’. 7/4; Fatawa Ibn Taymiyah, 26/5; al-Sharh al-Mumti’ by Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen, 7/9.