

Introduction

What follows in this short book is a glance at the secrets of the *Hajj*, as expounded by the great scholar and teacher of Akhlaq (Islamic Etiquette) and `Irf-an (Mysticism) Ayatullah al-Hajj ash-Shaikh Husain Mazaheri, presently living in Isfahan, Iran.

Hajj is one of the obligatory acts in Islam, which must be performed by each and every Muslim who is able to at least once in his or her lifetime if certain conditions are fulfilled. The books of ahadith are replete with wisdom from the Prophet of Islam and his twelve Successors (peace be upon all of them) concerning Hajj and the philosophical and mystical aspects behind the various acts performed. In the writing attributed to the sixth Imam, Ja'far ibn Muhammad al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) contained in *Lantern of the Path*¹, this noble personality explains Hajj in the following words:

"If you intend to go on pilgrimage, before resolving on it devote your heart to Allah , stripping it of every preoccupation and every barrier between you and Allah . Entrust all your affairs to your Creator and rely on Him in all your actions and moments of stillness. Surrender to His decree, decision and judgement. Abandon this world, repose, and all creation. Perform those duties which you are bound to fulfil for other people.

Do not rely on your provisions, the animal you will ride, your companions, your food, your youth nor your wealth, for fear that they will become your enemies and be harmful to you; in this way you will realize that there is no power, no strength, no might except by the guardianship of Allah and His granting of success.

Prepare for the pilgrimage as someone who does not hope to return. Keep good company, and be diligent in observing all your obligations to Allah and the Holy Prophet. Take care to show courtesy, endurance, patience, thankfulness, compassion, and generosity – always putting others before yourself – even those who reject you. Then perform an ablution with the water of sincere repentance for wrong actions; and put on the robe of truthfulness, purity, humility and fear. By donning the garments of pilgrimage, withhold yourself from everything which hinders you from remembering Allah , or that may impede you from showing obedience to Him.

Fulfill His call with an answer whose meaning is clear, pure and sincere when you call on Him, holding on firmly to your belief in Him. Circumambulate with your heart along with the angels who circumambulate the Throne, just as you circumambulate with the Muslims who go around the Ka'bah. Hasten as you run in flight from your passion, freeing yourself of all your personal assumptions of strength and power. Leave your heedlessness and errors behind when you go out to Mina; do not desire what is unlawful for you and what you do not deserve.

Confess your errors at Arafat – set out your contract with Allah by His Oneness, draw near to Him and fear Him at Muzdalifah. Climb with your soul to the highest assembly when you climb the mountain of Arafat. Slit the throat of passion and greed in the sacrifice. Stone your appetites, baseness, vileness, and blameworthy actions when you stone the Pillar of Aqabah. Shave off your outward and inward faults when you shave your hair. Enter into the security of Allah , His protection, His veil,

His shelter and His watchfulness and abandon the pursuit of your desires by entering the Sacred Precinct. Visit the House, and walk around it to glorify the Master, His wisdom, His majesty and His power.

Embrace the Stone, being content with His decree and humble before His might. Leave everything that is other-than-Him in the valedictory circumambulating. Purify your soul and your innermost being for the meeting with Allah , on the day when you will meet Him when standing on al Safa'.

Take on valour and courtesy from Allah by annihilating your attributes at al-Marwah. Be consistent in the conditions of your pilgrimage and fulfil the contract you have made with your Lord, by which you will have obliged yourself to Him on the Day of Judgement.

Know that Allah made the pilgrimage obligatory, and singled it out from all the acts of worship in respect of Himself when He said:

وَلِلَّهِ عَلَى النَّاسِ حِجُّ الْبَيْتِ مَنِ اسْتَطَاعَ إِلَيْهِ سَبِيلًا...

“Pilgrimage to the House is incumbent upon men for the sake of Allah, and [upon] everyone who is able to undertake the journey to it.. “ (3:97)

The Holy Prophet (‘s) established the organization of the rituals of pilgrimage, as preparation for and an indication of death, the grave, the resurrection and the Day of Judgement. In this lesson for mankind he discriminates between those who will enter the Garden and those who will enter the Fire, through his demonstrating the pilgrimage rites from beginning to end, to those with intelligence and prudence.

It is hoped that this short booklet which elucidates on some of the subtle points of the Hajj will be of benefit to the brothers and sisters who are making this once in a lifetime journey to the holy cities of

Makkah and Madinah. We pray that this small work is accepted by Allah , our Prophet Muhammad (‘s), his close friend, brother, and immediate successor Amir al-Mo'minin 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, and the 11 Imams from his family (as).

May this trip not only be a physical journey, but rather a journey of the inner soul towards self-purification and finally to the final abode – nearness to Allah (SWT) in every way.

May Allah hasten the return of our Mawla and Master, Sahib al-`Asr wa al Zaman (may our souls be sacrificed for the dirt under his feet).

Saleem Bhimji

Translator

1. This book has been translated into English by Fadlullah Haeri, and was originally published by Zahra Publications. The original title of the book in `Arabic is Misbah al-Shariyah wa Miftah al-Haqiqah.

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