

An aerial night view of the Kaaba and the surrounding mosque, illuminated with blue and white lights. A large crowd of people is visible in the courtyard. The Kaaba is the central focus, surrounded by the minarets and arches of the mosque.

*Hajj: Lessons for
the Mind, Spirit and
Community*

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Introduction

Islam is the religion of regulation and discipline, which is in consonance with the innate disposition of human beings and the laws that govern the Universe. Everything is assigned a proper place: the sun, moon, stars, and all the celestial bodies follow laws that Almighty Allaah has determined for them, and they never go out of their ordained course. Everything in the world – from the tiniest electrons to the gigantic galaxies – follows its own laws. The laws followed by the natural phenomena of the world are perfectly evident even in the case of human beings, where biological laws regulate birth, growth, and life. In fact, even the tiniest cells and vital organs like the heart and brain – are governed by the laws prescribed for them.

Allaah The Almighty Says in the Quran (what means):

{He created the heavens and the earth in true (proportions): He makes the Night overlap the Day, and the Day overlap the Night: He has subjected the sun and the moon (to His law): Each one follows a course for a time appointed. Is not He the Exalted in Power - He Who forgives again and again?} (Quran 39:5)

In his book "*Towards Understanding Islam*", Abu Al-A`la Mawdudi رحمه الله says:

As we humans can to a great extent deduce the set of laws which control the phenomena of the universe, we call them ‘natural laws’ even though it is Allaah The Almighty, the Creator and Ruler of the universe, who established them; and hence, it is His Law that is followed by everything in the universe. That is the reason we call Islam the religion of the Universe; because, Islam is nothing other

than obedience to God, Who is the Lord of the universe. From this angle, everything in existence is Muslim – air, water, heat, stones, trees, and animals – as they all obey the Creator by submitting to His laws. Even unbelievers and atheists are Muslim as far as their bodily existence is concerned, for each part of their bodies follows the course Almighty Allaah established for it, from birth until death and dissolution.

Islam teaches that Almighty Allaah, nature, and humanity are not remote, alien to, or opposed to each other. Almighty Allaah makes Himself known to humanity through nature and humanity itself: and nature and humanity are two books (of creation) that make Him known. Islam is the name of the code according to which nature functions in perfect obedience and by which humanity is required, but not forced, to live by using its free will.

Allaah The Almighty Says (what means):

{O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise (each other)). Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allaah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allaah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things).}
(Quran 49:13)

The Messenger of Allaah ﷺ is reported to have declared in his farewell address at Arafah: *“O humankind! Your Lord is one Lord, and you have one father. All of you are from Adam, and Adam is from dust. The noblest of you is the most God-fearing. No Arab has any superiority over a non-Arab, no non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab, no*

black person has any superiority over a white person, and no white person has any superiority over a black person – superiority is only through piety.” [At-Tirmithi]

The unity of humankind is a concept of Islam derived from the Unity of the Creator, Who is the Source of all existence. To a Muslim, social status and racial superiority are meaningless as the equality and brotherhood of humanity is basic to the living faith of Islam. Islam is Allaah’s Religion – in the sense that it is Allaah who inspired all His Prophets and Messengers to preach to their people, the same religion of submission to the will of the Creator. Hence, it is only reasonable to believe that Allaah The Almighty does not confine His religion or favors to any particular nation, race, or age. Thus, there cannot be any contradiction or fundamental differences in the religion of Allaah. When understood properly, it affords no chance to anyone to feel any sense of supremacy or presumed exclusivity. Moreover, when imparted to humans, it instills into their consciousness a clear concept and a sound basis of human brotherhood. As the Muslim believes in the Oneness of Allaah, the oneness of humanity, and the oneness of religion, he believes in all the messengers and revelations of God without discrimination.

Of all the rites of Islam, *Hajj* is most particularly significant to the concept of unity in that it brings nations and tribes together from distant lands before their Creator. *Hajj* strengthens the foundation of brotherhood among people and societies as nothing else can.

This annual pilgrimage of Muslims unifies them as one brotherhood in the worship of Almighty Allaah, the One Creator and Sustainer of the whole universe.

