The Rituals of Hajj and 'Umrah

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The Importance of Hajj

Worship
Tariq Haashmi

Hajj occupies a very important position in the various forms of Islamic worship. The Holy Prophet (sws) once, answering a question placed it among the basics of Islam. He defined Islam in the following words:

اﻹِْﺳْﻼَمُ أَنْ ﺗَﺸْﮭَﺪَ أَنْ ﻻَ إِﻟَﮫَ إِﻻﱠ ﷲﱠُ وَأَنﱠ ﻣُﺤَﻤﱠﺪًا رَﺳُﻮلُ ﷲﱠِ ﺻَﻠﱠﻰ ﷲﱠُ ﻋَﻠَﯿْﮫِ وَﺳَﻠﱠﻢَ وَﺗُﻘِﯿﻢَ اﻟﺼﱠﻼَةَ وَﺗُﺆْﺗِﻲَ اﻟﺰﱠﻛَﺎةَ وَﺗَﺼُﻮمَ رَﻣَﻀَﺎنَ وَﺗَﺤُﺞَ اﻟْﺒَﯿْﺖَ إِنْ اسْﺘَﻄَﻌْﺖَ إِلَﯿْﮫِ ﺖِﺒَلْاءٍ ﻣُﺴِﻠِّمٍ، رﻗﻢ: ٨

Islam means that you openly state that there is no god except Allah, and Muhammad (sws) is the Messenger of Allah; establish the prayer, pay Zakah; fast during the month of Ramadan and offer the Hajj of the House of Allah if you are able to afford journey to it. (Muslim, No: 8)

According to another narrative, the Prophet (sws) acknowledged it as one of the pillars of Islam:

سَلَّمُ ﻋَﻠَیْهِ ﻣُﺳِّدُ شَهادَةِ أَنْ ﻻَ إِلَهَ إِلاَّ ﷲَ وَأَنْ ﻣُﺤَﻤَّدًا رَسُولُ ﷲُ ﻋَلَيْهِ وَﺳَلَّمَ وَإِﻗَﺎمَ اﻟصَّلَاةَ وَإِﯾﺘَاءِ اﻟْزَكَاةَ وَالْحَجِّ وَوَصْوِ öldürمَزَانِ ( ﺒُخَارِي: رﻗﻢ: ٧)

Islam is based on five fundamentals: to proclaim that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad (sws) is the Messenger of Allah, and to establish the prayer, and pay Zakah, to offer pilgrimage of the House [of God] and to fast during Ramadan. (Bukhari, No: 7)

Abu Hurayrah (rta) narrates:

(أن ﻟَرَسُولَ اللَّهُ صلى الله عليه وسلم ﻣَنْ ﺗُؤْتَ ﺑَرْفُ ﻷيْ أَيُّ الْوَظَأَ ﻓَأَسْلَمُ ﻓَا يَأْسِرُ ﻋَلَى ﷲَ وَرَسُولُهُ، ﻭَمَمَّا ﻓَأَسْلَمُ ﻓَا يَأْسِرُ ﻣَنْ حَجَّ ﻟَرَمْرُورً ﺑِخَارِي: رﻗﻢ: ٢٥)

The prophet was once asked: ‘Which deed is the most superior?’ He replied: ‘Belief in God and His Messengers’. ‘After that?’ he was asked. ‘Jihad in His way’, was the answer. It was then asked: ‘After that’. He replied: ‘the Hajj offered with all its requirements’. (Bukhari, No: 25)

At another place, the Prophet (sws) is reported to have said:

(مَنْ حَجَّ ﻷيْ ﷲَ وَرَسُولُهُ ﻭَمَنْ ﻷيْ ﷲَ وَرَسُولُهُ ﻣَنْ ﻷيْ ﷲَ وَرَسُولُهُ ﺑِخَارِي: ١٤٢١)
One who offers Hajj in His way and doesn’t speak obscene language, and doesn’t commit sins, will come back [purified] as he was at the time of his birth. (Bukhari, No: 1421)

At yet another place, he said:

اَلْﻌُﻤْﺮَةُ إِﻟَﻰ اﻟْﻌُﻤْﺮَةِ ﻛَﻔﱠﺎرَةٌ ﻟِﻤَﺎ ﺑَﯿْﻨَﮭُمَﺎ وَاﻟْﺤَﺞُ ﺑَﯿْﻨَﮭُمَﺎ لَﯿْﺲَ ﻟَﯿْﺲَ ﻟَﮫُ ﺟَﺰَاءٌ إِﻻِّ اﻟْﺠَﻨﱠﺔُ (١٣٤٩)

An ‘Umrah after the other stands for the atonement of the sins committed in between. Hajj offered with all its requirements is rewarded with Paradise. (Muslim, No: 1349)

The importance of Hajj is also manifest in the Hadith in which the Prophet (sws) warned those people who do not perform Hajj, even when they do not have any obstacle in their way. Abu Amamah narrates:

إِنَّ ﯾَﮭُﻮدِﯾًّا وَإِنَّ ﯾَﮭُﻮدِﯾًّا ﻓَﻤَﺎتَ وَﻟَﻢْ ﯾَﺤُﺞﱠ ﻓَﻠْﯿَﻤُﺖْ إِنْ ﺷَﺎءَ ﯾَﮭُﻮدِﯾًّا وَإِنْ ﺷَﺎءَ ﯾَﮭُﻮدِﯾًّا (١٧٩٢)

The Holy Prophet said: ‘If a man unhindered by a compelling necessity, or a tyrant ruler, or a disabling disease dies without offering Hajj, God doesn’t care if he dies the death of a Jew or a Christian’. (Darmi, No: 1792)

Hajj, in fact, is an Abrahamic worship which the Prophet (sws) introduced and promulgated among his progeny and directed it to keep it in practice. We find the pagan Arabs who, in spite of having forgotten most of the teachings of the Abrahamic religion, practicing Hajj throughout their history, regarding it a great duty. They indeed regarded it a great religious service. With the passage of time like the other teachings of religion, they lost the true form of this worship and excluded many of its rituals and introduced some new practices that they deemed appropriate. The Qur’an re-established this Abrahamic worship in its original form and said:

وَلُعِبَ ﻋَلَى الْﻧَّاسِ حَجُّ الْبَيْتِ عِنْدِ ﺑَاءٍ ﺑَاءٍ وَمِنْ كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ عَنِ اللَّاهِ عَلَى الْمُؤَمِّنِينَ (٩٧)

And whosoever can afford should visit the House on pilgrimage as duty to God. Whosoever denies should remember that God is above heed of the world. (3:97)

We have dedicated this issue of the journal to the rituals of Hajj and Umrah for the benefit of the pilgrims who are going to offer Hajj this month. Presented in this issue is the research of Javed Ahmad Ghamidi on these rituals.

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And proclaim the pilgrimage among the people. They will come to you on foot and on the backs of lean camels from distant mountainous ways so that they are able to reach places of benefit and on a few appointed days invoke the name of God over their cattle which He has bestowed them. [So when you slaughter them] eat of their flesh, and feed the deprived beggar. Then let the pilgrims cleanse themselves of their dirt and fulfill their vows, and circle the Ancient House. (22:27-29)

It is this proclamation which was made centuries ago and it is in response to it that while uttering 'لُبْكَ لُبْكَ' we travel to Bayt Al-Haram, the Mosque built by Abraham (sws) in Makkah. It is this ancient mosque which in the words of Imam Farahi was the first house of God in this valley of Batha and about which it had been decided from the very beginning that it would fend off all those who would deviate from Tawhid. Consequently, when its inhabitants took to polytheism and left it, they took away some of its stones in order to worship them. When Abraham (sws) after migrating from Babylon while trying to find this ancient mosque reached this location, he could only discover a shining stone from its previous construction. After he attempted to sacrifice Ishmael (sws), the Almighty directed him to rebuild this place of worship. So both father and son started digging the earth beneath this very memorable stone. Once the ancient foundations became visible after some labour, they raised them and implanted this stone in one part of the erected structure. Ishmael (sws) was offered and devoted to this very house and thus regarded as its attendant and it was proclaimed in the name of the Almighty that people should come here to ceremonially devote themselves and revive their commitment to the belief of Tawhid. In religious parlance, these rituals are called Hajj and ‘Umrah. In the religion of Abraham (sws), these two rituals are the pinnacle of worship. The Qur’an has declared that Islam is in fact a contract of sale and purchase with the Almighty: We sell our lives and wealth for the Paradise the Almighty has prepared for us: ‘إِنَّ لِلَّهِ ﻣِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ’أَﻧفُﺳَﮭُمْ وَأَﻣْوَالِهِمْ ﺑِأَنَّ ﻟَهُمْ اﻟْﺟَﻨَّةُ’ (God has purchased from the faithful their lives and worldly goods, and in return has promised them the Garden (9:111)). Consequently, right after it is said: ‘وَبِإِنْبِعَاثِمُ الَّذِي بَآ إِلَيْهِ ﻣَعَ ﻋَمْلِهِ ﻓَوَذَﻟِكَ ﺎَﻟْفَوْزُ ﺍﻟْﻌَظِيمُ’ (Rejoice then in the bargain you have made. That is the supreme triumph (9:111)).

This is the highest position a person can attain in his zeal for worshiping the Almighty: he is ready to offer his life and wealth for Him when he is called for this. Hajj and ‘Umrah are symbolic manifestations of this offering. Both are an embodiment of the same reality. The only difference is that the latter is compact and the former more
comprehensive in which the objective for which life and wealth are offered becomes very evident.

The Almighty has informed us that Satan has declared war on the scheme according to which He has created Adam in this world since the very first day: 'Because You have led me into sin', he declared, ‘I will waylay Your servants who are on Your straight path, then spring upon them from the front and from the rear, from their right and from their left. Then You will find the greater part of them ungrateful (7:16-17)).

The Qur’an (7:13-14) says that this challenge from Iblis was accepted and His servants are now at war with their foremost enemy till the Day of Judgement. This is the very test on which this world has been made and our future depends on success or failure in it. It is for this war that we dedicate our life and devote our wealth. It is for this objective that many a time the prophets of God have called out: ‘Believers! Be the helpers of God (61:14)). This war against Iblis has been symbolized in the ritual of Hajj. The manner in which this symbolization has been done is as follows:

At the behest of Allah, His servants take time out from the pleasures and involvements of life and leave aside their goods and possessions, then proceed to the battlefield with the words ‘لَبْيَكْ لَبْيَكَ’ and just like warriors encamp in a valley.

The next day they reach an open field seeking the forgiveness of the Almighty, praying and beseeching Him to grant them success in this war and listening to the sermon of the imam.

Giving due consideration to the symbolism of waging war against Iblis they shorten and combine their prayers and then after a short stay on the way back reach their camps.

Afterwards they fling stones on Satan and symbolically offer themselves to God by sacrificing animals. They then shave their heads and to offer the rounds of vows come to the real place of worship and sacrifice.

Then they return to their camps again and in the next two or three days fling stones on Satan in the manner they had done earlier.

Viewed thus, the Ihram worn in Hajj and ‘Umrah symbolizes the fact that a believer has withdrawn from the amusement, attractions and involvements of this world and like a monk wearing two unstitched robes, bare-headed and to some extent bare-footed too has resolved to reach the presence of the Almighty.

