Hajj: Its Virtues and Benefits

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By: Sheikh

Muhammed Salih Al-Munajjid

Praise be to Allah and peace and blessings be upon the Messenger of Allah.

This is a brief discussion of *Hajj* – its virtues, benefits and a little about its rulings.

1. When *Hajj* was prescribed

According to the correct view, *Hajj* was made obligatory in 9AH, the year of the Delegations (*al-Wufood*), in which Chapter *Aal 'Imraan* was revealed, in which Allah Says (what means): ***{"And Hajj (pilgrimage to Makkah) to the House (Ka'bah) is a duty that mankind owes to Allah, those who can afford the expenses (for one's conveyance, provision and residence)."}*** [Qur'aan, 3:97]

2. The ruling on *Hajj*

Hajj is a *Fareedah* (obligatory duty), one of the pillars of Islaam. The evidence (*Daleel*) for this is the *Aayah* mentioned above, and there is also evidence in the *Sunnah* which indicates the same thing.

Ibn 'Umar, may Allah be pleased with them both, said: "*The Messenger of Allah, sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam, said:* **"**Islaam **is built upon five (pillars): testifying that there is no god worthy of worship but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, establishing regular prayer, paying *Zakaah*, *Hajj* and fasting *Ramadhaan*."** (Reported by Al-Bukhaari, 8; Muslim, 16).

3. Is *Hajj* obligatory straight away?

Yes, it should be done straight away. The evidence for this is the *Aayah* referred to above. This (doing things straight away) is the guiding principle concerning the commands of *Sharee'ah*. The evidence in the *Sunnah* which indicates this is as follows:

1. Abu Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him, said: "*The Messenger of Allah , sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam, gave a sermon (Khutbah) and said:* **'O people, Allah has enjoined *Hajj* upon you so do *Hajj*.'**" (Reported by Muslim, 1337).
2. Ibn 'Abbaas, may Allah be pleased with him, said*:* "*The Messenger of Allah , sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam, said:* **'Whoever wants to go for *Hajj*, let him hasten to do it, because he may fall ill or some other problems may arise.'**" (Reported by Abu Daawood, 1732, without the phrase "because he may…"' also reported by Ibn Maajah, 2883 and Ahmad, 1836).

According to a report reported by Ahmad: **"Hasten to do *Hajj* –i.e., the obligatory *Hajj* – for none of you knows what may happen to him."**

These two reports strengthen one another. (See *Irwaa' al-Ghaleel* by al-Albaani, 4/168).

The Shaafi'is say that *Hajj* may be delayed, because the Prophet*, sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam,* delayed his *Hajj* until 10 AH. But the answer to this is as follows:

1. He only delayed it for one year, but they say it may be delayed indefinitely!
2. He *, sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam,* wanted to purify the House (the Ka'bah) of the *Mushrikeen* (polytheists) and those who performed *Hajj* naked.
3. He was kept busy with the delegations who had started to come to Madeenah one after another to announce their Islaam.

(See *al-Sharh al-Mumti'* by Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen, 7/17, 18)

4. It is obligatory to do *Hajj* once in one's lifetime

Abu Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him, said: "*The Messenger of Allah, sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam, gave a sermon (Khutbah) and said:* **"O people, Allah has enjoined *Hajj* upon you so**

do *Hajj.”* *A man said: 'Is it every year, O Messenger of Allah?' He remained silent until the man had said it three times, then he said:* **“If I say yes, it will become obligatory and you will not be able to do it.”** *Then he said:* **“Do not push me to tell you more than what I have left you with, for those who came before you were destroyed because they asked too many questions and argued with their Prophets. If I command you to do a thing, do as much of it as you can, and if I forbid you to do something, then avoid it.”** (Reported by Muslim, 1337)

5. The virtues of *Hajj*

There are many narrations which speak of the virtues of *Hajj*, including the following:

1. From Abu Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him, that the Messenger of Allah*, sallallaahu* '*alayhi wa sallam,* was asked which deed is best. He said: **“Belief in Allah and His Messenger.”** He was asked: "*Then what?*" He said: ***“Jihaad* for the sake of Allah.”** He was asked, then what? He said: “**An accepted *Hajj*.”** (Reported by Al-Bukhaari, 26; Muslim, 83).

