

Introduction

Praise is due to Allah who made the House a pilgrimage for man and a place of security. Greetings of Allah be upon Muhammad; the chosen messenger whom Allah has sent as witness, bearer of good tidings, warner, and to “*call people to Allah, with His permission, and the bright lamp.*” And greetings be upon the members of his household from whom Allah kept away the uncleanness and purified a thorough purifying.

In this materialistic world, man’s spiritual assets are being plundered. The sublime spiritual virtues, being the only source of man’s dignity and a criterion for humanity, have lost their values and are gradually being removed from man’s life. A beastly atmosphere is turning the world into a quagmire.

The freedom-fighting and hearty human beings are naturally living in depression under such circumstances. Like taking breath in a polluted environment, living has become painful for them. Hence, they are always looking for a chance to hear a heavenly and divine call amidst the mammonists’ yellings so that it will remove fatigue from their lives and depression from their hearts, take them to a world above this boring one, and satiate them with the elixir of affinity with God, prophets, and saints. That is the call of the Hajj pilgrimage and the call of Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) (as)¹, which generates much enthusiasm in the ummah –Muslim community– with the coming of the Hajj rites.

Enthusiasm in the hearts and spirits of the believers who rush to the Kaaba²—the House of their Beloved, fills Mecca’s plain and mountain with *Labbayk Allahumma labbayk* (Yes, here I am, O Lord, here I am). Bare-footed, they shed off all worldly attachments and signs of distinction, reach for the House of their Beloved, embrace it, circumambulate it, voice their love from the bottom of their hearts, confide their grievances with God, hear the soothing answer of the Lord of the House, and return home with a spiritual joy.

The Kaaba is truly a spiritual sanctuary for human society in this stormy world. Those believers who have been fed up with the automated life and the wearisome account of mammonists’ profit and loss, those who are desperate for a happy life for themselves and others, by seeking refuge in the Kaaba, will find such tranquility that all problems will be made easy for them. With their heart at rest and an expanded breast as a result of relying on God’s imperishable power, the unlevelled paths of life will

become smooth for them, hence, they are prepared for fighting the hardships and creating an ideal life for human beings.

Nevertheless, attaining the life-giving impact of religious acts in general and the Hajj rite in particular depends on full attention to the philosophy of these great heavenly instructions, or an act devoid of spirit will evidently not yield any sublime socio-humane result. Perhaps one can assert that the main reason we, Muslims, are deprived of the effects of our religious instruction is lack of attention to the spirit of divine laws.

We are only content with their external forms. We notice that certain Muslims go to perform Hajj and Umrah. They know the Hajj rites very well but, amazingly, there is neither revolution in them in terms of evolution of spirit and connection with God nor have they been disciplined from the viewpoint of social relations and rights of human beings.

In the same way, they are deprived of spiritual effects of such other religious acts as prayer, fasting, visiting the holy shrines, mourning for Imam Husayn (as) and holding sessions or learning the Holy Qur'an and other religious rites.

Having the greatest intellectual and spiritual assets, this deprivation of sublime human virtues is regrettable, for it has no justification other than failing to know the truth of Islam and the spirit of the Qur'anic teachings. It is regrettable to see that Muslims work hard to learn about issues related to prayer, the rules of reciting the Holy Qur'an but fail to learn about the spirit of prayer and the aim behind this divine injunction to nourish their soul in the light of those injunctions, to make their heart turn into a mirror to reflect God's manifestations and to purify their individual and social life from the filth of all vices thanks to prayer.

It is seen that Muslims perform prayer, take part in congregational prayers, invoke, and supplicate, but remembrance of and spiritual attention to God and abstinence from indecency and evil, which are the ultimate goal of prayer, are missing in most worshippers. The prayer of most people is mixed with wrongdoing and is not different from ignoring God and not praying attention to Him. This is because we have failed to understand the ultimate goal of prayer as part of our religious program. Rather, we consider the ritual prayer and its external form as criterion for being religious.

The same detrimental negligence is seen in Hajj pilgrimage but more conspicuously. Those who intend to go on Hajj pilgrimage do not forget to take with them the smallest things they may need during the trip nor fail to learn some of the rites related to the state of Ihram,³ Tawaf,⁴ Sa'y⁵ and Ramy.⁶ Nevertheless, they are so ignorant of the spirit of Hajj and the ultimate goal of this divine journey that they will never discuss with anyone nor consider it as default.