The ‘Talbiyah’ is the answer to the call made by Abraham (sws) while standing on a rock after he had re-built the House of God. This call has now reached the nooks and corners of this world and the servants of God while acknowledging His favours and affirming belief in His Tawhid respond to it by saying: ‘اَﻟﻠّﮭُﻢَ ﻟَبْيَكَ ﻟَبْيَكَ’.

The rounds of ‘Tawaf’ are the rounds of vow. This is an ancient tradition of the Abrahamic religion. According to this tradition, animals which were to be sacrificed or devoted to the place of worship were made to walk to and fro in front of it and in front of the altar. It is these rounds which have been referred at various places by the translators of the Torah as the ‘wave offering’ and ‘presenting someone’:
You are to bring the Levites before the LORD, and the Israelites are to lay their hands on them. Aaron is to present the Levites before the LORD as a wave offering from the Israelites, so that they may be ready to do the work of the LORD. After the Levites lay their hands on the heads of the bulls, use the one for a sin offering to the LORD and the other for a burnt offering, to make atonement for the Levites. Have the Levites stand in front of Aaron and his sons and then present them as a wave offering to the LORD. In this way you are to set the Levites apart from the other Israelites, and the Levites will be mine. After you have purified the Levites and presented them as a wave offering, they are to come to do their work at the Tent of Meeting. They are the Israelites who are to be given wholly to me. I have taken them as my own in place of the firstborn, the first male offspring from every Israelite woman. (Numbers 8:10-16)

In the Arabic translations of the Bible, the words used for this are ‘ﺗُﺮَدﱢدُھُﻢْ ﻟِﻠْﺮَبﱢ’ and ‘إﻣَﺎمَ اﻟﺮﱠبﱢ’ which point to this underlying reason.

The Istilam of the Hajari Aswad symbolizes the revival of the pledge. In it, a person while symbolizing this stone to be the hand of the Almighty, places his own hand in His and in accordance with the ancient tradition about covenant and pledges by kissing it revives his pledge with the Almighty that after accepting Islam he has surrendered his life and wealth to Him in return for Paradise.

Sa‘i is in fact the Tawaf of the place where Ishmael (sws) was offered for sacrifice. Abraham (sws) while standing on the hill of Safa had observed this place of sacrifice and then to fulfill the command of Allah had briskly walked towards the hill of Marwah. In the Bible, this incident is narrated in the following words:

On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. He said to his servants, ‘Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you.’ (Genesis 22:4-5)

Consequently, the Tawaf of Safa and Marwah are the rounds of vow which are first made before the Ka’bah and then on the place of worship. It is evident from the Torah that just as they were made before sacrificing an animal they were also made after sacrificing it while holding a part of the slaughtered animal in the hands:

After you take the breast of the ram for Aaron’s ordination, wave it before the LORD as a wave offering, and it will be your share. (Exodus 29:26)

‘Arafat is a surrogate for the Ka’bah where the warriors gather to battle against Satan, seeking forgiveness for their sins and praying to God to grant them success in this war.

Muzdalifah is the place where the army stops and spends the night and the warriors once again pray and beseech the Lord when they get up in the morning on their way to the battlefield.

Rami symbolizes cursing Iblis and waging war against him. This ritual is undertaken with the determination that a believer would not be happy with anything less than the defeat of Iblis. It is known that this eternal enemy of man is persistent in implanting evil suggestions in the minds of people. However, if resistance is offered in return, his onslaught decreases gradually. Doing Rami for three days first at the bigger Jamarat and then at the smaller ones symbolizes this very resistance.
Animal sacrifice symbolizes that one is willing to sacrifice one’s life for the Almighty and shaving the head symbolizes that the sacrifice has been presented and a person with the mark of obedience and eternal servitude to the Almighty can now return to his home. Shaving the head is an ancient tradition of the religion of Abraham (sws). Consequently, this law has been stated in the Torah that a person who has been offered and devoted to God should not shave his head until the days of the vow are complete:

During this entire period of his vow of separation no razor may be used on his head. He must be holy until the period of his separation to the Lord is over; he must let the hair of his head grow long. (Numbers 5:6)

Now this is the law for the Nazirite when the period of his separation is over. He is to be brought to the entrance to the Tent of Meeting ... then at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting, the Nazirite must shave off the hair that he dedicated. He is to take the hair and put it in the fire that is under the sacrifice of the fellowship offering. (Numbers 6:13, 18)

It is evident from the foregoing details, how grand and exceptional the ritual of Hajj is. It has been made incumbent once in the life of a Muslim who has the capacity to undertake it. Consequently, the Almighty has warned the People of the Book that showing disregard to this ritual is tantamount to disbelief and if they insist on this disregard then God will not show any regard to them:

And pilgrimage to the House is a duty to God for all who have the capacity to make the journey and he who denies should know that Allah is regardless of the people of this world. (3:97)

Once, the Prophet (sws) also referred to its exalted status after faith and Jihad. He is also reported to have said that a person who offers Hajj and does not do anything lewd nor shows any disobedience, returns from Hajj as if his mother has given birth to him. Similarly, he has said: ‘An ‘Umrah done after ‘Umrah is atonement for the sins done in between them and the reward of the Hajj offered with full sincerity is Paradise.

**History of the Hajj and ‘Umrah**

The history of the rituals of Hajj and ‘Umrah begins with the declaration of Abraham (sws) referred to earlier at various places in this article. Never did these rituals cease to be offered thereafter. Before the advent of the Prophet Muhammad (sws) also, the people of Arabia would come to offer them in multitudes and after his advent too, this process has continued. No doubt, the Arabs had introduced certain innovations in these rituals; however, it is evident from historical narratives that certain people among them were fully aware of these innovations and would offer Hajj according to the way prescribed by Abraham (sws). It is narrated about the Prophet (sws) that before he was assigned Prophethood, he was spotted in ‘Arafat by Jubayr Ibn Mut‘im. He was surprised on this because the people of Quraysh would not go beyond Muzdalifah while the Prophet (sws) had come as far as ‘Arafat. He says:
I lost my camel. On the day of ‘Arafah, while trying to locate it I went up to the field of ‘Arafat and found that Muhammad (sws) was standing there. I said to myself: ‘By God! He belongs to the Quraysh; then what he is doing here?’ (Bukhari, No: 1664)

It is evident from the above discussion that when the Qur’an directed its addressees to offer Hajj, it was not an un-introduced directive for them. They were fully aware of its importance in religion and were also aware of its rites and rituals. They would vigilantly offer it each year. Consequently, the Qur’an only corrected these innovations and deviations and revived Hajj in its true Abrahamic form and shape. This revival thus constitutes the last chapter of the history of this ritual – written down by none other than Prophet Muhammad (sws). From then onwards, all these rites and rituals of Hajj are being transmitted generation after generation through the consensus and practical perpetuation of the Muslim Ummah. No addition or alteration has been made in them. The reformations introduced by the Qur’an at that time and which are eternally preserved in it now are outlined below:

1. Being the custodians of the Baytullah, the Quraysh thought that they had the right to allow whoever they wanted to offer Hajj and ‘Umrah and likewise the authority to stop anyone from doing so. The Qur’an has not accepted this right of theirs and has clarified that no tribe or family holds any monopolistic rights in this regard. No one has the right to stop any person who comes to the House of God for His worship and for Hajj and ‘Umrah whether he belongs to the Quraysh or to some other tribe, whether he belong to the east or west and whether he is an Arab or a non-Arab. All have equal right to offer these rituals and no discrimination shall be made between a native and a non-native. The Quraysh should not consider themselves to be the owners and rulers of this House; they should offer their services for it and act as its custodians. It is their obligation that like Ishmael (sws), they too should make it a centre of worship for all the world and invite all people to come to it to reap its blessings:

[On the other hand] those who disbelieved and are now preventing others from the path of God and from the Sacred Mosque which We regarded for mankind, natives and strangers alike [are indeed committing grave oppression], and [the matter of this Mosque is such that] those who seek to practice something non-religious, some polytheism within it, We shall make them taste a grievous penalty. (22:25)

2. The filth of polytheism had been inducted in this foremost centre of monotheism. The Qur’an has warned that when Abraham (sws) and Ishmael (sws) were blessed with its custodianship and were asked to settle themselves and their progeny in this area, the first directive that the Almighty gave them was to keep it cleansed from such filth. This was an indication that the Quraysh too should follow suit, otherwise this great trust shall be confiscated from them and handed over to the rightful:

(26:26)
And recall when We made for Abraham the site of the scared mosque as an abode [with the guidance]: ‘Worship none besides Me. Keep clean My House for those who walk around it, and those who stand upright or kneel in worship’. (22:26)

3. As per the Qur’an (6:138-150), in relation to their Idols, the Quraysh had forbidden certain animals on themselves and they would not sacrifice them. Similarly, owing to worldly interests, they had to a great extent altered the traditions of Abraham (sws) regarding this House. The Almighty also warned them on this attitude and informed them that only those animals are forbidden which the Qur’an has referred to. Thus they should refrain from ‘إفتاير على ﷲ’ (imputing falsity to God) and revere all which has been declared sacred by the Almighty. Only such an attitude would ensure a safe future for them:

Be diligent in these things and [remember] he who reveres the sacred things of God, it is better for him in [the eyes of] God. And the cattle are made lawful to you, except for those which have been spelled out to you before. So abstain from the filth of idols; and abstain from this falsehood [you attribute to God] dedicating yourselves to God, and not associating others with Him. And [remember] he who associates others deities with God is like a person who falls from heaven and then birds will snatch him away or the wind will carry him away and throw him at some far-off region. Adhere to these things and [remember that] he who reveres the symbols of God [should know that] this is from the piety of the hearts. (22:30-32)

4. Benefiting from the services of animals reserved for sacrifice was generally considered as prohibited. Consequently, animals reserved for sacrifice were neither used for carriage nor was their milk used for drinking. The Qur’an pointed out that holding such animals sacred does not require this attitude. Until the time of sacrifice, these animals can be used in every way beneficial to man:

You can put these [animals] of [sacrifice] to your use until an appointed time. Then they are to reach this Ancient House. (22:33)

5. Some Jews also live in Arabia. Because of a weak tradition, they had prohibited the camel upon themselves. The Almighty clarified that this was plain conjecture. Hence the camel could be sacrificed without any reluctance. In fact, if the Arabs sacrifice it, it will earn them great reward because this animal is very dear to them:

We have made the camels a part of God’s symbols. They are of much use to you. Pronounce over them the name of God while you draw them up in line. So when they fall on their sides eat of their flesh and feed the
uncomplaining beggar and the demanding suppli

Thus have We subjected these [animals] to your service, so that you may be grateful. (22:36)

6. It was believed that the Almighty is pleased with the flesh and blood of a sacrificed animal. The Qur’an has warned that this is mere foolishness. The Almighty is not pleased with the flesh and blood of these animals; rather, He is pleased with the piety which is engendered in those who offer such sacrifices:

٢٢:٣٦

The flesh and blood of these [sacrifices of yours] does not reach God; it is your piety that reaches Him. Thus has He subjected them to your service so that you may give glory to God for guiding you. [This is the way of those who are the righteous] and [O Prophet!] give glad tidings to these righteous. (22:37)