An accepted *Hajj* means:

1. It must be paid for with *Halaal* (lawful) money
2. One should keep away from evil, sin and unjust disputes during *Hajj*.
3. One should observe all the rituals according to the *Sunnah*.
4. One should not show off by doing *Hajj*; it should be purely and sincerely for the sake of Allah.
5. One should not follow it with acts of disobedience and sin.

1. Abu Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him, said: "*I heard the Prophet , sallallaahu* '*alayhi wa sallam, say:* '**Whoever does *Hajj* for the sake of Allah and does not have sexual relations (with his wife), commit sin, or dispute unjustly during the *Hajj*, will come back like the day his mother gave birth to him.**'" **(**Reported by Al-Bukhaari, 1449; Muslim, 1350)
2. Abu Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him, reported that the Prophet*, sallallaahu* '*alayhi*

wa sallam, said: **“‘*Umrah* is an expiation for the time between it and the previous *‘Umrah*, and an accepted *Hajj* has no less a reward than Paradise.”** (Reported by Al-Bukhaari, 1683; Muslim, 1349).

3. ‘Aa’ishah, the Mother of the Believers, may Allah be pleased with her, said: '*I said, O Messenger of Allah, can we not go out on campaigns and fight in Jihaad with you? He said:* **'But the best and most beautiful of *Jihaad* is *Hajj*, an accepted pilgrimage.'**" ‘Aa’ishah, may Allah be pleased with her, said: '*I never stopped going for Hajj after I heard that from the Messenger of Allah, sallallaahu* '*alayhi wa sallam.* (Reported by Al-Bukhaari, 1762).
4. ‘Amr ibn al-‘Aas, may Allah be pleased with him, said: "*The Messenger of Allah , sallallaahu* '*alayhi wa sallam, said:* **'*Hajj* wipes out whatever (sins) came before it.'**" (Reported by Muslim, 121).
5. ‘Abd-Allah ibn Mas’ood, may Allah be pleased with him, said: "*The Messenger of Allah , sallallaahu* '*alayhi wa sallam, said:* **'Keep on doing *Hajj* and *‘Umrah*, for they eliminate poverty and sin just as the bellows eliminate impurities from iron and gold and silver.'**" (Reported by at-Tirmithi, 810; an-Nasaa’i, 2631. The *Hadeeth* was classed as *Saheeh* by al-Albaani, may Allah have mercy on him, in *al-Silsilah al-Saheehah*, 1200).
6. Ibn ‘Umar, may Allah be pleased with them both, reported that the Prophet*, sallallaahu* '*alayhi wa sallam,* said: **“The one who fights for the sake of Allah and the pilgrim who goes for *Hajj* or *‘Umrah* are all guests of Allah. He called them and they responded; they ask of Him and He will give them.”** (Reported by Ibn Maajah, 2893. The *Hadeeth* is *Hasan* and was classed as such by Shaykh al-Albaani in *al-Silsilat al-Saheehah*, 1820).

6. The benefits of *Hajj*

Allah Says (what means): ***{“That they may witness things that are of benefit to them”}*** [Qur'aan, 22:28]

The benefits are both worldly and religious (spiritual).

With regard to the religious benefits, the one who goes for *Hajj* earns the pleasure of his Lord, and comes back with all his sins forgiven. He also earns the immense reward which he cannot earn anywhere else than in these places. One prayer in al-Masjid al-Haraam, for example, is equal to a hundred thousand prayers elsewhere, and *Tawaaf* (circumambulation) and *Sa'y* (running between Mount as-Safaa and al-Marwah) cannot be done anywhere except in these places.

Other benefits include meeting other Muslims and discussing their circumstances, and meeting scholars, learning from them and asking them about one's problems.

Worldly benefits include trade and business, and other kinds of earnings that have to do with *Hajj*.