Allaah The Almighty Says (what means):

{Surely this nation of yours is one nation, and I am your Lord, so worship Me} [Quran 21:92]

The essential unity of humanity is the constant theme upon which the whole edifice of Islam stands; and Muslims never disagree on this unifying idea. History can never call to mind a more superb call than this divine call for unity that was given through Allaah's Book and through Prophet Ibraaheem, may Allaah exalt his mention, at first, and finally through Muhammad ﷺ.

On the decisive day at *Arafah*, the declaration of the unity of humanity was by Muhammad ﷺ. That was a defining moment in history as that call dealt a death blow to injustice and discrimination on the basis of color, caste, race or language. The Prophet ﷺ announced: *"The Hajj is Arafah"*. Henceforth, millions of Muslims of every hue and stature from the far corners of the world flock to *Arafah* on the same ninth day of *Thul-Hijjah* every year to stand in prayer. This day, the Day of *Arafah*, is honored as a day of human unity – a great day for the worship of the one and only Lord of the universe.

On this blessed day, Muslims respond to the call of Allaah given through His Prophets and Messengers, may Allaah exalt their mention. As the Quran says (what means):

{The first House (of worship) appointed for men was that at Bakkah: Full of blessing and of guidance for all kinds of beings: In it are Signs Manifest; (for example), the Station of Abraham; whoever enters it attains security; Pilgrimage thereto is a duty men owe to Allaah,- those

who can afford the journey; but if any deny faith, Allaah stands not in need of any of His creatures.} [Quran 3:96-97]

Another verse of the Quran reads (what means):

{And proclaim unto mankind the pilgrimage. They will come unto thee on foot and on every lean camel; they will come from every deep ravine.} [Quran 22:27]

The sense of unity and brotherhood Islam instills into its adherents is unparalleled in the history of mankind, as vouchsafed by the great historian Arnold Toynbee in "*Civilisation on Trial*":

The extinction of race consciousness as between Muslims is one of the outstanding achievements of Islam and in the contemporary world there is, as it happens, a crying need for the propagation of this Islamic virtue.

And H.A.R Gibb in "*Whither Islam*",

No other society has such a record of success in uniting in an equality of status, of opportunity and endeavor so many and so varied races of humankind. The great Muslim communities of Africa, India and Indonesia, perhaps also the small community in Japan, show that Islam still has the power to reconcile apparently irreconcilable elements of race and tradition. If ever the opposition of the great societies of the East and West is to be replaced by co-operation, the mediation of Islam is an indispensable condition.

Hajj was made obligatory in 9AH, the year of the Delegations (Al-Wufood), in which Soorat Aal 'Imraan was revealed, in which Allaah The Almighty Says (what means):

{“And Hajj (pilgrimage to Makkah) to the House (Ka’bah) is a duty that mankind owes to Allaah, those who can afford the expenses (for one’s conveyance, provision and residence).”} (Quran 3:97)

Hajj is a Fareedhah (obligatory duty) and one of the pillars of Islam. 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 رضي الله عنه said: the Messenger of Allaah ﷺ said: ***“Islam is built upon five (pillars): testifying that there is no god worthy of worship but Allaah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allaah, establishing regular prayer, paying Zakaah, Hajj and fasting Ramadhaan.”*** [Narrated by Al-Bukhaari, 8; Muslim, 16].

Abu Hurayrah رضي الله عنه said that the Messenger of Allaah ﷺ gave a sermon (khutbah) and said: ***“O people, Allaah has enjoined Hajj upon you so do Hajj.”*** [Narrated by Muslim, 1337].

Ibn ‘Abbaas رضي الله عنه said: The Messenger of Allaah ﷺ said: ***“Whoever wants to go for Hajj, let him hasten to do it, because he may fall ill or some other problems may arise.”*** [Narrated by Abu Daawood, 1732, without the phrase ***“because he may...”*** also narrated by Ibn Maajah, 2883 and Ahmad, 1836].

According to a report narrated by Ahmad رحمته: ***“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 *Irwa' Al-Ghaleel* by Al-Albaani, 4/168).