Getting to know that truth and materializing those objectives in their hearts and on the scene of action is not part of the Hajj rites. The only thing the performer of Hajj has been asked to do seems to be to wrap himself in two pieces of cloth, to say *Labbayk*,⁷ to go round the House, to walk between Safa and

Marwa, to shave his head, to offer sacrifices, to throw pebbles at Satan, and to return home with trunks filled with gifts! It is for this reason that among those who have performed Hajj Umrah and those having visited the shrines of the Holy Prophet (saw)⁸ and the Imams (as), many deviations, impious acts, and undisciplined behavior, which have no conformity with the spirit of Hajj rites, are seen. It therefore becomes evident that most of those who have gone to Mecca have failed to understand the spirit of Hajj and the aim behind it. Hence, they are engaged in contradictory acts.

We, Muslims, are duty-bound to submit ourselves to the sublime Qur'anic teachings and try to comprehend the humane objectives of those wise and heavenly injunctions far more than the externals of religion. Elaborating on the sublime objectives of the Hajj rites, Imam Sajjad (as) while meeting a man who had performed Hajj rites posed the following questions:

Were you thinking of abandoning sin and living a pious life until the end of your life when you got into the state of Ihram and saying *Labbayk*?

Did you pay attention to the aim of the act you were doing?

Were you such and such in Tawaf, Wuquf, al-Mashar, Ramy, and Mina while you were shaving your head and offering a sacrifice?

The man's answer was 'No'. Then the Imam (as) said:

Since you have not performed those acts to materialize their objectives, actually you have not performed Hajj, that is to say, the results of the Hajj rites have not been obtained. In this case, you neither reached Mina, nor did you throw these pebbles on Satan, nor did you shave your head, nor did you perform the rituals of the Hajj, nor did you offer prayer in Kheif Mosque, nor did you perform Tawaf al-Ifadha, nor did you offer sacrifice for the Lord. Go back, you did not perform Hajj.”⁹⁹

Therefore, every Muslim who intends to go on Hajj is duty-bound to pay full attention to its inner objectives in addition to learning about the externals of this great religious duty according to the jurists' *-fuqaha-* decrees found in practical laws of Islam *-Risala-*, so that the visitation of God will leave an indelible impression on his heart that has turned into God's House and a center for His remembrance.

In this relation, the Holy Qur'an says:

فَإِذَا قَضَيْتُمْ مَنَاسِكَكُمْ فَادْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَذَكَرِكُمْ آبَاءَكُمْ أَوْ أَشَدَّ ذِكْرًا فَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ
يَقُولُ رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَمَا لَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ خَلَقٍ

“So when you have performed your devotions, then laud Allah as you lauded your fathers, rather

a greater lauding. (2:200)”

This book, which consists of quotations from the Holy Qur’an, the hadiths of the Holy Prophet and the immaculate Imams (as), the decrees of the religious authorities as well as my own opinion on Hajj, is dedicated to Imam Mahdi (may Allah expedite his reappearance).

Sayyid Muhammad Zia Abadi

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1. (as) stands for ‘peace be upon him/her/them’
 2. The Kaaba is the square-shaped building in the centre of the Great Mosque in Mecca, in the direction of which Muslims must face in doing the obligatory prayer.
 3. Ihram, being one of the rites of Hajj, is (1) The sacred state into which a Muslim must enter before performing a pilgrimage (Hajj), during which sexual intercourse, shaving, cutting one’s nails, and several other actions are forbidden, and, (2) the costume worn by a Muslim in this state, consisting of two lengths of seamless white fabric, one worn about the hips, the other over the shoulders or sometimes only over the left shoulder.
 4. Tawaf, being one of the rites of Hajj, is the circumambulation of the Kaaba—the Holy House of God.
 5. Sa’y, being one of the rites of Hajj, is the running between Mount Safa and Mount Marwa.
 6. Rami, being one of the rites of Hajj, is throwing seven stones, thrice, on an emblem representing Satan.
 7. Labbayk –or Labbaykah– is the talbiya –one of the pillars of the Hajj– the obligation of which is a matter very much discussed by the ulema, yet they did not reach consensus. Labbayk, however, means: Here I am at your service.
 8. (saw) stands for ‘peace be upon him and his family’
 9. See Mustadrak al-Wasaail; vol. 2 p. 186, Section 17, Hadith 5

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