7. The Marwah Hill is the place where Ishmael (sws) was prostrated for sacrifice. Since the Jews were not ready to accept this, they would keep creating various doubts about Tawaf of the Safa and Marwah. The Qur’an has admonished them on concealing this fact and unequivocally stated that these hills are from among the Sha’air (symbol) of God and circumambulating them is a virtue and no Muslim should feel any hesitation in doing so:

٢:١٥٨-٩

Safa and Marwa are indeed God’s symbols. So it shall be no offence for those who come for Hajj or ‘Umrah of this Sacred House to walk around them. [In fact, this a virtuous deed] and He that does a virtue of his own will God will accept it and is fully aware of it. Those who conceal the clear proofs and the guidance We have revealed [in this matter] even though We had openly proclaimed them for these people in our Book it is they who shall be cursed by God and cursed by those who curse. (2:158-9)

8. After returning from Hajj and while being in the state of Ihram the Arabs would not enter their houses from the front; they would enter them from the back. The reason for this queer act probably was the superstition that one should not enter from the doors from which one exited with the burden of sins; after being cleansed of these sins, this would be against piety. The Qur’an regarded this to be a foolish act and asserted that this is not a virtuous deed; hence, it must be put to an end:

٢:١٨٩

This is certainly no virtue that you enter your dwellings from the back [while returning from Hajj and being in a state of Ihram]. In fact, virtue is that of a man who adopts piety. And enter your dwellings by their doors and keep fearing God so that you may attain salvation. (2:189)

9. In the days of Jahiliyyah, the ritual of Hajj had assumed the form of a semi-religious entertainment. Consequently, people would take all sorts of assets and provisions to offer it but would give little importance to the fact that the real provision which one needs in this journey is the provision of piety. Little would they care that in
this journey they should not indulge in lustful activity and not show disobedience and not engage in any altercation. These acts are against the very spirit of this great ritual. The Almighty has directed their attention to these aspects and emphasized that in this journey one’s greatest provision is piety:

الْحَجةُ أَشْﮭُرٌ ﻣﱠﻊْﻠُﻮﻣَﺎتٌ ﻓَﻤَﻦ فَﺮَضَ ﻓِﯿﮭِﻦﱠ اﻟْﺤَجةٌ ﻓَﻼَ رَﻓَﺚَ وَﻻَ ﻓُﺴُﻮقَ وَﻻَ ﺟِﺪَالٌ ﻓِﻲ اﻟْﺤَجةٌ وَﻣَﺎ فَﻌَّلَواْ ﻣِنْ ﺗَﺄْشِرَاءِ ﻭَاتَّفَقُواْ فَإنَّ ﻧَﺤْيِ اﻟْرَءَاءِ ﻟَﻠْقُوْرَى وَﻠِﻠْقُوْ ردَّتِيَّا (۲/۱۹۷)

The months of the Hajj are specific. So anyone who intends to offer it [by wearing the Ihram] should not indulge in lustful activities and refrain from being disobedient to the Almighty and abstain from altercation. And [remember that] whatever good you do, the Almighty is aware of it. And [in the journey of Hajj] take along with you the provision [of piety] because the best provision is piety. And O men of intellect! Keep fearing Me. (2:197)

10. Owing to this apathy about Hajj, people instead of remembering Allah and celebrating His glory and exaltedness would indulge in business, trade and similar activities. The Qur’an has clarified that there is no harm if a person engages in business during this ritual but in reality the sites of Hajj are not meant for such activities. These great manifestations of knowledge and comprehension should remain specific to the remembrance of God:

وَاذْکُرُوهُ كَمَا هَذَا ﺑَوْاْ ﻣِنْ قَبْلِهِ لِمَنَ الضَّالِّيِّينَ (۲/۱۹۸)

[In this journey of Hajj], it shall be no offence for you to seek the bounty of your Lord [but remember that Muzdalifah is no place of amusement and trading; so] when you come from ‘Arafat remember God near the sacred monument and remember Him in the way He has guided you. And before this, you were undoubtedly in error. (2:198)

11. It had become the prerogative of the Quraysh to not go beyond Muzdalifah. They reckoned that they were the custodians and keepers of the Baytullah; so it was not appropriate for them to cross the limits of the Haram. The Almighty did not accept this privilege they granted to themselves and directed them to turn up in ‘Arafat the way others do:

ضَدُواْ مِنْ حَبْیْثُ ﻧُفِيْسُواْ اﻟْدُّنْيَا وَمَنَ آتَيْنَاهُ ﻣِنْ ﺧَﻼَقٍ ﻣَنْ ﯾَقُولُ رَبَّنَآ آَتِنَاهُ ﻣِنْ اﻵخِرَةِ ﻣِنْ ﺧَﻼَقٍ وِﻣَنَ آتَيْنَاهُ (۲/۱۹۹)

Then [O People of the Quraysh! this is also necessary that] you return from the place from where the other people return and seek the forgiveness of God. God is indeed Forgiving and Ever-Merciful. (2:199)

12. The days at Mina too were spent in eulogistic recitals, story telling and proving the superiority of one another. Not only this, some people would go as far as to view as great a ritual as Hajj on the basis of their worldly benefits. On this occasion also if they invoked God, they would ask for worldly benefits. The Qur’an has admonished them on such behaviour and asserted that such people will have no share in the Hereafter:
After this when you have fulfilled the rites of Hajj, remember God as you remember your forefathers; in fact even more. [This is the time of asking from God] but there are some who [at this instance also] say: ‘Lord, give us in this world’ and [then the result of this is that] these shall have no share in the world to come. But there are others who say: ‘Lord, give us what is good both in this world and in the world to come, and save us from the torment of the Fire’. It is these who will receive a share of what they earned and swift is God in taking account. (2:200-202)

13. Another issue which related to the stay in Mina was whether it was to be extended up to the thirteenth of Dhu’l-Hijj or could one return on the twelfth also. The Qur’an clarified that there is no harm in both cases. The reason is that the time of stay is not as important as the fact that however much a person is able to stay he spends his time in the remembrance of God and remaining fearful to Him:

And in the few appointed days of [Mina] remember God. Then he who in haste departed on the second day incurred no sin, nor did he who stayed on longer – truly for those who fear God and have fear of God, then, and be aware that [one day] you shall all be gathered before Him. (2:203)

14. The worst of these innovations was nude circumambulation of the Ka’bah. There was a plank of wood placed in the Ka’bah where people would place their clothes after undressing. Then it was only the graciousness of the Quraysh which would cover their bodies: their men would lend clothes to men and their women to women. However, those who were deprived of this generosity would circumambulate in the nude and would consider it to be an act of virtue.11 The Qur’an prohibited this practice and stressed that all places of worship a person must conceal his private parts and be fully dressed:

Children of Adam, adorn yourself with your clothes at all occasions of attending your mosques. (7:31)

The Objective of Hajj and Umrah

The objective of Hajj and Umrah is the same as its essence and reality viz acknowledgement of the blessings of the Almighty, affirmation of His Tawhid and a reminder of the fact that after embracing accepting Islam we have devoted and dedicated ourselves to Him. It is these things whose comprehension and cognizance are called the benefits (Manafi’) of the places of Hajj. Consequently, the words of the verse quoted at the beginning are ’لِيَﺸْﮭَﺪُوا ﻟِﮭُﻢْ ﻣَﻨَﺎﻓِﻊٍ’ (so that they are able to reach places of benefit). This objective is very nicely depicted in the utterances which have been specified for this ritual. It is evident that these expressions have been selected so that this objective is highlighted and fully implanted in the minds. Hence after wearing the Ihram, these words flow from ever person’s mouth:
I am in your presence; O Lord I am in Your presence; I am in Your presence; no one is Your partner; I am in Your presence. Gratitude is for You and all blessings are Yours and sovereignty is for You only and no one is Your partner.

Days of Hajj and Umrah

No time has been fixed for Umrah. It can be offered through the year whenever people want. However, the days of Hajj have been fixed from 8th to 13th Dhu’l-Hajj and it can be offered in these days only. Since people have to reach the city of Makkah from all over the world, so in order to safeguard this journey the Almighty prohibited war in four months. These months are Rajab, Dhu Al-Qa’dah, Du Al-Hajjah and Muharram. Among these months, Rajab is fixed for ‘Umrah and the other three are reserved for Hajj. These months have always remained sacred and there was never any doubt about their sanctity. The Almighty says:

God ordained the months twelve in number when He created the heavens and the earth. Of these, four are sacred. This is the true Faith. Therefore do not sin against yourselves in them [by violating their sanctity]. (9:36)

The Sites of Hajj and ‘Umrah

The sites of Hajj and ‘Umrah have been called the Sha’air of Allah. The Qur’anic words are: ‘

This word is the plural of Sha’irah, which means ‘a symbol’. In religious parlance, they connote certain manifestations which have been fixed by Allah and His Prophet (sws) to ingrain the comprehension of certain realities in our minds. The Almighty says (Qur’an 22:32) that if these Sha’air are revered then this is an act of piety of the hearts.

Following is an introduction to these sites:

Mawaqit

Certain places have been appointed before the limits of Haram begin which can only be crossed in a state of Ihram by those who want to offer Hajj and ‘Umrah. In religious terminology, they are called ‘Miqat’ and are five in number. For those coming from Madinah, the ‘Miqat’ is Dhu Al-Hulayfah, for those coming from Yemen, it is Yalamlam, for those coming from Syria and Egypt, it is Juhfah, for those coming from Najd, it is Qaran and for those arriving from the East, it is Dhatu ‘Irq.

Bayt Al-Haram

This is the same place of worship which the Qur’an (22:25-9) calls (البيت العتيق، ‘البيت’ and ‘البيت العتيق’). Since its
building is in the form of a cube it is also called ‘Khana i Ka’bah’. It is located in the city of Makkah in Arabia. The Qur’an (3:96) has called it by the name ‘Bakkah’ which means ‘an inhabited place’. It is situated about 277 meters above sea level and is surrounded by mountains from all four sides. Before the arrival of Abraham (sws), Makkah was uninhabited. An ancient tribe of Arabia called Jurham ruled this area and lived in the whereabouts of Makkah. Ishmael (sws) was married to a lady Bint Mudad of this tribe. After the death of his son Nabat, the rule of this city came in the hands of this tribe and they subsequently ruled for several centuries. After that Banu Khuza’ah and Banu Bakr ruled this city. Almost a century before the advent of Prophet Muhammad (sws) when Halil Ibn Habshiyyah, chief of the Khuza’ah tribe died Qussayi Ibn Kilab annexed it and once again the Ishmaelites became the rulers of this city.13

When Abraham (sws) arrived at this place almost four thousand years ago at the behest of the Almighty the Bayt Al-Haram because of floods and with the passage of time had been razed to the ground and there was no indication of it. Through divine inspiration he discovered its original foundations and with the help of his son Ishmael (sws) constructed a roofless building.14 This construction too could not remain intact with time and was destroyed. After that, first the ‘Imaliqah and then the tribe of Jurham constructed it.15 When because of certain calamities the construction done by the tribe of Jurham was also demolished, the Quraysh tried to reconstruct it but because of a lack of financial resources, it could not be constructed on its original Abrahamic foundations. This incident took place five years before Muhammad (sws) was assigned Prophethood. Consequently, he also participated in its construction. In fact, according to the historians the dispute of the re-placement of the Hajari Aswad was resolved by a very clever plan he had presented.16

It has been narrated that once the Prophet (sws) expressed his wish before A’ishah (rta) that had it not been for the assurance and comfort of the Quraysh, he would have had the Hatim included in the structure thus instituting the Baytullah on its original Abrahamic foundations.17 To honour this wish of the Prophet (sws), ‘Abdullah Ibn Zubayr during his rule demolished the structure constructed by the Quraysh and had it reconstructed. The structure was once again destroyed by stones hurled by Hajjaj’s catapults when he attacked ‘Abdullah Ibn Zubayr. After his martyrdom, at the behest of ‘Abdu’l-Malik Ibn Marwan, Hajjaj had the structure razed down and once again rebuilt on the foundations set by the Quraysh.18 The structure is now intact ever since that event.