Abu Hurayrah رضي الله عنه said that the Messenger of Allaah ﷺ gave a sermon (*khutbah*) and said: **“O people, Allaah has enjoined Hajj upon you so do Hajj.”** A man said, *“Is it every year, O Messenger of Allaah?”* He ﷺ remained silent until the man had said it three times, then he ﷺ said: **“If I say yes, it will become obligatory and you will not be able to do it.”** Then he ﷺ 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.”** (Narrated by *Muslim*, 1337)

Abu Hurayrah رضي الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allaah ﷺ was asked which deed is best. He ﷺ said: **“Belief in Allaah and His Messenger.”** He ﷺ was asked, then what? He ﷺ said: **“Jihad for the sake of Allaah.”** He ﷺ was asked, then what? He ﷺ said: **“An accepted Hajj.”** (Narrated by *Al-Bukhaari*, 26; *Muslim*, 83).

An accepted *Hajj* means:

1. It must be paid for with *Halaal* 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 Allaah.
 5. One should not follow it with acts of disobedience and sin.
- a. *Abu Hurayrah* رضي الله عنه said: "I heard the Prophet ﷺ say: ***“Whoever does Hajj for the sake of Allaah 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.”*** (Narrated by *Al-Bukhaari*, 1449; *Muslim*, 1350)
 - b. *Abu Hurayrah* رضي الله عنه reported that the Prophet ﷺ 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.”*** (Narrated by *Al-Bukhaari*, 1683; *Muslim*, 1349).
 - c. ‘*Aa’ishah*, the Mother of the Believers رضي الله عنها said: "I said, O Messenger of Allaah, can we not go out on campaigns and fight in *Jihaad* with you? He ﷺ said: ***“But the best and most beautiful of Jihaad is Hajj, an accepted pilgrimage.”*** ‘*Aa’ishah* رضي الله عنها said, "I never stopped going for *Hajj* after I heard that from the Messenger of Allaah ﷺ." [Narrated by *Al-Bukhaari*, 1762].
 - d. ‘*Amr ibn Al-‘Aas* رضي الله عنه said: the Messenger of Allaah ﷺ said: ***“Hajj wipes out whatever (sins) came before it.”*** [Narrated by *Muslim*, 121].
 - e. ‘*Abdullaah ibn Mas’ood* رضي الله عنه said: the Messenger of Allaah ﷺ 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.”*** (Narrated by *At-Tirmithi*, 810; *An-Nasaa’i*, 2631).

The *Hadeeth* was classed as *Saheeh* by *Al-Albaani* – رحمه الله – in *As-Silsilah As-Saheehah*, 1200).

- f. *Ibn ‘Umar* رضي الله عنهما reported that the Prophet ﷺ said: **“The one who fights for the sake of Allaah and the pilgrim who goes for Hajj or ‘Umrah are all guests of Allaah. He called them and they responded; they ask of Him and He will give them.”** (Narrated by *Ibn Maajah*, 2893. The *Hadeeth* is *Hasan* and was classed as such by *Shaykh Al-Albaani* in *As-Silsilat As-Saheehah*, 1820).

Allaah The Almighty Says (what means):

{“That they may witness things that are of benefit to them”} [Quran 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* and *Sa’y* 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*.

The spiritual effects of Hajj on a person

The journey of *Hajj* can be considered as a spiritual and physical healing program or journey, because it touches upon different aspects of the human self. During *Hajj*, pilgrims have to wear a special kind of unified and simple form of clothes. This is known to be the clothes of *Ihraam* which have a great psychological influence on the pilgrims. Each Muslim takes off his regular clothes and exchanges them for the simple clothes of *Ihraam*. With taking off the regular clothes, the Muslim also puts aside everything that these clothes represent; the profession reflected in a certain uniform, the culture represented in a specific fashion, the status reflected in the quality and price, and so on.

Male pilgrims have to take off any kind of head cover as a symbol of putting aside any worldly rank or position. So, there is no shelter for the human head except the shelter of belief and obedience to the Divine.