7. The ruling on *Hajj* and its spiritual effects on a person

There are many virtues of the rituals of *Hajj*, and much wisdom behind them. Whoever is blessed with proper understanding of them is blessed with much goodness. For example:

1. When a person travels to carry out the rituals of *Hajj*, he is reminded of his journey to Allah and the Hereafter. When he travels, he leaves behind his dear friends, wife, children and homeland, and the journey to the Hereafter is like that.
2. The one who goes on this journey equips himself with enough provision to help him reach the sacred land, so let him remember that for his journey to his Lord, he needs to have sufficient provision to help him get there safely. Concerning this, Allah Says (what means): ***{"And take a provision (with you) for the journey, but the best provision is At-Taqwaa (piety, righteousness, etc.)."}*** [Qur'aan, 2:197]
3. Travelling is a kind of torment, and the same is true of the journey to the Hereafter, only much more so. Ahead of man there is his dying, death, the grave, the gathering, the accounting, the scales and *al-Siraat*, followed by either Paradise or Hell. The blessed one will be the one whom Allah saves.
4. When the pilgrim puts on the two garments of his *Ihraam*, he cannot help but be reminded of the shroud in which he will be wrapped [after he dies]. This prompts him to give up disobedience and sin. Just as he has given up his regular clothing [for *Hajj*], so he has to give

up sin. Just as he has put on two clean, white garments, he has to make his heart clean and white [pure], and keep his faculties clean and pure, uncontaminated by the stain of sin and disobedience.

5. When he says "*Labbayk Allahumma labbayk*" at the *Meeqaat* [station of entering *Ihraam*], he means that he has responded to his Lord, so how can he insist on still sinning and not respond to his Lord's call to give it up? When he says "*Labbayk Allahumma labbayk*", he means, *"I am responding to Your prohibition of it and this is the time I am giving it up."*
6. When he gives up *Haraam* things during his *Ihraam*, and keeps himself busy with the *Talbiyah* and *Thikr*, this shows him how the Muslim should be. He trains himself to give up some things which in principle are *Halaal,* but Allah has forbidden them to him at this time [during his *Ihraam*], so how can he violate the prohibitions of Allah by doing things which are *Haraam* at all times and in all places?
7. When he enters the Sacred House of Allah, which Allah has made a sanctuary for humankind, he remembers the sanctuary of the Day of Resurrection, which no one can reach without striving hard and making a concerted effort. The greatest thing which will keep a person safe on the Day of Resurrection is *Tawheed* (Islamic monotheism) and avoiding *Shirk* (associating others with Allah).

Concerning this, Allah Says (what means): ***{"It is those who believe (in the Oneness of Allah and worship none but Him Alone) and confuse not their Belief with Thulm (wrong, i.e. by worshipping others besides Allah), for them (only) there is security and they are the guided."}*** [Qur'aan, 6:81].

Kissing the Black Stone, which is the first ritual to be undertaken, teaches the visitor to honor the *Sunnah* and not to oppose the laws of Allah with his feeble reasoning. He recognizes that there is wisdom and goodness behind the laws and rituals which Allah has prescribed for humankind, and he trains himself to submit himself totally to his Lord, may He be exalted. Concerning this, 'Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, said, after he kissed the Black Stone: *"I know that you are only a stone and that you can neither benefit nor harm. If I had not seen the Prophet, sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam, kiss you, I would not have kissed you."* (Reported by Al-Bukhaari, 1520; Muslim, 1720).

