

## Hajj; A Living Sign of Allah

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The life of a believer revolves around the obedience and worship of Allah, The Almighty. As soon as he comes out of the period of fasting in the month Shawaal he enters into the phase of pilgrimage in the month of Zul Qa'dah. The pilgrimage must take place during the month of Dhul Hijja, which is the last month of the Islamic lunar calendar. The most significant and virtuous time during the period of Hajj is the first ten days of Zul Hijjah.

Hajj is known as pilgrimage in English which is one of the five fundamental pillars of Islam. It is compulsory upon every sane, adult Muslim once in a lifetime if the means are available.

Prophet Mohammed PBUH said:

“The superstructure of Islam is raised on five pillars, testifying that there is none worthy of worship except Allah and Muhammad is the slave and messenger of Allah, the establishment of prayer, payment of Zakat, Pilgrimage to the House Ka'bah and fasting in the month of Ramadan”

(Authentic Muslim)

The remarkable event of Hajj is the world's largest annual human gathering which takes place in the most sacred and holiest site in Islam, the land of Makkah Al-Mukarramah.

Allah, the almighty said:

إِنَّ أَوَّلَ بَيْتٍ وُضِعَ لِلنَّاسِ لَلَّذِي بِبَكَّةَ مُبَارَكًا وَهُدًى لِّلْعَالَمِينَ \* فِيهِ آيَاتٌ بَيِّنَاتٌ مِّمَّا يُرَاهِمُ وَمَنْ دَخَلَهُ كَانَ آمِنًا

“Verily, the first House of worship appointed for mankind was that at Bakkah/Makkah which is full of blessing, and a guidance for the whole universe. In it are clear signs such as the standing place of Abraham. And whoever enters the holy land of Makkah will definitely be safe and secured”

(Al-Imran 96-97)

Hajj is a set of rituals and worships which commemorate the greatest obedience and sacrifice of the Noble Prophet Araham PBUH (peace be upon him) who is considered the father of the Muslim nation.

مَلَّةً أَبِيكُمْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ \* هُوَ سَمَّاكُمُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

It is the religion of your father Ibrahim (Islamic Monotheism). It is Allah Who has named you Muslims.

(Al-Hajj: 78)

Prophet Abraham, the honourable constructor of the holy Ka'bah was commanded by his lord to call upon the people of the world to come from wherever they are in order to perform their religious duties through the journey of pilgrimage to the sacred land of Makkah Al-Mukarramah.

وَإِذْ بَوَّأْنَا لِإِبْرَاهِيمَ مَكَانَ النَّبِيِّ أَنْ لَا تَشْرِكْ بِي شَيْئًا وَطَهِّرْ بَيْتِيَ لِلطَّائِفِينَ وَالْقَائِمِينَ وَالرُّكَّعِ السُّجُودِ  
وَأَذِّنْ فِي النَّاسِ بِالْحَجِّ يَأْتُوكَ رِجَالًا وَعَلَىٰ كُلِّ ضَامِرٍ يَأْتِينَ مِنْ كُلِّ فَجٍّ عَمِيقٍ  
لِيَشْهَدُوا مَنَافِعَ لَهُمْ وَيَذْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ فِي أَيَّامٍ مَّعْلُومَاتٍ عَلَىٰ مَا رَزَقَهُمْ مِّنْ بَهِيمَةِ الْأَنْعَامِ فَكُلُوا مِنْهَا وَأَطْعِمُوا الْبَائِسَ الْفَقِيرَ  
ثُمَّ لْيَقْضُوا تَفَثَهُمْ وَلْيُوفُوا نُذُورَهُمْ وَلْيَطَّوَّفُوا بِالْبَيْتِ الْعَتِيقِ

Meaning:

And (mention, O Muhammad), when We designated for Abraham the site of the House,(saying), "Do not associate anything with Me and purify My House for those who perform Tawaf (going around the K'abah) and those who stand (in prayer) and those who bow and prostrate.

And proclaim to the people the pilgrimage; they will come to you on foot and on every lean camel; they will come from every distant pass. So that they may witness benefits for themselves and mention the name of Allah on known days over what He has provided for them of (sacrificial) animals. So eat of them and feed the miserable and poor.

Then let them end their untidiness and fulfil their vows and perform Tawaaf around the ancient House.

