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ḥafiẓahullāh

USEFUL ADVICE FOR TRAVELLERS TO THE ḤARAMAYN

A companion to the *'How to Perform Ḥajj, 'Umrah & Ziyārah'* guides, giving useful advice on how to get the most from your blessed journey.

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BY SHAYKH MUHAMMAD SALEEM DHORAT

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

FOREWORD

On 30th December 2006, as I sat in the cold Arabian plains of Muzdalifah, I kept thinking to myself about how to make the most of my time, and benefit the most from these blessed moments. I had with me the extremely popular 'How to Perform Ḥajj/'Umrah/Ziyārah' guides authored by my respected Shaykh, Shaykh-ul-Ḥadīth Ḥaḍrat Mawlānā Muhammad Saleem Dhorat Ṣāḥib *ḥafiẓahullāh*, and they had proved very useful. But masā'il are masā'il, and I felt that the spiritual and practical advice Shaykh gives to intending pilgrims should also be compiled into book form to provide a companion to the other guides.

I sent a text message with this suggestion to my Shaykh that night, the night of 'Īd, and Shaykh replied with some sentences of encouragement and du'ā. Through the Grace of Allāh ﷻ and the blessings of Shaykh's du'ā, I was granted the ability upon the completion of ḥajj, when I returned to my hotel, to start making notes from the recording of Shaykh's Ḥajj Programme, which he delivers every year.

It so happened that during the summer of 2007, a brother going for 'umrah emailed Shaykh asking for advice on how to benefit the most from his journey. Shaykh forwarded the email to me, instructing me to compile some notes from his

advices to intending pilgrims. I sent the notes I had taken during ḥajj, and when Shaykh saw them, he was very pleased and instructed that they be published in the monthly journal Riyāḍul Jannah, of which he is Chief Editor.

After the article was published, I mentioned the idea of a fourth book again. Shaykh then advised me to go ahead, and told me to complete my notes using the older recordings of previous Ḥajj Programmes as well. I did this during the madrasah holidays at the time of Ḥajj 1428 (December 2007).

Through the Grace of Allāh ﷻ and the du'ā of my Shaykh, this project is now completed. I thank all those who helped in making this possible, especially my dear and respected friend, Shaykh Sulaymān Bhula.

I pray to Allāh ﷻ that he accepts this humble effort and makes it a means of guidance for the honoured guests of the Ḥaramayn, and that He rewards us all by granting us many visits to these blessed lands. I also pray that He instils in us the ādāb of Islām in every aspect of our lives so we become worthy of presenting ourselves in His Court in the hereafter. Finally, I pray that Allāh ﷻ maintains Shaykh's shade over us for many years to come, and grants us the ability to benefit from him and creates the means for more of his teachings to be published in the near future.

Āmīn.

Abū 'Abdullāh Ibn Ismā'īl
Shawwāl 1428 / October 2008

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

1. BEFORE LEAVING

Studying

In preparation for the blessed journey to the Ḥaramayn, pilgrims tend to buy many different books on the masā'il (rulings) of ḥajj or 'umrah. Try to avoid doing this as it can cause great confusion. Different books adopt different approaches to explaining the masā'il, so it is best to obtain a single book, of intermediate length, that has been authored by an appropriately qualified and experienced 'ālim (scholar).

Study the selected book very carefully. Wherever you have a query, make a note of it and consult an 'ālim. As well as learning the necessary masā'il, you should endeavour to gain an understanding of the spiritual aspects of ḥajj and 'umrah. An excellent read in this regard is 'Virtues of Ḥajj' by Shaykh-ul-Ḥadīth Shaykh Mawlānā Muḥammad Zakariyyā Kāndhalwī ﷺ.

Intention

Before departing, fix the following thoughts in your mind: "Allāh ﷻ, my Creator, who has given me life, health, wealth and the means to reach His House, has ordered me to come

to His House. Thus I am going on this Journey in order to fulfil His command and please Him."

Constantly review your niyyah (intention) to ensure that it remains sincere throughout the journey, and also after returning home. Your intention should not be that you are going on a holiday, for business or for show. Such insincere intentions have been condemned in the aḥādīth:

> A time will come upon the people when the rich will perform ḥajj for recreation, the middle classes for business, the qurrā to show off and the poor to beg. (Ad-Daylamī)

Repentance

As the pilgrim is going to present himself in the court of his Lord, it is not fitting for him to attend with a burden of sins upon his shoulders. So repent sincerely from all sins before embarking on this sacred journey, bearing in mind the following conditions:

If the sin is related to the rights of Allāh ﷻ (e.g. missing ṣalāh) then there are three prerequisites of repentance:

1. The sinful act must be stopped immediately.
2. Great remorse and regret should be felt about having committed the sin.
3. A firm intention must be made not to commit the particular sin again.