The similarity of appearance gives the pilgrim the feeling of a lighter spirit and takes the mind to a much higher mood; becoming detached from all the worldly, materialistic glamour of career, wealth, position, and status.

Hajj is also a great meeting between brothers and sisters from all over the world. This gives the clear living example of brotherhood in Islam. Thus, *Hajj* is the perfect treatment for people who suffer delusions of grandeur.

In every ritual of the *Hajj*, there is no difference between rich and poor, strong and weak, high rank and low rank, black and white, Eastern and Western, Northerner and Southerner. All of them are equal.

Hajj is also a very good chance for many pilgrims to and think about your life and to consider or to evaluate your past. This can be during *Hajj* by

asking Allaah to forgive your sins and to plan for a straight future, free from sins. *Hajj* purifies the person from inside, just as ablution cleans the body from outside. *Hajj* is a spiritual and physical purification of the self.

The journey gives the mind a rest from thinking about too many things at the same time, and it makes the mind focus on only one idea, which is asking Allaah for forgiveness.

Hajj is also an example of steadfastness, when a person has chosen the righteous truth. Pilgrims in their rituals remember *Haajar*, may Allaah have mercy upon her, when Prophet Ibraaheem ﷺ left her in the dry valley of *Makkah* all by herself with her newborn baby. This was when she asked him, "Is it Allaah who ordered you to this?" He, may Allaah exalt his mention, answered, "Yes." She simply said what meant, "Then He will not fail us."

This inner strength and steadfast belief in the power of Allaah The Almighty and care for his servants, which penetrated and controlled her heart, is transmitted to the heart of each pilgrim throughout the rituals of *Hajj*.

Each pilgrim remembers *Haajar* ﷺ running up and down between the two hills of *Safa* and *Marwah* while she was searching for a drop of water for her child; then Allaah The Almighty provided her with His help and steadfastness by having the water of *Zamzam* flow from underneath the feet of her baby. Therefore, the assertion of belief that takes place within the hearts of pilgrims during this obligatory worship is a divine gift from God Himself. He has said in the Quran what means:

{Allaah confirms those who believe by a firm saying in the life of the world and in the Hereafter, and Allaah sends wrong-doers astray. And Allaah does what He will.} (Quran14:27)

During the *Hajj*, we see Muslims raising their hands humbly asking Allaah The Almighty to give them their needs in this life. So, if they are rich they remember that their riches are a gift from Allaah Himself.

Pilgrims also train themselves concerning patience in order to be able to complete the steps of *Hajj*. They raise their hands up, asking Allaah to give them the virtue of patience. Allaah The Almighty has said in the Quran (what means):

{(... if you endure patiently, verily it is better for the patient.)} (Quran 16:126)

Pilgrims spend a lot of money during *Hajj*, just for the sake of pleasing Allaah The Almighty. This is another self-treatment for spiritual sicknesses like greed and miserliness. Allaah The Almighty has touched upon these spiritual sicknesses in the Quran by saying (what means):

{(And the parable of those who spend their property to seek the pleasure of Allaah and for the certainty 'of their souls is as the parable of a garden on an elevated ground, upon which heavy rain falls so it brings forth its fruit twofold but if heavy rain does not fall upon it, then light rain (is sufficient); and Allaah sees what you do.)} (Quran 2:265)

Here, the Muslim pilgrim overcomes such fatal spiritual sickness and is once again capable of controlling his or her worldly desires.

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

When a person travels to carry out the rituals of *Hajj*, he is reminded of his journey to Allaah The Almighty 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.

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, Allaah The Almighty Says (what means): ***{“And take a provision (with you) for the journey, but the best provision is At-Taqwa (piety, righteousness, etc.).”}*** (Quran 2:197)

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 *As-Siraat*, followed by either Paradise or Hell. The blessed one will be the one whom Allaah saves.

In the Quran, where Allaah The Almighty instructs Ibraaheem, may Allaah The Almighty to invite people to come to *Hajj*, it is said (what means):

{So that they may witness things that are of benefit to them} (Quran 22: 28).

