

## **Hajj with Faith – The Journey of a Lifetime**

This is not a physical journey, but a journey of the heart, so with your heart imagine we are going on a journey of a lifetime.

Hajj is one of the pillars of Islam which is required to be done once in a lifetime. Since this is a worship that is done at least once in your life, it means it is a worship that will make you see the reality of everything and experience so many different situations and go to different places in a short period of time. You experience all that you get to experience in a lifetime, subhan Allah.

Preparation for the Journey of a Lifetime (الاستعداد لرحلة العمر):

Repentance and settle any scores with those you have wronged (التوبة و رد المظالم لأهلها): before leaving for this journey, you want your balance of sins to be zero. You want to settle everything with those you wronged. And we need to be in this state all the time because the journey of hajj is actually a rehearsal to the journey on the Day Judgement, and we will all eventually go on this journey. You want to always repent because you do not know when the start of your real journey will begin (leaving this earth), and then you will not be able to return. You want to go with your heart clean and clear. On a journey, you need to be light and free of burden, and it is the sins that weigh us down. May Allah forgive our sins. Ameen.

Provisions and best provision is taqwa (الزاد - و تزودوا فان خير الزاد التقوى): packing with your clothes, ihram, etc. that is only a physical, the best thing to carry and pack with you is your taqwa in the heart. Be patient and grateful with the people.

Transport (الراحلة): before people used to go by camel, even by foot, and they would travel for months. So we need to be thankful to Allah that it is easy now. We have to remember the ride that we will all ride, which is the ride when our bodies will be carried by our loved ones and placed beneath the earth. The journey to hajj is reminding us that one day, we too will leave this earth.

Leaving the family behind (ترك الأوطان و مفارقة الأهل): we have only one life and it is so precious, and so when we leave everything behind while on hajj, it represents that we will one day leave everything behind – leave our house, our family, and the one thing we will have will be our good deeds. And there is nothing that can make us leave except for Allah. Life itself is a journey and we are travelling to our final destination as each second passes. This is the temporary life, it is not real, it will end. The next life is the real life. So we need to feel that we are travelers and it is by Allah's permission that He will take us when our time has come.

Ihram (الإحرام): as we reach the point of meeqat, that is when the hajj begins. The men need to remove anything stitched, so they all wear white. So everyone is the same, at that time no one knows other's status, cultural identity, etc. It is forbidden to cut the nails, hair, and fragrance. A

person is truly in a state of simplicity. Your behavior should also change, no arguing, shouting, screaming, etc, you need to behave because you are a guest of Allah. So it really teaches you submission and to be a humble slave of Allah. At that time, a person will also remember that when he leaves, he will not take anything from the duniya except being wrapped in a white shroud, similar to the ihram. We don't know that one day someone else will remove our clothes and shroud us, and it reminds us that one day we will go to our graves, and it will be the same for everyone. This journey shows you the reality of this life.

At your service (التلبية - لبيك اللهم لبيك، لبيك لا شريك لك لبيك، ان الحمد و النعمة لك و الملك لا شريك لك): As soon as you enter the meeqat, this dua'a is recited to say that I am your service oh Allah, I will take commands only from you. And this reminds us that we should be in this state all the time, that we are slaves of Allah, which is so honorable. Allah does not want you to be a slave of money, desires, status, or another human. Allah wants you to be at His service and this is the honor. And when you are a slave to anything besides Allah then that is the humiliation.

Tawaf (طواف): you will stop saying (لبيك). And this is showing as if you are going from one decree to another in this life. Though there are so many people, you need to feel as if you are the only one there. You will go round seven times, starting from the black stone. You are not honoring the house itself, but you are honoring the commands of Allah. You are in a state of worship, do not be busy with looking at others, or mobile. You want your life to revolve around the pleasure of Allah.

Sae'ee between Safa and Marwah (السعي بين الصفة و المروة): There are two mountains called Safa and Marwah, and the sae'ee is the passage between these two mountains. This represents the time when Ibrahim (as) was commanded to leave his wife Hajjar and son Ismail. Though she did not have water, she was taking the means to find the water. And look how Allah honored her by making it one of the symbols of Allah. And this 'coming and going' represents what it means to be a slave of Allah. Just as a servant for a king, who is coming and going, similarly, this is our life for Allah, we are 'coming and going' to be at His service.

8<sup>th</sup> of Dhil Hijjah – Day of Tarwiyah (يوم التروية): this is the official start of hajj, and you need to go into state of ihram again. People are preparing to go to Mina, and while you are waiting this is to remind you that you too will wait on the Day of Judgement. And just as people are all going in the same direction, similarly on the Day of Judgement, there is no escape.

Day of Arafah (يوم عرفة): the hajj is all in preparation for this day. Hadith: ( قَالَ قَالَتْ عَائِشَةُ إِنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ( مَا مِنْ يَوْمٍ أَكْثَرَ مِنْ أَنْ يُعْتَقَ اللَّهُ فِيهِ عَبْدًا مِنَ النَّارِ مِنْ يَوْمِ عَرَفَةَ"صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ (There is no day when God sets free more servants from Hell than the Day of 'Arafa.) – Sahih Muslim 1348

On that day, Allah will forgive their sins and they will be like newborns. The shaitan is the most miserable on this day because he lost all of the years he made you sin, and in one day it is wiped out. Subhan Allah.

Everyone is waiting for this day. From sunrise to sunset, Allah will descend to the lowest heaven in a manner that suits His majesty. And He will boast to the angels about them, and say look at My servants who came from all over, and look at them with dusty hair and barefooted, and I bear witness that I forgive all their sins. Imagine the happiness. It is a feeling that cannot be explained, you feel the closeness of Allah. At that moment, your dua'a and reciting will be different, you will be different, and the moment the sun sets, the people's faces will be bright. And the first sin that is committed is people thinking that their sins were not forgiven, subhan Allah.

On this day, you are declaring your testimony of faith on this day. You are renewing your oath with Allah. This is reminding you of the accounts on the Day of Judgement, and Allah is forgiving you. This reminds you that Allah is close to you by His support, companionship, love, but you to remember Him.

And Allah will appreciate it from you. Never think that Allah will forsake you if you come to Him. The hajj is telling you how you will be closer to your Creator.

Allah wants your heart, and it is a lifetime journey that is in preparation for the final journey. If you come to Allah walking, Allah will come to you running. But you have to make the first step.

On this day, you should make the dua'a ( لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له، له الملك و له الحمد يحيي و يميت و هو ) (على كل شئ قدير) (There is no god but Allah alone, with no partner, to Him is the Kingdom, and to Him are all praise, He causes life and He causes death, and He is able to do all things)

Muzdalifah (المبيت بمزدلفة): the worship here is just to sleep outside and make you look at the universe around you, stars above you, and the earth below you. And it will remind you that just as you came from the earth, you will return to the earth. And even if you sleep for an hour, it is the best sleep because you are a 'newborn'.

Actions on the Day of Sacrifice (أعمال يوم النحر): this is the first day of Eid, and you take 7 stones, the size of chickpeas and you throw them against 3 pillars that represent the shaitan. That is when you declare enmity against the shaitan. You are now a newborn, and you do not want to fall into his trap again. You are telling him to keep away, do not come close to me, do not take me as your friend. You are sacrificing an animal on this day, though you are telling Allah that you deserve more, and I am ready to sacrifice everything for you.

Farwell pilgrimage: you make tawaf around the ka'aba again as a sign of renewing your oath again.