The Hajari Aswad is placed at one corner of this building. After it, the northern corner of the building is called the ‘Rukni Iraqi’, the western corner is called the ‘Rukni Shami’ and the southern corner is called the ‘Rukni Yamani’. The door of the Baytullah is about two meters above the ground. The wall between this door and the Hajari Aswad is called the ‘Multazim’. This is like the doorstep of this divine shrine embracing which the devotees invoke and beseech the Almighty. The building is covered by a black cloth which is changed every year. There is a white stone in the verandah of the building. It is said that Abraham (sws) stood on this very stone when he raised its foundations.20 Near this white stone is a natural fountain which is called ‘Zamzam’. Those who come for the pilgrimage of this house, quench their thirst from it.

The precincts of the Baytullah extend for several kilometers on all four sides and have always been known. All this area is called the ‘Haram’. It is forbidden to harm any human being, animal and even self-springing vegetation in this area. The Qur’anic words ‘29:67) (75 :28) and ‘125 :2) refer to this very status of this sacred area. The Prophet (sws) is reported to have said:
This is the city which has been declared sacred by the Almighty ever since He created the heavens and the earth. Hence, it is sacred till the Day of Judgement because of this sanctity declared by God. No one before me was ever given the permission to wage war in it. For me too, this prohibition was lifted for a part of day. Hence, it is sacred till the Day of Judgement because of this sanctity declared by God; neither will its thorny trees be cut nor its prey be chased for hunting nor will any thing found in it be picked except of it is picked by someone in order to have it delivered to its owner and nor will its grass be cut. (Muslim, No: 1353)

Safa and Marwah

These are two hills located very near the Baytullah. It is on Marwah that the incident of Ishmael’s sacrifice took place. As such, this is the real place of slaughter which has been extended to Mina for the convenience of the pilgrims. In the Tawaf of this place of slaughter, each round begins with Safa and ends on Marwah. In religious parlance, this is called ‘Sa’i’.

Mina

This is a vast field between two hills and is situated about five kilometers from Makkah. The pilgrims stay here after they return from Makkah on the eighth of Dhu Al-Hajj and from ‘Arafat on the tenth of Dhu Al-Hajj. During their stay here, they complete the remaining rites of Hajj.

‘Arafat

This is also a vast field located about ten kilometers from Mina. It is here that the imam of the Muslims delivers a sermon and then till sunset the pilgrims observe the ceremonial stand (Waquuf).

Muzdalifah

On way to Mina, this is a second field where the pilgrims spend the night on their way back from ‘Arafat. This is situated almost half way between Mina and ‘Arafat. The limits of Haram start from here. For this very reason it is also called ‘ (Al-Mash’ar Al-Haram). In the Qur’an (2:198) also, it is mentioned by this name.

Jamarat

These are three columns situated in the middle of Mina. The largest of these is called Jamrah ‘Aqabah or Jamrah Al-Ukhrah. The second and third are called Jamrah Al-Ula and Jamrah Al-Wusta respectively. After the pilgrims return from ‘Arafat they hurl stones at these columns.

Methodology of Hajj and ‘Umrah
The methodology which has been fixed for Hajj and ‘Umrah by the Shari‘ah is as follows:

‘Umrah

First the Ihram should be put on with the intention of doing ‘Umrah: Those coming from outside Makkah should put on the Ihram from their respective Miqat; locals whether they are Makkans or are temporarily staying in Makkah should put it on from some nearby place located outside the limits of the Haram. And those who live outside the limits of Haram but are located within the Miqat their Miqat is their place of residence. They can put the Ihram from their homes and begin reciting the Talbiyah.

The recital of the Talbiyah should continue till a pilgrim reaches the Baytullah.

Once he arrives there, he should offer the Tawaf of the Baytullah.

Then the Sa‘i should be offered.

If the animals of Hadi accompany a pilgrim, they should then be sacrificed.

After sacrifice, men should shave their heads or have a hair cut and women should cut a small tuft from the end of their hair and then take off their Ihram.

The Ihram is a religious term. It signifies that pilgrims will not indulge in lewd talk; they will not use any adornments and not even use any perfume; they will not cut their nails nor shave or cut any body hair; they will not even remove any dirt or filth from them so much so they will not even kill any lice of their body; they will not hunt preys nor wear stitched cloth; they will expose their heads, faces and the upper part of their feet; they will wear one sheet as loin cloth and enfold another around themselves.

Women, however, can wear stitched clothes and even cover their heads and feet. They are only required to expose their hands and faces.

The Talbiyah implies the constant recital of these words:

لبيك اللهم لبيك لبيك لا شريك لك لبيك

It begins right after putting on the Ihram and continues till a pilgrim reaches the Baytullah. This is the only recital which the Almighty has fixed for Hajj and ‘Umrah.

The Tawaf refers to the seven rounds which are made around the Baytullah in a state of cleanliness. Each of these rounds begins with the Hajari Aswad and ends with it and the Istimlaq of the Hajari Aswad is done at the beginning of each round. It means kissing the Hajari Aswad or touching it with the hands and then kissing the hands. If the place is crowded, a pilgrim can just raise his hands in its direction or even point a stick or something similar towards it.

The Sa‘i refers to the Tawaf of the Safa and Marwah. This also consists of seven rounds which begin with Safa. A
complete round extends from Safa to Marwah. The last round ends on Marwah.

Like animal sacrifice, the Sa’i between the Safa and Marwah is optional. It is not an essential part of the ‘Umrah. The Almighty says:

٨٥١:٢

The Safa and Marwa are indeed two of God’s symbols. So it shall be no offence for those who come for Hajj or ‘Umrah of this Sacred House to walk around them [In fact, this is a virtuous deed] and He that does a virtue of his own will God will accept it and is fully aware of it. (2:158)

The Hadi refers to the animals which have been specifically reserved to be sacrificed in the Haram. In order to make them distinct from other animals their bodies are marked and collars are tied around their necks. For this very reason the Qur’an (5:2 / 5:97) uses the word ‘‘

Hajj

Like the ‘Umrah, the Hajj too begins with the Ihram. Consequently, the first thing that a pilgrim must do is to put on the Ihram with the intention of offering Hajj. Those coming from outside Makkah should put on the Ihram from their respective Miqat; locals whether they are Makkans or are temporarily staying in Makkah or live outside the limits of Haram but are located within the Miqat should put it on at their place of residence. This is their Miqat. They can put the Ihram from their homes and begin reciting the Talbiyah.

Pilgrims should go to Mina on the eighth of Dhu Al-Hijjah and reside there.

They should go to ‘Arafat on the ninth of Dhu Al-Hijjah. At ‘Arafat the imam will deliver the sermon before the Zuhr prayer and the prayers of Zuhr and ‘Asr shall be offered by combining and shortening them.

After the prayer, pilgrims should celebrate the glory of their Lord and express their gratitude to Him, express His exaltedness and oneness and invoke and beseech Him as much as they can.

They should set off for Muzdalifah after sunset.

After arriving at Muzdalifah, the pilgrims should offer the prayers of Maghrib and ‘Isha by combining and shortening them.

The night must be spent at the field of Muzdalifah.

After the Fajr prayer, the pilgrims for some time should celebrate the glory of their Lord and express their gratitude to Him, express His exaltedness and oneness and invoke and beseech Him – just as they did at ‘Arafat.

Then they should leave for Mina and once they reach the Jamra’ ‘Aqabah they should stop reciting the Talbiyah and pelt this Jamrah with seven stones.
If the pilgrims have brought forth the Hadi or if it has become incumbent upon them to sacrifice animals which have been devoted or which are a means of atonement, then these should be sacrificed.

After sacrifice, men should shave their heads or have a hair cut and women should cut a small tuft from the end of their hair and then take off their Ihram.

After that the pilgrims should set off for the Baytullah and offer the Tawaf.

With this, all restrictions which the Ihram entails shall be lifted. After that, if a pilgrim wants, he can offer the Sa’i of the Safa and the Marwah – though this is optional.

Then they should go back to Mina and stay there for two or three days and then everyday pelt first the first Jamrah, then the middle one and then the last one with seven stones each.

Ever since the times of Abraham (sws), these are the rites (Manasik) of Hajj and ‘Umrah. The Qur’an has made no change in them; it has only explained certain issues which arose – issues about which there was no clear directive given previously.

These issues are five in number:

The first of them is that showing reverence to whatever has been declared sacred by the Almighty regarding Hajj and ‘Umrah is a requirement of faith. This should be expressed and followed at all costs. If some other group violates this sanctity, Muslims too have the right to retaliate on equal footings. The reason is that keeping intact the sanctities ordained by the Almighty is a two way practice. One member of the pact cannot just maintain it on its own. The Almighty says:

اﻟﺸﱠﮭْﺮُ اﻟْﺤَﺮَامُ ﺑِﺎﻟﺸﱠﮭْﺮِ اﻟْﺤَﺮَامِ وَاﻟْﺤُﺮُﻣَﺎتُ ﻗِﺼَﺎصٌ ﻓَﻤَﻦْ اﻋْﺘَﺪَى ﻋَﻠَﯿْﻜُﻢْ ﻓَﺎﻋْﺘَﺪُوا ﻋَﻠَﯿْﮫِ ﺑِﻤِﺜْﻞِ ﻣَﺎ اﻋْﺘَﺪَى ﻋَﻠَﯿْﻜُﻢْ وَاﺗﱠﻘُﻮا ﷲﱠَ وَاﻋْﻠَﻤُﻮا أَنﱠ ﷲﱠَ ﻣَﻊَ اﻟْﻤُﺘﱠﻘِﯿﻦَ (2:194)

A sacred month for a sacred month; [similarly] other sacred things too are subject to retaliation. So if anyone transgresses against you, you should also pay back in equal coins. Have fear of Allah and keep in mind that Allah is with those who remain within the bounds [stipulated by religion]. (2:194)

While explaining this verse, Imam Amin Ahsan Islahi, writes:

This verse implies that fighting in the forbidden months or fighting within the boundaries of the Haram is a big sin. However, if the disbelievers disregard their sanctity, Muslims on account of Qisas also have the right to strip them of the protection that these sacred entities afford them. The life of every person carries great sanctity in the eyes of the Shari’ah. However, when a person violates this sanctity and kills someone, then he himself will be deprived of the right of sanctity of his own life to avenge his own deed. Similarly, the sanctity of the forbidden months and of the Haram itself shall be upheld in all circumstances on the condition that the disbelievers also uphold it and do not oppress and tyrannize people during this time. However, if they unsheathe their swords in the forbidden months and in the sacred land of Makkah, then on account of Qisas they themselves deserve to be divested of the protection these months and this land hold for them. The verse goes on to say that just as the taking of Qisas for
the forbidden months is necessary, the Qisas of other sacred entities must also be taken. In other words, if the disbelievers deprive Muslims of the right of protection that certain sacred things hold for them, Muslims too have the right as a result of Qisas to pay them back in equal coins or measure.21