If the sin is related to the rights of others (e.g. backbiting or refusal to settle a debt) then there is a fourth condition: the violated right must be compensated for, e.g. by repaying

the debt owed. If the right violated is something that cannot be physically repaid, as for example in the case of backbiting, then it will be necessary to seek forgiveness from the person in question.

If repentance is performed with firm adherence to these conditions then forgiveness is assured. As mentioned in a ḥadīth, once a person sincerely repents, it is as if that sin had never been committed.

> The one who repents from sin is like one who has no sin. (Ibn Mājah)

Making Up for What Has Been Missed

With regards the rights of Allāh ﷻ, there are certain ones that also need to be made up for. This point is especially pertinent when it comes to the farḍ and witr ṣalāh that one has missed. Even though the sin of missing these will be forgiven by sincere repentance, it is still obligatory to make up for the deficiency. Thus, consult an ʿālim and with his help try to calculate how many ṣalāh need to be made up. Thereafter, begin and continue to perform at least one set of five qaḍā ṣalāh per day.

One method of doing this is to read a qaḍā ṣalāh with the corresponding ṣalāh of the day, e.g. one qaḍā of Ẓuhr with the Ẓuhr Prayer of that day. By doing this, you will be able to make up for one day's missed ṣalāh daily along with your regular ṣalāh. If a person regularly performs one set of qaḍā a day but is unable to complete his missed ṣalāh before he dies, then it is hoped that Allāh ﷻ will

overlook what is left.

There are also other acts of worship, e.g. the fasts of Ramaḍān, that need to be made up for after repentance. Hence, you should consult a qualified ʻālim about your particular circumstances to ascertain what you need to do.

Visiting People before Ḥajj/ʻUmrah

It is usual to meet relatives and associates before departing for ḥajj or ʻumrah. The objective of such meetings should be to seek forgiveness from each other for any shortcomings in fulfilling each other's rights. It should be noted however, that just saying, "Please forgive me if I have done anything to hurt you," is not sufficient; in order to make up for past mistakes genuine forgiveness needs to be sought.

Nowadays, the trend is to only visit those with whom you are on good terms, whereas it is more important to visit those with whom you are not on good terms, so that you can seek forgiveness and be truly forgiven by them.

Baseless Customs

During the days before your departure for the blessed lands, abstain from all baseless customs. A custom currently in fashion is to invite those intending to go for ḥajj for a meal. If such an invitation is given out of love and affection then this is indeed a means of acquiring great reward. However, if it is done merely as a custom or out of obligation and societal pressure, then it will bear no benefit in the hereafter

whatsoever.

Travelling Companions

When choosing your travelling companions, bear the following points in mind:

1. Aim to travel with those who are pious and also have experience in the rituals of ḥajj and ʻumrah. Such companions will encourage you towards worship and, inshā'allāh, aid you in gaining the pleasure of Allāh ﷻ. Their experience will also make things easier for the novice.
2. An ʻālim's presence among the group is of benefit, as his knowledge and guidance will help make the journey of ḥajj more fruitful.
3. Try to avoid travelling in very large groups as this may result in much inconvenience.
4. If possible, find like-minded companions with a similar temperament and outlook to yourself. It is often seen that when people are not like-minded, misunderstandings and arguments occur. By travelling with a group of like-minded individuals, the risk of such incidents occurring during this blessed journey will be reduced.

We should try not to make unnecessary friendships, for doing so wastes a lot of time. If our objective is to make friends, we can do that without spending so much money and undertaking such a long journey. The whole point of

going is to establish and strengthen our friendship with Allāh ﷻ, so we should spend as much time as possible trying to please Him by doing those things that please Him and refraining from those things that displease Him.

Copying or Criticising

During your journey you will see hundreds and thousands of people, from different backgrounds, with different levels of knowledge. It is likely that you will see people carrying out certain ritual acts and worships incorrectly. On such occasions try to tell yourself that it is not your job to judge and criticise.