Hence, the real blessings of *Hajj* can only be experienced by those who actually perform it. *Imaam Abu Haneefah* رحمته was unsure which act of

worship was more excellent among the various ones laid down by Islam. Nevertheless, once he had performed *Hajj*, he had no hesitation in declaring that *Hajj* was the most excellent of all. The blessings of the *Hajj* commence from the moment we undertake the journey itself.

Usually we think of journeys of two kinds: those made for business and those made for pleasure. In both cases, it is to fulfill your worldly desires and benefit yourselves that you leave your homes, separate from families, spend money – all is done for your own sake. No question arises of sacrifice for any higher, sublime purpose.

However, the journey of the *Hajj* is quite different in nature. This is not meant for any personal end. It is undertaken solely for the sake of Allaah The Almighty and the fulfillment of the duty prescribed by Him. Nobody can be prepared to undertake this journey until and unless he has love of Allaah The Almighty in his heart as well as fear of him, and is convinced that Allaah wants him to do what he is doing. The person who sets out on *Hajj* is willing to bear the privations arising from separation from his family, to incur great expenses on a journey that will bring no material rewards and to suffer any loss of business or job. All these are signs of certain inner qualities that the person undertaking the journey loves and fears Allaah The Almighty more than anything, that they have a strong sense of duty to Him, that they are willing to respond to His summons and ready to sacrifice their material comforts in His cause.

A pilgrim will find that his love of Allaah The Almighty heightens as he starts preparing for the pilgrimage journey, with the sole intention of pleasing Allaah. When the pilgrim's heart longs to reach their goal, they become purer in thought and deed. They repent for past sins, seek forgiveness from people whom they might have wronged, and try to

render their due to others where necessary so as not to go to Allaah The Almighty burdened with injustices that they may have done to their fellow beings. In general, the inclination for doing good intensifies and abhorrence for doing evil increases.

After leaving home, the closer they get to the House of Allaah, the more intense becomes their desire to do good. The pilgrims become careful so that they harm nobody and try to render whatever service or help they can to others. They avoid abuse, indecency, dishonesty, squabbles and bickering, because they are proceeding on the path of God. Thus, the entire journey constitutes an act of worship. How can, then you do wrong? This journey, in contrast to every other, is a continuing course through which a Muslim attains a progressive purification of the self.

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.

Putting on the *Ihraam* symbolizes that whatever your position in the world, before Allaah The Almighty you must come as a beggar and destitute, as in outward appearance so in the depths of your heart. Take off your colorful clothes; put on simple ones. Do not wear socks. Keep your heads bare. Do not use any perfume, nor comb your hair. Do not use any kind of adornment. Stop sexual relations with your wives, refrain even from any gestures, which may arouse eagerness for, and be reminder of, these relations. Do not hunt, and do not help anyone you see hunting.

Adopting such outward postures will influence your inner lives also. You will develop an ascetic attitude. Pride and vanity will disappear. Humility and peace of mind will grow. The impurities that have sullied your souls due to indulgence in worldly pleasures will be removed and a feeling of godliness will dominate both your internal and external selves.

When the pilgrim says “*Labbayk Allaahumma 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 Allaahumma labbayk*”, he means, “*I am responding to Your prohibition of it and this is the time I am giving it up.*”

This, in fact, is an answer to that general proclamation which Ibrahim, as commanded by Allaah, made more than four thousand years ago: *O slaves of Allaah! Come to the House of Allaah. Come from every corner of the earth, either on foot or by transport!*


Thus, with every cry of '*Labbayk!*' the pilgrim answers Allaah’s summons; every time he answers His summons he becomes more closely knit with that movement which has been inviting to true and genuine worship of the One God since the time of *Ibraaheem* and *Ismaa’eel*, may Allaah exalt their mention.

At every step, as the pilgrim proceeds further and further, the yearning and longing get more and more intense. This recurrent cry in conjunction with the ascetic dress of *Ihraam*, the special nature of the journey and the feeling of getting nearer and nearer to the *Ka’bah* combine to produce in the pilgrim the feeling of being enveloped in Divine love. Nothing of any

importance any longer resides in his heart except the remembrance of his Lord.