Secondly, in spite of the permission for war, Muslims cannot take any initiative in violating the sanctities. These are the sanctities ordained by God and taking the initiative in violating them is a grave sin. In no circumstances should this happen. An attack on the Sacred House is an attack on the House of God; harming the animals which are marked for sacrifice to God and the people who have travelled to seek the bounty and pleasure of their Lord is like going after God. Hence, even animosity towards a nation should not lead Muslims to violate the limits in this regard. It should remain clear to them the Almighty is stern in retribution for those who break promises and covenants – promises which He had made with people as a favour and as a means to grant them dominance:

Believers, do not violate the symbols of God, or the sacred months, or the animals of Hadi or [specifically those among them] who are marked with collars of devotion or those who have set out for this House to seek God’s grace and pleasure ... And if some people have stopped you from coming to the Sacred House, your animosity against them should not incite you so much that you cross the limits of the Almighty. [No, you must abide by these limits] and help one another in what is virtuous and pious and not in what is wicked and sinful. Have fear of God because God is stern in retribution. (5:2)

God has made the Ka'bah, the Sacred House, a centre for the people and the sacred months, and the sacrificial animals and [especially those among] the animals which [as symbols] are adorned with collars devoted [to Allah]. This is because you may know God has knowledge of all that the heavens and the earth. Beware that God is stern in retribution, and that God is Forgiving and Merciful. (5:97-98)

The third issue is that the prohibition of hunting while a pilgrim is wearing the Ihram is only for animals of the land. Hunting sea animals or eating sea animal which have been hunted by others is allowed. This lenience is because if provisions become scarce in land travel they can be obtained by one way or another but in sea travel there is no option but to hunt animals. However, this permission does not mean that people wrongfully benefit from it. The prey hunted on land is prohibited in all circumstances. So if a person deliberately commits such a sin then he must atone for it.

There are three ways for this atonement:

A similar household quadruped animal to that which has been hunted should be sent to the Baytullah for sacrifice. If this is not possible then the price of such an animal should be calculated and the amount spent to feed the poor.
If even this is not possible then a person should fast; the number of these fasts should be equivalent to the number of poor a person has become liable to feed.

As far as the decision is concerned regarding the type of animal to be sacrificed in return, or if this is not possible then the determination of the price of such an animal or the number of poor which should be fed or the number of fasts which should be kept, it shall be made by two trustworthy Muslims so that no chance remains for the sinner to succumb to a wrong judgement:

Believers, God will definitely try you through the prey which you can catch with your hands or with your spears in order to see who fear Him without observing Him. Then he who transgresses even after this warning shall be sternly punished. Believers! do not hunt while wearing the Ihram and anyone of you who deliberately does so, then he should sacrifice a similar animal in return to the one he had killed. This decision shall be made by two just men among you and this offering shall be sent to the Baytullah or he shall, in expiation, either feed the poor or fast a similar number so that he may taste the evil consequences of his deed. God has forgiven what has been done in the past but if anyone relapses into wrongdoing God will avenge Himself on him. [This is the decision of God] and God is Mighty and Capable of revenge. Lawful for you is the prey you catch from the sea and the sustenance it provides; a wholesome food, for you and for the seafarer. But you are forbidden the prey hunted on land as long as you are wearing the Ihram. Have fear of God, before whom you shall all be assembled. (5:94-96)

The fourth issue is that if the pilgrims are not able to reach the Sacred House and are stranded somewhere they can sacrifice a camel, cow or a goat and after shaving their heads they can take off their Ihram. This will complete their Hajj and ‘Umrah. On the occasion of the truce of Hudaybiyyah, this is precisely what the Prophet (sws) did. However, this much should remain clear that whether the sacrifice is offered on such compelling occasions or in Makkah or Mina, shaving the head is not permissible before it. The only exception to this is if a person is sick or he has some ailment in his head and he is forced to shave his head before animal sacrifice. The Qur’an has allowed the pilgrims to do so in such circumstances but they should atone for this in the form of keeping fasts, or spending in the way of God or sacrificing an animal(s). The amounts of these acts of atonement are left to their own discretion. It is narrated that when the Prophet (sws) was asked about these amounts, he replied: ‘it would suffice if either a person fasts for three days, or feeds six poor people or sacrifices a goat’.23

And [if the way to] Hajj and ‘Umrah [is opened to you, offer them with all their rites] for God only. But if you are stranded on the way sacrifice whatever offering is available to you and do not shave your heads until the offerings have reached their destination. But if any of you is ill or suffers from an ailment of the head, he must atone for this either by fasting or by spending in the way of God or by offering a sacrifice. (2:196)
The fifth issue is that if those who have come from outside want to combine the Hajj with the ‘Umrah in one journey, they can do so. The way to do this is that they should first take off the Ihram after offering the ‘Umrah. Then they should again put it on the eighth of Dhu Al-Hijj and then offer Hajj. This is a mere lenience which the Almighty has provided the pilgrims to save themselves of the bother of two journeys. Thus they will atone for benefiting from this lenience. There are two ways for this:

They should offer the sacrifice of whatever animal is available to them from a camel, cow or goat.

If this is not possible, then they should fast for ten days: three during their Hajj stay and seven when they return.

It is evident from the above explanation that what is pleasing in the sight of God is that one should make separate journeys for Hajj and ‘Umrah. Thus the Qur’an has clarified that this lenience is not for those whose houses are near the Sacred Mosque:

Then in peacetime anyone among you who benefits from the ‘Umrah till the time of Hajj arrives, he should sacrifice any animal that is available; and if it is not available, he should fast for three days during the Hajj and seven when he has returned. These are ten days in all. This [lenience of combining Hajj with ‘Umrah in a single journey] is only for those whose houses are not located near the Sacred Mosque. [Follow this directive] and have fear of God and know well that God is stern in retribution. (2:196)

It should remain clear that those who want to avail this rebate, they are not required to bring the Hadi animals along with them; they can buy them from there on the day of sacrifice. The reason for this is that these animals shall be sacrificed on the 10th of Dhu Al-Hijj and as is evident from the above discussion they cannot shave their heads unless this sacrifice takes place; as a natural consequence of this they would not be able to take off their Ihram. At the occasion of the last Hajj, the Prophet (sws) faced this very situation. Consequently, he is reported to have said:

Had what has now become evident to me become evident earlier, I would not have brought the Hadi animals along and if I had not brought them, I would have been able to take off my Ihram. (Bukhari, No: 2505)

Guidance provided by the Prophet (sws)

The previous discussion covers the directives of Hajj and ‘Umrah. However, the guidance we receive from the practices of the Prophet (sws) in this regard is as follows:

Ihram

When putting on the Ihram, the Prophet (sws) would sprinkle some perfume on himself. A’ishah (rta) narrates that
she sprinkled the perfume of musk on him before he put on the Ihram and also on the 10th of Dhu Al-Hijj after he took off the Ihram when he departed to Makkah to offer the Tawaf. She is reported to have said: ‘Even today, I see the glow [of the powder] of the fragrance where his hair parts’. 24

While wearing the Ihram, the Prophet (sws) had scarification done, had his hair set and also washed his head.25 He also allowed people to tear their socks from below and use them as shoes in case they did not have shoes to wear and also allowed them to wear shalwar or pajamah in case they did not have unstitched cloth.26

He did not approve of a person getting married or a person having someone get married or finalizing a marriage while wearing the Ihram.27

If a person dies in the state of Ihram, the Prophet (sws) has directed people to bury him in this state and has stopped people from sprinkling perfume on him or covering his head or face while burying him. He informed us that Allah will raise such a person on the Day of Judgement while that person is reciting the Talbiyah.28

He similarly explained that no doubt hunting animals is forbidden in the state of Ihram; however, such a person can eat the animal which has been killed by someone who is not wearing the Ihram on the condition that he did not suggest or indicate to him to hunt down the prey.29 He also explained that this prohibition of hunting animals does not relate to harmful and dangerous animals. Such animals can be killed in the state of Ihram without any hesitation.30

**Talbiyah**

Regarding the Talbiyah, the Prophet (sws) is reported to have said: ‘This is a symbol (shi’ar) of Hajj’31 and when a Muslim utters the words: ‘لَبِّيْكَ،’ then the trees and stones to the right and left of him till the end of the earth also say these words’.32 Consequently, he is reported to have said: ‘Gabriel the trustworthy has directed me that these words should be said loudly’.33

It is evident from certain narratives that he would add words of similar meanings to the Talbiyah. Ibn ‘Umar (rta) reports that when the Prophet (sws) would go out for Hajj and ‘Umrah he would pray two Rak’ats at Dhu Al-Hulayfah, then would get on a camel near the mosque; when the camel would stop, he would begin the Talbiyah with the following prayer34:

لَبِّيْكَ اللَّهُمَّ لَبِّيْكَ وَ سَعْدُيْلُلْحَدِيرِ فِي يَدِيْكَ وَ الرُّغَمُ إِلَيْكَ وَ الْعَمَلُ

I am present; O lord I am present; I am present and receive good fortune from this very presence; the good is only in Your hand; I am present and inclination is towards You alone and deeds are for You only.

Likewise, on a similar occasion, the words which have been reported are: 35

**Tawaf**

There is only one Tawaf of Hajj which is called the Tawafi Ifadah; however, the Prophet (sws) has directed the pilgrims to offer another Tawaf after offering Hajj and ‘Umrah before they return to their homes. Ibn ‘Abbas
narrates that the Prophet (sws) is reported to have said that before departing the last thing everyone of you should do is this.36 Women, however, who are passing through their menstrual cycles have been exempted by him from this and have been permitted to depart from Makkah without offering it.37

Before beginning the Tawaf, the Prophet (sws) did Wudu38 and said that the Tawaf is like the prayer but if any one wants to say something during it he can; however, he should say what is good.39

A’ishah (rta) narrates the she was having her menstrual cycle and the Prophet said: ‘In this state you can offer all the rites of Hajj except the Tawaf.40

Umm Salamah (rta) says: ‘I was ill; when the Prophet (sws) was told of this, he asked me to offer Tawaf on a conveyance.41

Jabir Ibn ‘Abdullah (rta) says that when the Prophet offered the first Tawaf after reaching Makkah, he ran in the first three rounds while shaking his shoulders and the four remaining rounds he walked the way he used to walk.42 Then he advanced towards the Maqami Ibrahim and offered two Rak’ats while standing behind it; he then came back towards the Hajari Aswad and did the Istilam and went off towards Safa from the door.43

Ibn ‘Abbas (rta) narrates that during this Tawaf, his right shoulder was uncovered and he had covered his left shoulder after inserting the [ihram] cloth through his right armpit.44

Some narratives also mention that he did the Istilam of the Rukn Yamani during the Tawaf.45

Similarly, among the blessings of the Tawaf as recorded in certain narratives is that he who did Tawaf and then also offered two Rak’ats, it was as if he emancipated a slave in the way of God.46

Sa’i

The manner in which the Prophet (sws) offered the Sa’i was that once he was through with the Tawaf, he went off towards Safa and climbed right to its top; then he faced the Qiblah and declared the oneness and sovereignty of Allah and declared:

لا إله إلا الله وحده، لا شريك له، له الملك وله الحمد، و هو على كل شئ قدير، لا إله إلا الله وحده، و هو الرب الحكيم العليم

There is no God but Allah; He is alone; no one is His partner; sovereignty is His and all praise and gratitude also is His and He has power on everything. There is no God but Allah; He is alone; He has fulfilled His promise and has helped His servant and alone has defeated all groups who have rejected [the truth].47

He repeated these words three times and in between, he also invoked the Almighty each time. Then he set off for Marwah and when his feet touched the slope, he started to run and as soon as he reached the incline, he reverted to his own gait. At Marwah, he repeated what he did at Safa and in this manner completed seven rounds.48

Waqaf at ‘Arafat
The Prophet (sws) set off for ‘Arafat from Mina after sunrise on the 9th of Dhu Al-Hajj. There a camp had been erected for him in the valley of Namrah. He resided in this camp till the sun started to decline (Zuhr time). Then he came to the lower part of the valley and delivered a sermon to the people. Following this, he offered the Zuhr and the ‘Asr prayers with one Adhan and two Takbirs. He did not offer the optional prayer either before or after them. Then near the Jabli Rahmat he stood while facing the Qiblah invoking and beseeching the Almighty till sunset. Anas (rta) reports that on that day people kept reciting the Talbiyah and also the Takbirs but no objection was raised against these practices.