It is possible that even though their actions seem incorrect to the onlooker, the love and sincerity with which they are performing them may find acceptance in the Court of Allāh ﷻ. And it is also possible that because of our many shortcomings, Allāh ﷻ rejects our worship.

Remember, the one who is constantly worried about the faults of others remains negligent of his own faults, whereas the one who is negligent of the faults of others remains concerned about his own shortcomings. Thus, do not overly concern yourself with the quantity or quality of what others are doing. Concentrate on yourself; only Allāh ﷻ knows whose ʻibādah is accepted and whose is rejected.

Prior to your journey, acquire firm knowledge of the necessary rituals that you need to perform so that you will be confident that you are doing what you should be doing,

and therefore have no need to copy anyone else.

The Guests of Allāh ﷻ

It is only natural for those who are travelling to the Ḥaramayn for the first time to experience anxiety and feelings of unease at the time of departure. Unfortunately, these feelings are exacerbated by the many negative points that you may hear from others prior to departure.

Aim to remove excessive anxiety and trepidation by bearing in mind that any difficulty that you may encounter is minimal when compared to the great benefits of the journey. For example, what greater benefit and comfort can there be than seeing the House of Allāh ﷻ, the Ka'bah.

My respected father, Ḥāfiẓ Ibrāhīm Dhorat ﷺ used to say: "A guest never needs to worry, all he is required to do is to mention his needs to his host and the host takes care of the rest. If a human takes such great care of his guests then imagine what care Allāh ﷻ, who is the Lord of all the Worlds, takes in looking after His guests."

If some form of difficulty is faced on the journey then this is also the mercy of Allāh ﷻ, for as mentioned in a ḥadīth, it is through such small difficulties that Allāh ﷻ forgives sins:

> Never is a believer stricken with discomfort, illness, anxiety, grief or mental worry, or even the pricking of a thorn, but that Allāh expiates his sins on account of his patience. (Al-Bukhārī)

2. THE JOURNEY

Emotions When Departing

Feeling grief as you leave family and friends is normal, but try to keep a check on such emotions and aim to show signs of happiness and joy upon your departure. This is because you are embarking on a journey towards the most blessed of lands.

It is essential to ensure that all the laws of the Sharī'ah are adhered to by the traveller and those who have come to bid him farewell. Particular importance should be given to the observance of ṣalāh and of ḥijāb, especially during the journey.

Whilst Travelling

During the journey, strive to spend every moment in the obedience of Allāh ﷻ. Make every effort to avoid sins. Particular importance should be given to protecting the gaze.

Farḍ ṣalāh needs to be observed whilst travelling, and it cannot be delayed beyond its appointed time, even whilst one is flying.

Whilst on the plane, give consideration to the comfort of your fellow travellers. Be considerate and courteous throughout the flight. For example, it is common to see pilgrims changing into iḥrām clothing in the aisles or leaving a mess after performing wuḍū. Such behaviour gives a negative impression of Islām. If possible, make all

these preparations prior to flying.

If the lower garment of the iḥrām is worn prior to boarding, you will only need to don the upper garment whilst on the plane. Likewise, you can perform the two rakaʿāt nafl for iḥrām (without it being followed by the niyyah of ḥajj or ʿumrah) at the airport, and make the niyyah for ḥajj or ʿumrah at the necessary juncture during the flight. Whilst on board, if the need arises to perform wuḍū, ensure that the facilities used are left in a tidy state for the next user.

Recite the talbiyah in abundance. Much negligence occurs in this regard and the talbiyah is usually not given its due importance. While reciting the talbiyah, try to ponder upon its meaning.

لَبَّیْکَ اَللّٰھُمَّ لَبَّیْکَ ، لَبَّیْکَ لَا شَرِیْکَ لَکَ لَبَّیْکَ ،

اِنَّ الْحَمْدَ وَ النِّعْمَةَ لَکَ وَ الْمُلْکَ لَا شَرِیْکَ لَکَ

Labbayk allāhumma labbayk. Labbayka lā sharīka laka labbayk. Innal-ḥamda wanniʿmata laka wal-mulk. Lā sharīka lak.

Here I am at Your Service, O Lord here I am. Here I am at Your service; no partner do You have, here I am. Truly all Praise and Favour is Yours and the Sovereignty; no partner do You have.