1. When he does *Tawaaf*, he is reminded of his father Ibraaheem, may Allah exalt his mention, who built the House to be a place of sanctuary for humankind and a place of safety, and that he called them to perform pilgrimage to this House. And our Prophet Muhammad*, sallallaahu* '*alayhi wa sallam,* also called them to perform pilgrimage to this House. Moosa, Yoonus and 'Eesa, may Allah exalt their mention, also performed pilgrimage to this House. This House was a symbol and a meeting place for these Prophets; how could it be otherwise, when Allah had commanded Ibraheem, may Allah exalt his mention, to build it and venerate it?
2. When he drinks the water of Zamzam, he is reminded of the blessing which Allah has bestowed upon humankind in the form of this blessed water, from which millions of people have drunk throughout the long ages, but it has never dried up. He is encouraged to make *Du'aa'* when he drinks it by the *Hadeeth* which has been reported from the Prophet, *sallallaahu* '*alayhi wa sallam*: **"The water of Zamzam is for whatever it is drunk for."** (Reported by Ibn Maajah, 3062; Ahmad, 14435. This is a *Hasan Hadeeth*; classed as *Hasan* by Ibn al-Qayyim, may Allah have mercy on him, in *Zaad al-Ma'aad*, 4/320).
3. When he does *Sa'y*, running between as-Safaa and al-Marwah, he is reminded of the trial endured by Haajar, the mother of Ismaa'eel and the wife of al-Khaleel [Ibraaheem], may Allah exalt their mention, and how she ran back and forth between as-Safaa and al-Marwah, searching for water which would save her from what she was suffering, and especially so that she could give her little son – Ismaa'eel, may Allah exalt his mention – water to drink. Since this woman was patient in the face of this adversity and turned to her Lord, this teaches man that doing this is better and more appropriate. When a man remembers the struggle and patience of this woman, it makes it easier for him to bear his own problems, and a woman who is of her own kind will find her problems easier to bear.
4. The standing (*Wuqoof*) in 'Arafaah reminds the pilgrim of the throngs of people on the Day of Gathering. If the pilgrim feels tired from being in a crowd of thousands, how will it be in the crowds of barefoot, naked, uncircumcised people, standing for fifty thousand years?
5. When he throws the pebbles at the *Jamaraat*, the Muslim trains himself to obey Allah unquestioningly. Even if he does not understand the reason and wisdom behind this throwing (*Ramy*), and cannot make the connection between rulings and their purpose, this is a

manifestation of complete submission (‘Uboodiyyah) to Allah.

6. When he slaughters his sacrifice (*Hady*), he is reminded of the great event when our father Ibraaheem, may Allah exalt his mention, submitted to the command of Allah to sacrifice his only son Ismaa’eel, may Allah exalt his mention, after he had grown up and become a help to him. He is also reminded that there is no room for emotions which go against the commands and prohibitions of Allah. This teaches him to respond to what Allah commands, as Ismaa’eel, may Allah exalt his mention, said (what means): ***{“ ‘O my father! Do that which you are commanded. In shaa Allah (if Allah wills), you will find me of as-saabireen (the patient ones).’”}*** [Qur'aan, 37:102].
7. When he comes out of his *Ihraam* and things that had been forbidden to him once again become permissible, this teaches him about the consequences of patience and that after hardship comes ease. The one who responds to the call of Allah will have joy and happiness, and this joy cannot be known by anyone except those who have tasted the sweetness of obedience, such as the joy felt by the one who fasts when he breaks his fast, or by the one who prays *Qiyaam* during the last part of the night, after he has finished praying.
8. When he has finished performing all the rituals of *Hajj* as they were prescribed by Allah and in the manner that Allah loves, he has the hope that his Lord will forgive him all his sins, as the Prophet *, sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam,* promised in the *Hadeeth*: **“Whoever does *Hajj* for the sake of Allah and does not have sexual relations (with his wife), commit sin, or dispute unjustly during the *Hajj*, will come back like the day his mother gave birth to him.** (Reported by al-Bukhaari, 1449; Muslim, 1350). This invites him to start a new page in his life, free of sin.
9. When he comes back to his wife and children, and experiences the joy of meeting them again, this reminds him of the greater joy of meeting them in Paradise. This also teaches him that the greatest loss is losing oneself and one’s family on the Day of Resurrection, as Allah Says (what means): ***{“The losers are those who will lose themselves and their families on the Day of Resurrection. Verily, that will be a manifest loss!”}*** [Qur'aan, 39:15].

We ask Allah to help us to obey Him and to reach His House and to do all that He has enjoined

upon us. May Allah bless our Prophet Muhammad, *sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*.