When he gives up *Haraam* actions 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 Allaah The Almighty has forbidden them to him at this time [during his *Ihraam*], so how can he violate the prohibitions of Allaah by doing things which are *Haraam* at all times and in all places?

When he enters the Sacred House of Allaah, which Allaah 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 Allaah). Concerning this, Allaah The Almighty Says (what means): **{“It is those who believe (in the Oneness of Allaah and worship none but Him Alone) and confuse not their Belief with Thulm (wrong, i.e. by worshipping others besides Allaah), for them (only) there is security and they are the guided.”}** (Quran 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 Allaah The Almighty with his feeble reasoning. He recognizes that there is wisdom and goodness behind the laws and rituals that Allaah has prescribed for humankind, and he trains himself to submit himself totally to his Lord, may He be exalted. Concerning this, ‘Umar  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 ﷺ kiss you, I would not have kissed you.” (Narrated by *Al-Bukhaari*, 1520; *Muslim*, 1720).

When he does *Tawaaf*, he is reminded of his father *Ibraaheem* ؑ who built the House to be a sanctuary for humankind and a place of safety, and that he called them to perform pilgrimage to this House. Prophet *Muhammad* ﷺ also called them to perform pilgrimage to this House. *Mousa*, *Yoonus* and ‘*Eesaa*, may Allaah 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 Allaah The Almighty had commanded *Ibraaheem* ؑ to build it and venerate it?

When he drinks the water of *Zamzam*, he is reminded of the blessing which Allaah The Almighty has bestowed upon mankind 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’* (supplication) when he drinks it by the *Hadeeth* which has been reported from the Prophet ﷺ” “The water of *Zamzam* is for whatever it is drunk for.” (Narrated by *Ibn Maajah*, 3062; *Ahmad*, 14435. This is a *Hasan Hadeeth*; classed as *Hasan* by *Ibn Al-Qayyim* – may Allaah have mercy on him – in *Zaad Al-Ma’aad*, 4/320).

- a. When he does the *Sa’y* – running between *As-Safa* 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 Allaah exalt his mention, and how she ran back and forth between *Al-Safa* 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* ﷺ – 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.

The standing (*Wuqoof*) in 'Arafah 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?

When he throws the pebbles at the *Jamaraat*, the Muslim trains himself to obey Allaah The Almighty 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 (*'Uboodiyah*) to Allaah The Almighty.

When he slaughters his sacrifice (*Hady*), he is reminded of the great event when our father *Ibraaheem* ﷺ, submitted to the command of Allaah The Almighty to sacrifice his only son *Ismaa'eel* ﷺ, after he had grown up and become a help to him. He is also reminded that there is no room for emotions that go against the commands and prohibitions of Allaah. This teaches him to respond to what Allaah The Almighty commands, as *Ismaa'eel* ﷺ, said (what means): {“ ***'O my father! Do that which you are commanded. In shaa' Allaah (if Allaah wills), you will find me of As-Saabireen (the patient ones).***”} [Quran 37:102].

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 Allaah The Almighty 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.

When he has finished performing all the rituals of *Hajj* as they were prescribed by Allaah The Almighty and in the manner that Allaah loves, he has the hope that his Lord will forgive him all his sins. This is as the Prophet ﷺ, promised in the *Hadeeth*, “*Whoever does Hajj for the sake of Allaah 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.*” (Narrated by *Al-Bukhaari*, 1449; *Muslim*, 1350). This invites him to start a new page in his life, free of sin.

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 Allaah The Almighty 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!*”} [Quran 39:15].

Thus overwhelmed with the love of Allaah, the pilgrim reaches *Makkah*, and immediately proceeds towards the sacred precincts to which he has been summoned. He kisses the Black Stone on his Lord's house. Then he goes round and round it, the focus of his faith, the hub of his life. Every round he starts and ends by kissing the Black Stone, symbolizing a renewal of his pledge of allegiance, loyalty, and obedience to his Lord and Master.