Think to yourself: "I am sinful and have been disobedient to Allāh ﷻ all my life. I am now attending the House of Allāh ﷻ with guilt, total regret and a firm belief that He

will definitely enshroud me in His Mercy and forgive my shortcomings."

If any difficulty is encountered, avoid criticizing or blaming anyone. Say to yourself: "I am going to the House of Allāh ﷻ; hence I should bear all difficulties during the journey with patience and a sense of great love for Allāh ﷻ."

Also, believe that this patience will be a means of cleansing you from sins and elevating your status in the Court of Allāh ﷻ.

Gratefulness to Allāh ﷻ

As soon as you reach the blessed lands, tell yourself, "There are many people throughout the world whose wish is to be where I am now, but for some reason they could not make it. Allāh ﷻ was very kind to me because he removed all obstacles and allowed me to come here. Neither my money nor my efforts have brought me here; it is only the Mercy and Grace of Allāh ﷻ that has granted me this opportunity. Now that Allāh ﷻ has granted me this favour, it is only right that I am grateful to Him."

Your gratitude should be displayed in three ways:

1. Mentally, by thinking that this pilgrimage is a great gift of Allāh ﷻ bestowed upon you, without you being deserving of it.
2. Verbally, by saying: "O Allāh! You have brought me here; this is a great favour of yours. I praise You and

express my gratitude to You." You may also say in Arabic:

اَللّٰهُمَّ لَکَ الْحَمْدُ وَ لَکَ الشُّکْرُ

Allāhumma lakal-ḥamdu wa lakash-shukru.

O Allāh! All praise is only for You, and all thanks are due only to you.

3. Physically, by spending every moment of this blessed journey according to the wish of Allāh ﷻ and utilising your time in the way required of you. Adopting a timetable in order to organise your activities throughout the day is a great aid in showing gratefulness in this form.

Remember, if a person is ungrateful then Allāh ﷻ will punish him, and this may be by not granting him the opportunity to return to the blessed lands. The possession of sufficient wealth does not guarantee a return. Only those whom Allāh ﷻ invites can undertake this blessed journey.

3. DURING YOUR STAY

Talking in the Ḥaram

Whilst in the Ḥaramayn (or whilst visiting any masjid) engage in 'ibādah, adopt silence and observe the utmost respect and decorum. Completely avoid conversations about worldly matters. Rasūlullāh ﷺ has said in a ḥadīth:

> There will come a time upon people when they will talk about worldly affairs in the masjid. At such occasions, do not sit with them. Allāh does not need such people. (Al-Bayhaqī)

Mobile Phones

The ringing of mobile phones, even during important acts of worship such as ṣalāh, is something that is regrettably common. Unfortunately, it is now observed that people use their mobile phones even while reading the Qur'ān or while doing ṭawāf. Always remember to switch off your mobile phone in these sacred places. Better still, abstain from taking your mobile with you in the first place.

Television

Just because a television is found in nearly every hotel room does not mean that you should watch it. Among the many harms of television is laghw (futility), and laghw typically leads to sin. Thus the television should be shunned, for it is a strong means of incurring the displeasure of Allāh ﷻ.

Eating Out and Wasting Food

It is sad that merely for the sake of tasting different types of food, pilgrims sacrifice precious time during their journey in eating out in different restaurants. Such is the neglect that people go as far as missing congregational ṣalāh in the Sacred Ḥaram. Such behaviour should be avoided.

Be careful not to disrespect any food by showing dislike for it or wasting it. Allāh ﷻ punishes those who waste food by inflicting them or their children with poverty.

It is mentioned in a ḥadīth that Rasūlullāh ﷺ saw a morsel of food that had been thrown on the floor. He picked it up, wiped it, ate it and said:

> O Ā'ishah! Respect this food, because when Allāh takes it away from a people it does not return to them. (Ibn Mājah)

After you have eaten, if you find that some food is left over then you should try to distribute it among the poor and needy. However, endeavour to present the food in a manner that does not convey to the recipient that it is unwanted or disliked.

Shopping

Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

> The most beloved of places to Allāh are the masājid, and the most disliked of places to Allāh are the markets. (Muslim)

It is something to think about that despite this ḥadīth, visitors to the blessed cities seem more inclined towards

the shopping centres than the Ḥaramayn.

To ensure that time is not lost in shopping, prepare a list of what you require. Refrain from browsing and window shopping because hours can be wasted as there is no end to what you can find in the markets.