(Al-Hajj: 26-29)

The great Prophet Ibrahim PBUH was given the toughest tests by his lord in so many different ways, but he passed all the tests and tribulations through his unparalleled quality of trust in Allah and his unique quality of forbearance. Allah, the exalted loved the hardship and sacrifice of Abraham PBUH and his family so much that, not only did he speak about this blessed family in the holy Quran but also he commanded prophet Mohammed PBUH and his Ummah to follow the phenomenal tradition of Prophet Abraham PBUH every year during the season of pilgrimage. Here is an example of one of the toughest tests which prophet Ibrahim had gone through.

وَقَالَ إِنِّي ذَاهِبٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي سَيَهْدِينِ

And he said after he was saved from the fire: "Verily, I am going to my Lord. He will guide me!"

رَبِّ هَبْ لِي مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ

My Lord! Grant me offspring from the pious ones.

فَبَشَّرْنَاهُ بِغُلَامٍ حَلِيمٍ

So we gave him the good news of a forbearing boy.

فَلَمَّا بَلَغَ مَعَهُ السَّعْيَ قَالَ يَا بُنَيَّ إِنِّي أَرَىٰ فِي الْمَنَامِ أَنِّي أَذْبَحُكَ فَانظُرْ مَاذَا تَرَىٰ ۚ قَالَ يَا أَبَتِ افْعَلْ مَا تُؤْمَرُ ۖ سَتَجِدُنِي إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ مِنَ الصَّابِرِينَ

And, when his son was old enough to walk with him, he said: "O my son! I have seen in a dream that I am slaughtering you.

So look what you think!" He said: "O my father! Do whatever your lord has commanded you, In shaa Allah (God willing), you will find me amongst the "Saabireen" (the patients ones).

فَلَمَّا أَسْلَمَا وَتَلَّهُ لِلْجَبِينِ

Then, when they had both submitted themselves (to the Will of Allah), and he had laid him prostrate on his forehead (or on the side of his forehead for slaughtering);

وَنَادَيْنَاهُ أَن يَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ

And We called out to him: "O Abraham!

قَدْ صَدَّقْتَ الرُّؤْيَا إِنَّا كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ

You have fulfilled the dream (vision)!" Verily! Thus do We reward the Muhsinun (good-doers

إِنَّ هَذَا لَهُوَ الْبَلَاءُ الْمُبِينُ

Verily, that indeed was a manifest trial

وَقَدَيْنَاهُ بِذَبْحٍ عَظِيمٍ

And we ransomed him with a great sacrifice

(Surah As-Safaat: 99-107)

The inspiring event of Hajj comes with many precious benefits and lessons for mankind.

1. Expiation of previous sins. Prophet Mohammed PBUH said:

العمرة إلى العمرة كفارة لما بينهما ، والحج المبرور ليس له جزاء إلا الجنة

The performance of Umrah is an expiation for the sins committed between it and the previous Umrah; and the reward of an accepted Hajj is nothing but Paradise.

(Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

2. Strengthening the connection and bond with the Qiblah and the most focal point of Islam, Makkah Al-Mukarramah and being privileged by visiting the tomb of the greatest prophet Mohammed PBUH in Al-Madinah Al-Munawarah.

3. Benefiting from the blessed day of Arafah. Prophet Mohammed PBUH said:

صِيَامُ يَوْمِ عَرَفَةَ إِنِّي أَحْتَسِبُ عَلَى اللَّهِ أَنْ يُكَفِّرَ السَّنَةَ الَّتِي قَبْلَهُ وَالسَّنَةَ الَّتِي بَعْدَهُ

Fasting on the Day of Arafah, indeed I anticipate that Allah will forgive (the sins) of the year after it, and the year before it

(At-Tirmizi)

4. Learning how to strive and sacrifice in the path of Allah through the difficult journey of Hajj. Also, learning beautiful lessons of certainty, trust in Allah, patience and forbearance from the tradition of Noble Prophet Abraham PBUH.
5. Hajj is the best example of maximum humbleness and equality. When we look at the largest human gathering of Hajj we see the people of all colours, genders, professions, races, ethnicities and nationalities, all staying in one place, eating in one place and worshipping in one place. This is the biggest example of equality, and the effort of Islam in combating the diseases of racism which have remained in the hearts and minds of many people in this world.

Prophet Mohammed PBUH said in his farewell speech on the day of Arafah:

All mankind is from Adam and Eve. An Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab, nor does a non-Arab have any superiority over an Arab. A white person has no superiority over a black person, nor does a black have any superiority over a white except by piety and good action. Learn that every Muslim is the brother of another Muslim and that Muslims constitute one brotherhood.

May Allah, the almighty enable us to benefit immensely from this sacred period of Hajj. Ameen