Some ignorant people object to the kissing of the Black Stone, arguing that it is a kind of idol worship. The circumambulation of the *Ka'bah* starts where the Black Stone is fixed and, during the seven rounds, it is either kissed or touched, or a sign is made towards it at the end of every round. There is not the slightest vestige in this or worshipping it. That the Stone itself is ascribed no power is demonstrated very well in what 'Umar رضي الله عنه, is reported to have said while kissing it: "*You are a mere stone. If the Prophet ﷺ had not kissed you, I would have never kissed you.*"

After completing the seven rounds, he goes to the place where lies the stone on which *Ibraaheem*, may Allaah exalt his mention, stood and called men to the House of Allaah, called *Maqaam Ibraaheem* (Station of *Ibraaheem*). He then offers two *Rak'ahs* of Prayer to thank Allaah.

Conclusion

Hajj reflects the unity of all Muslims from all over the world and their bond of brotherhood is reflected in every single ritual during *Hajj*.

Hajj is a clear manifestation of the unity of the human self and body in complete submission to the One and Only God. During the journey of *Hajj*, the Muslim embarks on a deep spiritual journey which witnesses self-denial, where he neglects most of his physical needs, opening the door for his soul to overwhelm his relation with existence and reach a profound climax of joy in submission to Allaah, the One and Only God.

In fact, the pilgrim does deny himself all his lawful physical needs, in expression of love to Allaah, all except what would keep his survival and that is "*food*". Otherwise, the pilgrim willingly dresses in humble clothes, denies himself intimate expressions of love, deserts his homeland, walks barefooted, sleeps on the ground, shares his days and nights with brothers and sisters who used to be "strangers" and "different" a short while ago.

How can a person share this unique experience of unity with others, without feeling united with them? The simplest result here is an overwhelming sense of unity and equality that prevails and encompasses all pilgrims.

Then, the question here is, why does Allaah order the rituals of *Hajj* to take all pilgrims in this direction? The answer is that Allaah The Almighty wants Muslims to be united through *Hajj*. Allaah wants Muslims to experience the real feeling of equality and unity by experiencing the same feeling of devotion, same humble code of dress, same direction of prayer, and same target of reaching Allaah The Almighty.

The directs pilgrims towards the concept of unity through a very wise divine order, which says (what means): ***{There should be no indecent***

speech, misbehavior, or quarrelling for anyone undertaking the pilgrimage...} (Quran 2:197)

Accordingly, the pilgrim needs to understand that the *Quran* is clearly directing Muslims, who are going for *Hajj*, to drop any manner or attitude that would lead to their division or would result in any kind of dispute.

The rituals of *Hajj* smoothly and peacefully take the pilgrims towards the understanding and the experiencing of practical and down-to-earth unity. Then, the *Quranic* order denies them anything that would cause division or partition.

Just like many other nations, differences and disputes might rise and cause division between Muslims. That is where *Hajj* serves best. *Hajj* is a compelling conference of unity that practically re-directs each pilgrim to his real identity and his first priority: being a Muslim, a brother or sister of all Muslims.

The sense of sharing that prevails during *Hajj* makes the pilgrims focus on what is in common, not on what is different. It provides a cozy and comfortable atmosphere that ignores social differences and the diversity of political views and cultural habits. All are one in the eyes of Allaah The Almighty, seeking the same end, which is the closeness of God.

When the rich and the poor share the same code of dress, and when the Persian and the Arab share the same land on which they stand pleading for forgiveness, and when the American walks on the same ground, barefooted with the African, and when all sleep the night on the same ground, body to body, and shoulder to shoulder, staring at the same sky, waiting for the sun of the day of *Arafah* to rise up, all becomes one.

Muslims must drop differences and agree on what is common. They need to realize that what's in common between them creates stronger bonds than that which divides them. They need to realize that they are all equal and they are in more peaceful harmony when they unite. Unity of Muslims is a targeted goal for this blessed Islamic pillar. All it needs from Muslims is to drop what would curb the reaching of this goal.