Try to delay any shopping until the last few days, so that when you do go you will be conscious of the fact that there are only a few days left. Inshā'allāh, as a result, time will be spent wisely and not wasted in pointless wandering around. Set a limit on the amount of time to be spent in shopping and restrict yourself to it.

Keep in mind that all the items found in the shops of Makkah and Madīnah can also be found in shops throughout the world. However, the spiritual items of Makkah and Madīnah cannot be acquired elsewhere. Therefore, spend the majority of your time in acquiring these priceless spiritual commodities by spending as much time as possible in the Ḥaramayn and engaging in 'ibādah.

Some people say that items are cheaper in Makkah and Madīnah and state this as their reason for extensive shopping. But think for a moment: how much will you save? Even if you were to save £1,000, it is still in reality a loss. This is because by spending time in shopping, the millions of rewards that could have been acquired by performing 'ibādah in the Ḥaramayn are forfeited.

Where to Shop?

The renowned Shaykh-ul-Ḥadīth, Shaykh Muḥammad Zakariyyā ﷺ would advise pilgrims to shop in Madīnah Munawwarah with the intention that it is the city of our beloved Rasūlullāh ﷺ. By shopping there, the profit earned from our trade will benefit the inhabitants of our beloved's city. (This is a matter of love; it is neither sunnah nor mustaḥab.)

Gifts for Relatives

Though we may buy anything we wish for our family, the most blessed and most fitting items to buy as gifts are Zamzam and dates of Madīnah. Better and greater gifts are du'ā, ṭawāf, 'umrah, etc.

4. IN MAKKAH

The First View of the Ka'bah

The du'ā made at the very first sighting of the Ka'bah is readily accepted, so value and cherish this great opportunity. After entering Al-Masjid-ul-Ḥarām, walk towards the Ka'bah with your gaze lowered, until you find a spot where it is possible to make du'ā with concentration. Now look at the Ka'bah, and recite three times:

اَللّٰهُ اَكْبَرُ

Allāhu akbar.

Allāh is the greatest.

Thereafter, recite three times:

لَا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ

Lā ilāha illallāh.

There is no deity except Allāh.

Now, after praising Allāh ﷻ and sending salutations upon Rasūlullāh ﷺ, make du'ā for all your needs of this world and the hereafter. Make du'ā for family, friends and the entire ummah. You should make du'ā for the 'ulamā, mashā'ikh and all the religious activities taking place throughout the world. Du'ā is a means of contributing to them; by making du'ā, you will become part of these efforts and thus reap rewards. Also make du'ā for those deceased Muslims who are lying in the solitude of their graves, who are in need of rewards, yet have no one to send

thawāb for them. I humbly request you to make du'ā for me, my parents, teachers, mashā'ikh, relatives, associates, all those connected to me, and all those who assisted in the preparation of this booklet.

Conclude this du'ā, and all the other supplications you make throughout the rest of the journey, by saying: "O Allāh! Grant me all the things that Rasūlullāh ﷺ asked of you at this point. O Allāh! Include me among those whose du'ās are accepted."

Performing 'Umrah

Many pilgrims wish to perform 'umrah immediately upon arrival in Makkah. If the driving factor of this enthusiasm is the desire to come out of iḥrām then this is incorrect. Performing 'umrah is a great worship and should not be treated as a burden. 'Umrah should be performed with love, desire and motivation. Hence it is preferable that you take some rest first so that you can refresh yourself. Also bear in mind the weather conditions prior to undertaking your 'umrah.

However, if intense love and longing to perform 'umrah is experienced, then it is better to perform 'umrah immediately.

Ziyārah

Many pilgrims eagerly attempt to climb the mountains of Ḥirā and Thawr. Though this keenness is laudable, climbing these mountains is categorised neither as sunnah

nor mustaḥab. On the other hand, ṣalāh is compulsory and performing it with congregation in the Ḥaram is very important. Missing it completely is a great sin and shows grave ungratefulness to Allāh ﷻ. If you feel that by attempting to climb the mountains you will become fatigued and thereby risk missing ṣalāh or congregation (due to oversleeping), then it is prudent not to attempt to climb them.