A’ishah (rta) narrates from the Prophet (sws): ‘On the day of ‘Arafah, the Almighty is near His people; He expresses His pride about them and does not liberate His servants from Fire anymore than this day’.

Stay at Muzdalifah

At Muzdalifah also, the Prophet (sww) offered the Maghrib and ‘Isha prayers with one Adhan and two Takbirs, the way he had offered the Zuhr and the ‘Asr prayers at ‘Arafat. Then he rested till dawn and did not offer any optional prayers. However, he offered the Fajr prayer a little early. He then stood by the Mash’ar al-Haram kept invoking and beseeching the Almighty till the day fully dawned. Just before sunrise, he set off from there and reached Mina while briskly crossing the valley of Muhassar.

Rami

The Prophet (sws) did Rami at mid morning on the day of sacrifice and on the other days when the sun started to decline. For this he faced the Jamrah with the Sacred Mosque on His left and Mina on his right. Then he hurled seven pebbles and recited the Takbir each time he threw a pebble. He also did Wuquf (the ceremonial stand) near the first two Jamrahs and after Rami expressing his gratitude to Him, declaring His exaltedness and oneness and invoking and beseeching Him for long. However, he did not stand near the last Jamrah.

At this occasion and on the eighth of Dhu Al-Hajj also when he came to Makkah from Mina, he shortened all his prayers as long as he stayed here.

When certain shepherds of the area asked permission to spend the night with their herds instead of spending it at Mina, the Prophet (sws) allowed them to do so and said: ‘After hurling pebbles on the day of sacrifice, you can hurl the pebbles of the two days on one day’.

Animal Sacrifice

He offered animal sacrifice in the usual way. However, a question arose that if the animals of Hadi came near death during the way, then what should be done? It is narrated by Ibn ‘Abbas (rta) that when a person who had sent sacrificial camels inquired from the Prophet (sws), he answered: ‘Slaughter them and dip their hooves in blood and place them near the humps and then neither you nor your associates should eat their meat’.

Halq

On the occasion of the final Hajj, the Prophet himself had his head shaved (Halq) and some of the Companions (rta)
also preferred it. Ibn ‘Umar (rta) narrates that the Prophet (sws) prayed three times for those who had shaved their heads and once for those who had hair cuts.

This practice of the Prophet (sws) is an indication that the reward of shaving the head is more than just having a hair cut.

There are certain other things that have been reported in certain narratives:

1. A lady raised her child towards the Prophet (sws) and said: ‘Can he also offer the Hajj?’ The Prophet (sws) replied: ‘Yes, but the reward of this Hajj shall go to you’.

2. A lady from the tribe of Kath’am asked: ‘O Messenger of God! The Hajj is obligatory upon my father but he is so old that he cannot even sit on an animal of conveyance; can I offer the Hajj for him’. The Prophet (sws) replied: ‘Yes’.

3. A lady from the tribe of Juhaynah inquired from the Prophet (sws): ‘My mother had vowed to offer the Hajj; now she has died; can I offer it for her’. He replied: ‘You should certainly offer it; would you not have paid back a loan she had borrowed? This is a loan taken from God; so pay it back and the obligation to pay back the loan to God is more [than any other]’.

4. Once a person uttered these words before the Prophet (sws): ‘The Prophet (sws) inquired: ‘Who is this Shubrumah’. He said: ‘He is my brother’. The Prophet (sws) asked: ‘Have you offered your own Hajj’. He said: ‘No’. The Prophet (sws) then remarked: ‘First do your own Hajj and then do it on behalf of Shubrumah’.

5. On the occasion of the final Hajj while the Prophet (sws) was at Mina, he stood to answer questions raised by the people, someone asked: ‘I did not know [the right sequence] so I have shaved my head before offering the sacrifice?’ The Prophet (sws) replied: ‘Not to worry; offer the sacrifice now’. Another person asked: ‘I did not know [the right sequence] and I have offered the sacrifice before doing the Rami. The Prophet (sws) remarked: ‘Do the Rami now; not to worry’. In general whenever he was asked about what should be done if a rite had been offered before or after its appointed time, he said these same words: ‘Not to worry; do it now’.

6. The Prophet (sws) always warned people about the sanctity of Madinah that just as Abraham (sws) had classified Makkah as sacred, he had also classified Madinah. Therefore, no one should shed blood of any person within the two limits of the city nor should he hunt animals nor pick up weapons for war nor shake off the leaves of a tree except if the intention is to feed animals.

The Prophet (sws) is similarly reported to have said: ‘Any person who was guilty of any religious innovation in the city of Madinah or offered residence to those who are guilty of this, then the curse of God, his angels and all mankind be on him’.

7. The Prophet (sws) said that praying in his mosque at Madinah earns more reward than a thousand prayers offered in other mosques except the Sacred Mosque at Makkah. Regarding the space between his house and the sermon pulpit he said that this is an orchard from among the orchards of Paradise and also said: ‘My pulpit is right
at the place where the fountain will be on the Day of Judgement’.69

(Translated by Shehzad Saleem from Ghamidi’s ‘Qanun i ‘Ibadat’)

1. Ibn Kathir, Tafsir Al-Qur’an Al-Azim, vol., 3, p. 216

2. Bukhari, No: 26 / Muslim, No: 135

3. Bukhari, No: 1723 / Muslim, No: 1350

4. Bukhari, No: 1683 / Muslim, No: 1349

5. This incident is before Muhammad (sws) was assigned Prophethood. However, since it has been narrated by Jubayr Ibn Mut’im after he had embraced Islam, the word Prophet has been used by him.

6. Bukhari, No: 1604 / Muslim, No: 1322

7. Deuteronomy, 14:7


10. Ibid., p. 390

11. Ibid., p. 359

12. Ibn Hisham, Sirah Nabawiyyah, vol., 1, pp. 93-104


17. The portion left outside the structure of the building is called the ‘Hatim’.
18. *Bukhari*, No: 1506, 1508 / *Muslim*, No: 1333
22. *Bukhari*, No: 1807, 1811, 1812
25. *Bukhari*, No: 1835, 1540, 1840 / *Muslim*, No: 1202, 1184, 1205
27. *Muslim*, No: 1409
31. *Ibn Majah*, No: 2923
32. *Ibn Majah*, No: 2921
33. *Abu Da’ud*, No: 1814
34. *Muslim*, No: 1184
35. *Ibn Majah*, No: 2920
36. *Muslim*, No: 1137
38. *Bukhari*, No: 1614 / *Muslim*, No: 1235
39. Tirmadhi, No: 960
40. *Bukhari*, No: 294 / *Muslim*, No: 1211

41. *Bukhari*, No: 464 / *Muslim*, No: 1276

42. Ibn ‘Abbas (rta) interpreted this practice of the Prophet by opining that when *Muslims* reached Madinah, they were taunted for becoming physically weak. In return, the Prophet (sws) directed the people to offer the Tawaf while running in this manner and he himself offered it in this manner too.

43. *Muslim*, No: 1218

44. *Abu Da’ud*, No: 1884, 1889

45. *Bukhari*, No: 1606, 609 / *Muslim*, No: 1267, 1268

46. *Ibn Majah*, No: 2956

47. *Muslim*, No: 1218

48. *Muslim*, No: 1218

49. *Muslim*, No: 1218

50. *Bukhari*, No: 970 / *Muslim*, No: 1285

51. *Muslim*, No: 1348

52. *Muslim*, No: 1218

53. *Bukhari*, No: 1746 / *Muslim*, No: 1299


55. *Bukhari*, Nos: 1655, 1656

56. *Abu Da’ud*, No: 1976

57. This he said in order to clarify to the on comers that this animal has been sacrificed in the proper way and is thus Halal and is not carrion.

58. *Muslim*, No: 1325. It is evident from this directive of the Prophet (sws) that he liked that all the meat of such animals be reserved for the poor.

For every community We have ordained the ritual of sacrifice so that they may pronounce the name of God over the cattle which He has blessed them with because your God is one God; so surrender yourselves to Him. [But this will only be done by those whose hearts are bowed down before their God] and [O Prophet (sws)! Give glad tidings [from their Almighty] to these who bow down. (22:34)
In all the ancient religions of the world, the ritual of animal sacrifice has remained a great means of attaining the nearness of the Almighty. Its essence is the same as that of the Zakah, but it is not to be regarded as analogous to wealth; it is essentially a vow of pledging one’s life and is fulfilled by the animal we sacrifice on behalf of our life. Seemingly, this is like presenting ourselves to death, but a little deliberation shows that this death is the door to real life. The Qur’an at one place says: ‘And do not say that those slain in this cause of God are dead; [they are not dead; in fact] they are alive, but you are not aware of [the manner they live]. (2:154)’

At one instance, the Qur’an by placing the prayer in comparison to life and the sacrifice in comparison to death has referred to this very aspect: just as the prayer is like life in the way of God, the sacrifice is like death in His way:

Say: ‘My prayer and my sacrifice, my life and my death, are all for God, Lord of the Universe. (6:162)’

When Abraham (sws) was directed to sacrifice a ram in place of his son and to commemorate this great sacrifice make it a living tradition for the coming generations, the Almighty said: ‘And We ransomed Ishmael for a great sacrifice; (37:107)). The implication of these words was that the vow made by Abraham (sws) had been accepted by the Almighty and now generation after generation, people would commemorate this great incident by sacrificing animals.

Viewed thus, the sacrifice is the pinnacle of worship. When we make an animal stand or bow down 1 in the direction of the Baytullah and also direct our own face towards the House of God and present the sacrificed animal as an offering to God by saying2: ‘bury��َسْمَ！」، we are actually offering our own selves to God.

This offering is the essence of Islam because the meaning of Islam is that one should surrender to God and submit his most prized possession – so much so, his own life – to Him.