The Quran clearly says (what means):

{The believers are brothers, so make peace between your two brothers and be mindful of Allaah, so that you may be given mercy.} (Quran 49:10)

Here comes another clear and direct *Quranic* order related to the unity of Muslims. This should be the general attitude of Muslims. This is intensively reflected through the worship of *Hajj*.

It is an expression of love to Allaah The Almighty, being united with the ones who love Him best. In case there is a dispute or division between any two Muslims, or between any two Muslim countries or groups, *Hajj* should be a fair chance to resolve all problems.

The outcome of such a peaceful unity is a common joy that prevails and mesmerizes the senses of thousands of pilgrims. Then, the real prize is the absolute forgiveness that each pilgrim receives. Coming down from Mount Arafah, they are all forgiven for sure. Hand in hand, they come down, as pure as a newborn.

Thus, Islamic unity is one of the outstanding features of *Hajj*. This unity is based on Islam by holding firm to the rope of Allaah. This unity has been declared by Allaah The Almighty in His Noble Book, the Quran,

and it has been implemented and practiced by Prophet *Muhammad* ﷺ his Companions, and followers. Since the time of the Messenger of Allaah ﷺ this political unity has been propagated from generation to generation, up until the time when the rope that unified the Muslims was eliminated.

How do we view Islamic unity from a social perspective? In other words, how do we look at this unity, as individuals?

Allaah The Almighty Says in the Quran (what means): ***{"Hold fast, All together by the rope which Allaah stretches out for you, and be not divided among yourselves."}*** This verse indicates two things, two orders: Hold fast, All together to the rope of Allaah, and do not be divided.

First, hold fast, all together to the rope of Allaah The Almighty is a general order, which includes every single Muslim without exception, whether they are rulers or being ruled. And every individual Muslim is responsible according to his/her ability and authority. No one is exempt from this responsibility. At the same time, no one should be overburdened with the total responsibility of unifying the Muslim *Ummah*.

The second thing the previous *Ayah* (Verse) indicates is, do not be divided among yourselves. This is also a general order, which is meant for all members of the Muslim *Ummah* without exception.

Allaah's miracles will not come to support Muslims that are divided among themselves. Allaah The Almighty advises us in His Glorious book (which means): ***{"And obey Allaah and His Messenger, and do not dispute (with one another) lest you lose courage and your strength depart..."}***

Therefore, brotherhood among Muslims is an obligation. This approach can be found clearly from the life of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ at the early stages of establishing Islamic state on earth. The first Islamic State was established by the Prophet ﷺ himself in *Madeenah* after his migration from *Makkah*. This state has actually prevailed since the declaration of a new doctrine that was set by the Prophet ﷺ. This doctrine clarifies and regulates the relations among the Muslims themselves as well as their relations with neighboring non-Muslims.

It must be noted that the existence of the first Islamic State was preceded by Islamic unity among the individual Muslims in the form of brotherhood. *Imam Ibn-Haajar رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ*, narrated in his *Sharh Saheeh Al-Bukhaari* that, "*The establishment of brotherhood happened twice among Muslims at the time of the Prophet ﷺ once among Makkah's Muslims before migration, and once between the immigrants and the local Muslims in Madeenah after migration. (Vol. 7, Page 191)*" This second "solidifying of brotherhood" was much more serious than the first one. It was more than just emotional support, but it included material support and they even used to inherit from each other, after death (the two brothers) without being blood relatives.

We as individuals or Islamic organizations are responsible to reestablish the unity among ourselves and any shortcoming of other brothers will not relieve us from this responsibility to the best of our ability.

The Islamic Unity among ourselves cannot be achieved by just occasional exchange of warm emotions, but we must work objectively to come up with one work plan in which every one of us has his share of duty to fulfill. Islamic Unity among individual Muslims and Islamic

organizations is the obligation of the time, which should take the first priority of our efforts, and getting busy with other things which do not help in fulfilling the obligation is a sin.

If we Muslims (individuals and organizations) do not succeed in making true unity among ourselves, then we cannot ask the others for making it nor can we expect it to happen on the state level. In other words, if we failed in achieving this unity among ourselves, we will be one of the obstacles that the others must overcome and may not be able to.