Virtues of Ṭawāf

It is mentioned in a ḥadīth:

> Whoever performs wuḍū properly and thereafter comes to Al-Ḥajar-ul-Aswad with the intention of performing ṭawāf, he dives into the mercy of Allāh ﷻ. And when he starts his ṭawāf by doing istilām, then recites:
>
> بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ ، وَ اللّٰهُ اَكْبَرُ ، اَشْهَدُ اَنْ لَّا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ وَحْدَهٗ لَا شَرِيْكَ لَهٗ وَ اَشْهَدُ اَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهٗ وَ رَسُوْلُهٗ
>
> *Bismillāhi wallāhu akbar. Ash-hadu allā ilāha illallāhu waḥdahū lā sharīka lahū wa ash-hadu anna muḥammadan ʿabduhū wa rasūluh.*
>
> In the name of Allāh. Allāh is the greatest. I bear witness that there is no deity except Allāh. He is One; He has no partner. And I bear witness that Muḥammad ﷺ is His servant and His messenger.
>
> the mercy of Allāh ﷻ engulfs him. On each step during the ṭawāf he receives 70,000 rewards, 70,000 sins are forgiven,

his status is raised 70,000 times and his intercession is accepted for 70 members of his household.

Then when he goes to the Maqām Ibrāhīm and performs two raka'āt behind it, with faith and the expectation of reward, Allāh ﷻ grants him reward equivalent to that of emancipating 14 slaves from the children of Ismā'īl ﷺ and he becomes clean from sins, like the day his mother gave birth to him. (At-Targhīb)

Quantity of Ṭawāf

During your stay in Makkah, perform as many ṭawāf as possible. This is because in Makkah there is no nafl 'ibādah more virtuous than ṭawāf. You can perform all other nafl 'ibādah in your home town, but ṭawāf can only be performed in Makkah. This is why the fuqahā have mentioned that nafl ṭawāf is more virtuous than nafl ṣalāh.

To ensure that you perform a reasonable number of ṭawāf, set yourself a target. Not setting a target usually results in the performance of only a minimal number of ṭawāf.

A good target is fifty, as it is mentioned in a ḥadīth:

Whoever performs fifty ṭawāf will become pure from sins like the day his mother gave birth to him. (At-Tirmidhī)

Quality of Ṭawāf

During ṭawāf, pay attention both to quantity and quality. Walk with great humility and reverence, with your gaze kept low. Avoid looking around, as this is makrūh (detestable).

Likewise, avoid trying to pass others who are slower than you by zigzagging. Such behaviour is against the etiquettes of the House of Allāh ﷻ.

Ṭawāf for Others

Try to perform ṭawāf on behalf of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, the Ṣaḥābah ؓ, your parents, teachers, mashā'ikh, our pious predecessors, friends and family. At the end of your stay, try to perform one ṭawāf on behalf of the entire ummah as well. I humbly request you to perform ṭawāf on my behalf too. Similarly, try to perform ṭawāf on behalf of my parents, teachers and mashā'ikh.

There are two ways of performing an 'ibādah and dedicating its thawāb (reward) to another. The first method is to make the intention before the 'ibādah that it is going to be carried out on behalf of such and such a person. In this case the thawāb attained will be dedicated to that particular person. The second method is to perform the 'ibādah without a specific intention and thereafter to dedicate the thawāb to whoever you wish. In this case, you can dedicate the thawāb of one act to as many people as you like.

Nafl 'Umrah

Perform as many nafl 'umrah as possible, but remember that, overall, performing ṭawāf is more virtuous than performing nafl 'umrah (after the first 'umrah). This is because if it takes one hour to perform 'umrah, this one

hour is more fruitfully spent performing ṭawāf, as there is no travelling etc. involved in ṭawāf and the entire time is spent in the Ḥaram. However, if you know that you will not be able to maintain the discipline required to perform ṭawāf for one hour continuously then it is advisable to perform nafl ‘umrah.

The Multazam[1]

As the Multazam is normally perfumed with ‘iṭr, try not to touch it whilst in iḥrām. However, try your utmost to go to the Multazam as often as possible during other times. Du‘ā made at the Multazam is readily accepted. Such is the atmosphere of this blessed place that it is as though you are in Allāh’s ﷻ lap and that Allāh ﷻ has definitely heard and accepted your du‘ā.