A little deliberation shows that the sacrifice is a portrayal of this essence. When Abraham (sws) and his great son Ishmael presented themselves to God, the Qur’an called this submission as ‘Islam’: ‘إذا أسلموا وَنَقُلْ اَلْجَبِينَ (37:103)). It is worth noting that in the above quoted verses of Surah Hajj the words ‘buryُأَسْلِمُوا وَيَشَّرْ انْحَذَبْتُمْ’ very aptly point to this essence. The implication is that if our hearts are bowed down before our God then we should submit ourselves to Him because our God is one God. This is the very essence of sacrifice and the Almighty has made it part of the Shari’ah so that people can especially express their gratitude to Him; therefore, no one should associate partners with Him.

History of the Sacrifice

The history of sacrifice begins with Adam (sws). According to the Qur’an, when two of his sons, Abel and Cain, presented their offerings to the Almighty, one of them was accepted and the other was not (27:5): ‘buryلاَتْ اَنْحَذَبْتُمْ وَلَمْ يْقْلِلْ مِنَ الْأَحْيَاءِ’ explicitly mentioned in the Bible that Able on this occasion had offered the sacrifice
of the first born of his goats:

Adam lay with his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. She said, ‘With the help of the LORD I have brought forth a man’. Later she gave birth to his brother Abel. Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil. In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the LORD. But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. (Genesis 4:1-5)

This practice quite evidently must have continued later also. Consequently, there exist signs and remnants in all ancient religions which corroborate this fact. However, the way this worship ritual has increased in its importance, grandeur and scope after the sacrifice of Abraham (sws), it has become unprecedented. The details of the sacrifice offered by him are as follows:

When he migrated from his people thinking that there was no hope for them to accept faith, he prayed to God to bless him with virtuous children. This prayer was accepted and the Almighty gave him glad tidings of the birth of a son. Ishmael (sws) was this son. According to the Qur’an, when he grew up and started to run and walk about his father, Abraham (sws) saw a dream in which he was being directed to sacrifice his son to the Almighty. Although this directive was given in a dream and dreams need to be interpreted – and the interpretation of such a dream was that he should devote his son to the Almighty for the service of the House of God and it did not certainly mean that he was required to slaughter his son – this mighty and virtuous servant of God decided to follow the dream without interpreting what it implied. The first step he took in the implementation of this directive was that he informed his son of this dream in order to test his mettle and resolve. The son deeming it to be the directive of the Almighty immediately told his father to comply with it without any hesitation and attested that he was fully ready and prepared for the step. Being satisfied with the answer of the son, Abraham (sws) took him to the hill of Marwah and made him lie down on his temples so that he could be sacrificed. He was about to slit his throat with a knife when a voice spoke to him: ‘O Abraham! You have made your dream come true; this was a great trial and you have succeeded in it; no need to proceed now’. Consequently, the Almighty ransomed Ishmael for the sacrifice of a ram and to commemorate this incident the ritual of sacrifice was instituted as a great tradition to be carried out on the same day each year. It is this sacrifice that we offer with fervour and enthusiasm on the occasions of the Hajj and ‘Umrah and on the ‘Id of Al-Adha. The Qur’an says:

They said: ‘Build up a pyre and cast him into the blazing fire’. Thus they tried to scheme against him; but We defeated them. And [when Abraham saw this,] He said: ‘I will take refuge with my Lord; He will give me guidance. Lord, grant me a righteous son’. [When he finished praying] We gave him news of a forbearing son. And when he reached the age when he could work with him, [one day] his father said to him: ‘My son, I dream that I am slaughtering you. Tell me what you think’. He replied: ‘Father, do as you are bidden. God willing, you shall find me steadfast.’ And when at last both submitted to God, and Abraham had laid down his son prostrate upon his temples and We called out to him, saying: ‘Abraham, you have fulfilled your dream’. Thus do We reward the righteous. This was indeed an open trial. [Abraham succeeded in it] and [as a result], We ransomed his son with a
noble sacrifice. (37:97-107)

The Objective of Sacrifice

The objective of sacrifice is to express gratitude to the Almighty. When we offer our life symbolically to the Almighty by offering the sacrifice of an animal, we are in fact expressing our gratitude on the guidance of submission which was expressed by Abraham (sws) by sacrificing his only son. On this occasion, the words uttered to declare the exaltedness and oneness of the Almighty are done so for this very objective. The Qur'an has explained this directive in the following words:

\[
لَنْ يَنَالَ ﷲﱠَ ﻟُﺤُﻮﻣُﮭَﺎ وَﻻَ ﺷِﻤَﺄْوُھَﺎ وَﻟَﻜِﻦَ يَنَالُﮫُ اﻟﺘﱠﻘْﻮَى ﻣِﻨَﻜُﻢْ ﺳَﺨﱠﺮَھَﺎ ﻟَﻜُ ﻟِﺘُﻜَﺒﱢﺮُوا ﷲﱠَ ﻋَﻠَﻰ ﻣَﺎ ھَﺪَاﻛُﻢْ وَﺑَﺸﱢﺮِ اﻟْﻤُﺤْﺴِﻨِﯿﻦَ (22:37)
\]

The flesh and blood [of your sacrificed animals] does not reach God; it is only your piety that reaches Him. Thus has He subjected them to your service so that you may give glory to God for guiding you. [This is the way of the righteous] and [O Prophet!] give glad tidings to these righteous. (22:37)

The Shari’ah regarding Animal Sacrifice

The Shari’ah regarding animal sacrifice that has reached us through the consensus and perpetual practice of the Ummah can be stated thus:

1. All four legged animals which are cattle can be sacrificed.

2. Sacrificed animals should not be flawed and should be of appropriate age.

3. The time of animal sacrifice begins after offering the ‘Id prayer on the 10th of Dhu Al-Hajj (Yawm Al-Nahr)

4. The days fixed for animal sacrifice are the same as have been appointed for the stay at Mina once the pilgrims return from Muzdalifah. In Surah Hajj, the words ‘أَﯾﱠﺎمٍ ﻣﱠﻊْﻠُﻮﻣَﺎتٍ’ (some appointed days (22:28)) allude to these very days. In religious parlance, they are called ‘The Days of Tashriq’. Besides animal sacrifice in these days, one is also required to declare the ‘Takbir’ at the end of each congregational prayer. Being an absolute directive, the words of the ‘Takbir’ have not been fixed.

5. The meat of sacrificed animals can also be eaten without any hesitation by those have had them slaughtered and can also be used to feed others. The words: ‘فَ(626,662),(671,717)*مِّﻨِّیَا وَأَطْﻌِمْوا اﻟﻠِّدوريّ’ (So eat from it your selves and also feed those who are content and those who ask (22:37)) explicitly point to this conclusion.

This is the Shari’ah of animal sacrifice. The Prophet (sws) has also explained some of its aspects:

i. Animals should be sacrificed in all circumstances after the ‘Id prayer. It will not be regarded as the sacrifice of ‘Id if it is offered before the ‘Id prayer; it will be a mere animal sacrifice that one may offer to eat meet.
ii. The appropriate age for a sacrificed sheep or goat is at least one year, for that of a cow, it is at least two years and for camels, male or female, it is at least five years. If these animals are not available, a ram can be sacrificed. It will suffice even if it is six months old.4

iii. More than one people can share the sacrifice of camels and cows. These share holders can even go up to seven. There are some narratives which mention that at one instance in the presence of the Prophet (sws), ten people shared one camel for sacrifice and he did not stop them.5

iv. Animal sacrifice can also be offered as an optional act of worship other than on ‘Id. Consequently, when people asked about the ‘Aqiqah, the Prophet (sws) replied: ‘Anyone who wants to offer an animal for sacrifice on the birth of a child can do so’.6

(Translated by Shehzad Saleem from Ghamidi’s ‘Qanun i ‘Ibadat’)

1. In case of Nahar, the animal is made to stand and in case of Dhibh we lay it in the direction of the Baytullah.

2. Bukhari, No: 5565 / Muslim, No: 1966


4. Muslim, No: 1963 / Abu Da’ud, No: 2799

5. Abu Da’ud, No: 2808 / Tirmadhi, No: 1501

6. Mu’atta’, No: 1066

When does Hajj become Obligatory?

Worship

Question asked by .

Answered by Shehzad Saleem
Question:

When does Hajj become obligatory on a Muslim? If a person has gathered some money by which he/she can easily perform Hajj, is it allowed for him/her to spend that money on some other account, for example to go for higher education? Please elaborate.

Answer:

In this regard, the Qur’an has guided us in the following words:

And for those who have the resources to reach there – [the House of their Lord] – on them is an obligation to perform for Allah the Hajj of this House. (3:97)

Keeping in view the Arabic word Istata’ah (resources), sense and reason demand that, except in extraordinary circumstances, as soon as a person has arranged for his basic necessities of life like food, clothing, health, house, transport, and education, he should try to raise money for offering Hajj. He should also plan to take time off from the daily routine of life for this all important undertaking. The importance Hajj has as a form of worship ritual entails that one should plan to collect money specifically for this purpose and should embark upon this sacred journey whenever it is possible for him.

The whole event of Hajj has a deep symbolic significance and if performed with sincerity and spirit, cleanses a person from all his sins. The Prophet (sws) is reported to have said:

Abu Hurayrah narrates: ‘If someone offers Hajj during which he abstained completely from lewd talk and did not indulge into any act of disobedience of Allah, he will be rid of all his sins and become as pure as he was on the day he was born’. (Bukhari, Kitabu’l-Hajj)

A believer should yearn for such opportunities, for purifying the soul is the objective of Islam – something which will lead him to the life of bliss in the Hereafter. As such, saving money for Hajj should be among his goals. The current practice of waiting to go for Hajj when one grows old seems to be against the spirit of worship. The Prophet (sws) is reported to have remarked:

He who intends to go for Hajj should do it as soon as is possible for him. (Abu Da’u d: Kitabu’l-Manasik)

The money collected for Hajj can be used for other purposes if any unavoidable need arises.

Which Son did Abraham (sws) offer for Sacrifice?
Question:

I am a Muslim and I have a friend who is a new Muslim. He wanted to know the name of Abraham’s sacrificed son. The Bible says it was Isaac (sws). Is this true?

Answer:

Without doubt, the son offered for sacrifice by Abraham (sws) was Ishmael (sws). The Qur’an bears reference to this established historical fact in the following words:

And he [—Abraham—] said [after being saved from the fire]: ‘Verily, I am going to my Lord. He will guide me!’ ‘My Lord! Grant me (offspring) from the righteous.’ So We gave him glad tidings of a forbearing boy. And, when he [his son] was old enough to walk with him, he said: ‘O my son! I have been seeing in a dream that I am offering you in sacrifice [to Allah]. So look what you think!’ He said: ‘O my father! Do that which you are commanded, Insha Allah, you shall find me of the patient. Then, when they had both submitted themselves [to the will of Allah], and he had laid him prostrate on his forehead, We called out to him: ‘O Abraham! You have made the dream a reality’. Verily, thus do We reward the good-doers. Verily, that indeed was a manifest trial. And We ransomed him with a great sacrifice [a ram]; And We left for him [a goodly remembrance] among the later generations. Peace be upon Abraham! Thus indeed do We reward the good-doers. Verily, he was one of Our believing slaves. And We gave him the glad tidings of Isaac – a Prophet from the righteous. (37:99-112)

The underlined portion of the passage clearly shows that glad tidings of the birth of Isaac (sws) were given to Abraham (sws) after he had already offered his first born son for sacrifice. In other words, the italicized verse: ‘So We gave him the glad tidings of a forbearing boy’, and all that has been narrated after this verse refer to Ishmael (sws).