‘Alī ؓ has said with regards the Multazam:

> It is like a person who has committed a crime against another; he grabs hold of his clothes and begs him until he forgives him. (Al-Bayhaqī)

Al-Ḥajar-ul-Aswad

Kissing Al-Ḥajar-ul-Aswad is a blessed sunnah of Rasūlullāh ﷺ and a means of great reward, but to cause others harm in order to fulfil a sunnah is impermissible. Therefore, if you fear that by trying to kiss Al-Ḥajar-

[1] This is the area between Al-Ḥajar-ul-Aswad and the door of the Ka‘bah. Many people are under the impression that the door itself is the Multazam. This is incorrect.

ul-Aswad you will inconvenience others then it is more rewarding to refrain. Remember, we are slaves not of our desires and emotional sentiments, but of our Lord, so we should do what He is pleased with. Even though you may have a great desire to kiss the black stone, restrain your emotions just to please Allāh ﷻ. This will, inshā'allāh, be a means of greater reward.

Stay in Makkah

While residing in Makkah, think to yourself that this could be your last journey to the blessed land, and therefore you should not waste a single moment in useless actions, or even worse, in acts of sin.

Abstaining from all sins is essential because just as the reward of good deeds performed in the blessed cities of Makkah and Madīnah is increased, the effects of sin are also increased many times over. The Companions 'Umar ﷺ and 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās ﷺ would say:

> I would prefer to commit seventy sins in Rukyah [a place outside of Makkah] than commit a single sin in Makkah. (Kanz-ul-'Ummāl)

Spend as much time as possible in the Ḥaram and set yourself targets to complete, e.g. completion of one recitation of the Qur'ān in the Ḥaram.

However, while valuing your time, be moderate in your 'ibādah and try not to tire yourself excessively. This is especially important if you are staying in Makkah prior

to the days of ḥajj. As the main purpose of your journey is the period of the five days of ḥajj, make sure that you have enough energy for it.

Dhikr in Makkah

Recite the Kalimah Ṭayyibah:

لَا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَّسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ

Lā ilāha illallāhu muḥammadur-rasūlullāh.

There is no deity except Allāh and Muḥammad ﷺ is His Messenger.

and istighfār:

اَسْتَغْفِرُ اللّٰهَ

Astaghfirullāh.

I seek forgiveness from Allāh.

as much as possible. Keep your prayer beads handy and recite one tasbīḥ[2] of the first kalimah and one tasbīḥ of istighfār regularly. Also recite the third kalimah, fourth kalimah, ṣalāt ʻalan-Nabī ﷺ and:

سُبْحَانَ اللّٰهِ وَ بِحَمْدِهٖ سُبْحَانَ اللّٰهِ الْعَظِيْمِ

Sub ḥānallāhi wa biḥamdihī sub ḥānallāhil-ʻaẓīm.

Glory be to Allāh and all praise; glory be to Allāh, the Great.

[2] Complete round of 100 times.

Du'ā

Allocate some time daily for making du'ā to Allāh ﷻ. Ask Allāh ﷻ for all your spiritual, physical and material needs - all your needs of this world and the hereafter. Most importantly, ask Allāh ﷻ for His friendship. Be especially persistent in this du'ā, saying: "O Allāh! You are all-powerful and you can do whatever You want. You are also extremely merciful. I beg You to grant me Your friendship? How can You allow me to return empty handed? I will not leave here without You granting me Your friendship. O Allāh! I beseech You to grant me Your eternal friendship."

You should also say: "O Allāh! I am so ignorant that I do not even know what I should be asking. O Allāh! Grant me all that is good for me. Grant me everything that Your beloved Rasūl ﷺ asked from You."

Du'ā for Others

Make du'ā for others too on a regular basis. It is mentioned in a ḥadīth:

> The most rapidly accepted prayer is the prayer of one person for another, in his absence. (Abū Dāwūd)

In another ḥadīth it is stated that:

> When a person makes du'ā for his brother in his absence, the angels say: "May Allāh grant you the same." (Muslim)

I humbly request you to make du'ā for me, my parents,

teachers, mashā'ikh, relatives, associates, all those connected to me, and all those who assisted in the preparation of this booklet.

Asking Sincerely

Though Allāh ﷻ accepts all du'ās, a point to think over is whether we are really sincere in what we are asking for. While we may ask Allāh ﷻ to make us muttaqī (god-fearing), if we simultaneously fear that were we to become muttaqī, we would have to do difficult things such as perform ṣalāh, then there is little chance of such du'ās being genuine.

With thoughts such as these in our minds, how will Allāh ﷻ accept our supplications and grant us His friendship? So, when making du'ā, ask Allāh ﷻ with the utmost concern and with a heartfelt yearning.