As far as the Bible is concerned, it, as your friend has pointed out, does mention a different story: In one of the most blatant examples of interpolation, the Jews have inserted the name of Isaac (sws) in place of Ishmael (sws) to cut off the relationship of Muhammad (sws) with Arabia and his great ancestor Abraham (sws).

However, in spite of this tampering, the Bible contains passages which still point to Ishmael (sws) as the son offered for sacrifice. The passage which mentions the incident of sacrifice in the Bible reads:

Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, ‘Abraham!’ ‘Here I am,’ he replied. Then God said, ‘Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah.'
Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about.’ Early the next morning Abraham got up and saddled his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about. On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. He said to his servants, ‘Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you.’ Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them went on together, Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham, ‘Father?’ Yes, my son?’ Abraham replied. ‘The fire and wood are here,’ Isaac said, ‘but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?’ Abraham answered, ‘God Himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.’ And the two of them went on together. When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But the angel of the Lord called out to him from heaven, ‘Abraham! Abraham!’ ‘Here I am’ he replied. ‘Do not lay a hand on the boy,’ he said. ‘Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son.’ Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called that place The Lord Will Provide. And to this day it is said, ‘On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided.’ The angel of the Lord called to Abraham from heaven a second time and said, ‘I swear by myself, declares the Lord, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.’ (Genesis 22:1-18)

It follows from the underlined portion that Abraham (sws) was asked to sacrifice his only son which means that at that time he had no other son. The fact that this could only be Ishmael (sws) is evident from the following two passages of the Bible:

Abraham was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore him Ishmael. (Genesis, 16:16)

Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. (Genesis, 21:5)

It is evident from these verses that Ishmael (sws) was fourteen years old at the birth of Isaac (sws), and must have been offered for sacrifice before Isaac (sws) was born because Abraham (sws) had been asked to sacrifice his only son; after Isaac’s birth of course the words ‘your only son’ would be totally inappropriate and against reality.

In the light of this evidence, it is obvious that the word Isaac mentioned in the passage above (indicated by the underlined portion) was inserted in place of Ishmael (sws).
1. Imam Hamidu’l Din Farahi (d:1930) has written a detailed critique on this interpolation and has convincingly shown that the Bible still contains evidence on the fact that the son offered for sacrifice by Abraham (sws) was Ishmael (sws) and not Isaac (sws). This answer summarizes some of his arguments on the issue. For details see ‘Al-Ra’i al-Sahih fi man huwa al-Dhabih (The Correct View regarding the Sacrifice offered by Abraham (sws)), Damascus, Daru’l-Qasim, 1999.

Why did the Almighty ask for Ishmael’s Sacrifice?

Worship

Question asked by .

Answered by Shehzad Saleem

Question:

Why did God ask Abraham (sws) to sacrifice his son? This seems pretty cruel on the face of it. True the sacrifice never took place but my question is: Why was it asked for?

Answer:

The Almighty never commanded Abraham (sws) to sacrifice his son. It was Abraham (sws) who took this step thinking that the Almighty wanted this to happen. In this regard, the following points must remain in consideration:

1. Firstly, Abraham (sws) thought that he was directed to sacrifice his son by the Almighty in a dream shown to him. For the Prophets of Allah, such dreams are a source of contact with the Almighty, and in them they are shown certain images by Him for the purpose of their education and instruction. However, as a principle, they are not to be interpreted literally; they contain realities which are depicted in symbolic form. Symbolic representation is a very subtle and powerful way of expression: facts seem veiled, yet for one who pauses to ponder, they are most evident. So what needs to be understood is that dreams of the Prophets of Allah are symbolic too. They portray a fact in figurative form in order to make it more effective to understand. Let me give you an example. You must have read the dream of the Prophet Joseph (sws) mentioned in the Qur’an. It says that he saw the sun, the moon and eleven stars bowing...
down to him. The interpretation of the dream offered by the Qur’an itself at the end of Surah Yusuf shows that this bowing down was a symbolism to show that his eleven brothers and father and mother would submit to his authority as the king (12:100). Similarly, more examples can be given from the Qur’an.

2. The next point which arises is about the symbolism found in ‘human sacrifice’. In other words: ‘What does human sacrifice stand for?’ A knowledge of the ancient scriptures reveals that human sacrifice offered to God symbolizes consecrating a person in the service of Allah:

You are to bring the Levites before the Lord, and the Israelites are to lay their hand on them. Aaron is to present the Levites before the Lord as a wave offering from the Israelites, so that they may be ready to do the work of the Lord. After the Levites lay their hands on the heads of the bulls, use the one for a sin offering to the Lord and the other for a burnt offering, to make atonement for the Levites. Have the Levites stand in front of Aaron and his sons and then present them as a wave offering to the Lord. In this way you are to set the Levites apart from the other Israelites, and the Levites will be mine. After you have purified the Levites and presented them as a wave offering, they are to come to do their work at the Tent of Meeting. They are the Israelites who are to be given wholly to me. I have taken them as my own in place of the firstborn, the first male offspring from every Israelite woman. Every firstborn male in Israel, whether man or animal, is mine. When I struck down all the firstborn in Egypt, I set them apart for myself. And I have taken the Levites in place of all the firstborn sons in Israel.
(Numbers 8:10-18)

As is evident from the underlined portion, the symbolism found in ‘human sacrifice’ is dedication of a person to the service of Allah. In other words, the Almighty actually wanted Abraham (sws) to devote Ishmael (sws) for special tasks assigned by the Almighty.

3. Abraham (sws) in his spirit of submission to the will of God started to follow his dream in the literal sense instead of interpreting the dream; consequently, the Almighty told him that he had ‘made the dream a reality’, which of course was not required. However, this willingness to submit to a command of Allah as perceived by Abraham (sws) greatly pleased the Almighty since it was based on sincerity and a great will to do what he thought was Allah’s will.

Charity instead of Animal Sacrifice

Worship

Question asked by .
Answered by Shehzad Saleem

Question:

I have a query related to animal sacrifice. Instead of sacrificing sheep on Eid, can one donate the equivalent in money to the Edhi Trust or other bonafide Charity? Secondly, can one give
money as Sadqah to charity instead of sheep slaughter? Can one adopt some other token form of Sadqah and give balance amount to charity?

Answer:

Your answer needs a little elaboration:

For every human being who believes in Allah, there are two distinct spheres of interaction in which relationships come into existence. The first sphere covers a person’s relationship with Allah, while the second one constitutes a person’s relationship with his fellow human beings. Islam and all divinely revealed religions nothing but guide human intellect in these two spheres. A person’s relationship with Allah manifests itself in worship, which in Islam has some distinct forms. Similarly, a person’s relationship with his brethren takes the form of social interaction, which again has many areas. Total or partial negation of any one of these spheres results in an unbalanced life. Extremism in the first sphere breeds monasticism and ascetism while extremism in the second one breeds materialism. Islam wants every person to create a balance in his life by giving each sphere its due. Similarly, it wants a person to undertake the various prescribed forms of interaction in both the spheres since each has a definite purpose.

In the first sphere, Islam has prescribed specific forms of worship of which one form cannot replace the other, since each has its own purpose and objective. Animal Sacrifice is one such form of worship. It has an underlying philosophy which must be well be appreciated in order to do it in letter and spirit. Just as Salah cannot replace Zakah and vice versa, animal sacrifice also cannot be replaced by Zakah or charity. What animal sacrifice induces in a person, Zakah or Salah or Hajj do not.

The raison d’etre for animal sacrifice on Eid is to commemorate a great event which depicts an extraordinary expression of submission to the command of Allah – the essence of Islam. The Prophet Abraham (sws) while obeying the Almighty set a platinum example of this submission. When we offer an animal in sacrifice, we actually symbolize our intention that we are ready to submit ourselves to Allah in any way that may be required by Him, just as His great Prophet Abraham (sws) had once done so with spirit and splendour, glory and grandeur.

Taking Allah’s Name while Slaughtering

Worship

Question asked by .

Answered by Shehzad Saleem

Question:
Not taking Allah’s name while slaughtering an animal is Haram – right! I have seen many Muslims here in America eating non-halal food in restaurants. They claim it is Mukruh (undesirable) and not Haram. Is that correct? Does the Sunnah of the Prophet (sws) specify a particular way of slaughtering? Also what are the reasons of taking Allah's name while slaughtering an animal?

Answer:

According to the Qur’an, animals which are not slaughtered while taking Allah’s name are forbidden:

Eat not on which Allah’s name has not been pronounced. (6:121)

In other words, taking Allah’s name before slaughtering an animal is a positive requirement. Therefore, the meat of animals which are slaughtered while disregarding this practice bears the label of prohibition in the Islamic Shari’ah.

Yes, the Sunnah of the Prophet (sws) specifies a particular way of slaughtering. It is called ‘Tadhkiyah’ by the Qur’an. In this particular way, animals as goats and sheep are slaughtered through their jugular veins and are not killed instantaneously by cutting the bead of the neck. This method keeps intact the connection between the heart and the brain so that every drop of blood is drained out of the slain animal. This purifies the meat from the contamination of blood – and achieving purity, we know, is the objective of every directive of Islam.

The underlying reasons in taking Allah’s name before sacrificing an animal can be summed up as follows:

1. As a principle, Muslims have been directed to take Allah's name before every task, routine or work they do. This actually is an acknowledgement of the Almighty’s favours and as such is a worthy expression of gratitude.

2. The sanctity a life possesses requires that even an animal be sacrificed only with the permission of the Almighty who is the Creator of life. It is only Allah who can give us this right, and, therefore, as a reminder of this fact, it is necessary to take His name when the life of an animal is taken.

3. This practice closes the gateway to polytheism. Those who are aware of the history of various religions know that animal sacrifice is deeply linked to idol worship. To please various deities, polytheists used to sacrifice them. Taking Allah’s name eliminates these unwarranted practices as well.
Does Hajj become compulsory after doing ‘Umrah?

Worship

Question asked by .

Answered by Shehzad Saleem

Question:

I was told by many people that if a person does not have money for Hajj, then he should not try for ‘Umrah also. And if a person does so, Hajj becomes obligatory on him as he has done a job he was not asked for. I do not have money to send my father for Hajj but I think that I can manage to send him for ‘Umrah. Can I do so and what will be the ruling for the above mentioned issue?

Answer:

Although Hajj and ‘Umrah both are sacred rituals of Islam. They are separate in their nature and in the extent of obligation they entail. Hajj is obligatory for a Muslim who has physical and financial strength to do it, whereas ‘Umrah though desirable and commendable is not obligatory for every Muslim. Offering ‘Umrah does not make Hajj obligatory because the physical and financial ability is different for both these rituals. Hajj, you would agree, is more strenuous and also more expensive.

If you can manage to send your father for ‘Umrah, you should do so because a true Muslim should be very sensitive for each and every chance of virtue and good deed he gets. When and wherever he gets it he should avail it, lest the candle of his life be put off. However, you should have the urge and intention for yourself and for your father that whenever God provides favorable circumstances you will offer Hajj. Man is responsible and accountable for his present conditions and circumstances and not for his ‘would be’ circumstances. Take care of the present and the future will take care of itself.