Note:

It is beneficial to learn how to reach your hotel from an appointed place in the Ḥaram before ḥajj. Thus, if any mishap occurs during the days of ḥajj, you can easily find your way to the Ḥaram (any taxi will be able to take you there) and then find your way to your hotel from there.

5. DAYS OF ḤAJJ

A Journey of Love

When people fall madly in love, they enjoy nothing better than being in the company of their beloved. If they cannot meet or converse with their beloved, they satisfy their yearning with a glance. If even a glance is not possible, they find solace by concentrating on all those things that remind them of, and that are connected to, the one they love. The one who is truly in love forgets everything else. He is willing to bear every pain, undergo every difficulty and undertake every sacrifice in order to meet or even just see his beloved.

In the annals of literature can be found the story of Majnūn and Laylā. Majnūn was madly in love with Laylā, but he was not allowed to talk to her or even see her. As a punishment for his impermissible love, it was ordered that he be given a hundred lashes. As lash upon lash struck his back, Majnūn remained silent and, amazingly, did not utter as much as a sigh. However, when the hundredth lash hit him, he screamed loudly in pain.

Upon being questioned about his strange reaction, Majnūn replied: "My beloved Laylā was standing on the balcony of her house watching me while I was being whipped. I was so engrossed in looking at her that I did not realise what was happening. After the ninety-ninth lash, she moved out of my sight, and it was only then that I felt the pain."

As he could not meet Laylā directly, Majnūn would wander around the streets where Laylā lived in order to console his heart by this indirect companionship. And in desperation he would recite:

امر علی الدیار دیار لیلی اقبل ذا الجدار و ذا الجدارا

وما حب الدیار شغفن قلبی ولکن حب من سکن الدیارا

I pass by the house of my beloved Laylā,
kissing this wall and that wall,
It is not love of the house that has infatuated my heart,
But love of the one who resides within.

Ḥajj too is nothing if not an expression of love. During the journey towards his Beloved, the ḥājī bears all difficulties with great patience. Enraptured by the thought of his Beloved, he forgets about adornment and wears the simple iḥrām clothing. Because he cannot sit with his Beloved or talk to Him directly, Allāh ﷻ made the Ka'bah so that the ḥājī can console his heart by performing ṭawāf around the house of his Beloved.

As the ḥājī goes around the house of Allāh ﷻ, his love increases so much that he wishes to show his affection to his Beloved. But because this is not possible, Allāh ﷻ made Al-Ḥajar-ul-Aswad and the Multazam for the ḥājī to kiss and embrace. This love then reaches its peak, yet the ḥājī is still not able to acquire His beloved.

His heart becomes so dejected due to this that he wishes to run away and leave everything. Thus, Allāh ﷻ

instructs the ḥājī to go to the plains of Minā, ʻArafāt and Muzdalifah. But this flight does not console his love. It is now so overpowering that the ḥājī no longer wishes to live without his Beloved. He desires to give his life, but because suicide is impermissible, Allāh ﷻ instructs him to perform the naḥr. And thus with the utmost love the ḥājī sacrifices an animal instead.

ʻAlī ؓ was once asked why one has to perform wuqūf outside of the Ḥaram in ʻArafāt, then spend the night in Muzdalifah and only then come to Makkah. He replied:

> Because the Kaʻbah is the house of Allāh, the boundary of the Ḥaram is the boundary of His House. When someone wishes to come to His House, he is first made to stand outside begging and pleading. He is then allowed entry into the common court, Muzdalifah, where he must pray and beseech Him some more. Next, he is allowed to present a sacrifice. And it is only after all of this, when he has become pure and clean, that he is admitted into the House of Allāh. (Al-Bayhaqī)

Delays

During the days of ḥajj it is very likely that delays will be encountered, which may hinder the performance of certain rituals. If we were to understand that the purpose of life is not only to engage in worship, but to obey every command of Allāh ﷻ, then it would be very easy to understand how to behave in such circumstances. Upon encountering a delay, tell yourself: "This is what Allāh ﷻ wishes for me at this

moment; he does not wish for me to reach my destination on time, so I should be patient and happy with the decision of Allāh ﷻ, and this is also worship. So either way, I am pleasing Allāh ﷻ and receiving reward."

Another point to bear in mind is that sometimes the niyyah of a believer is better than his action. For example, if you make a firm intention to spend the whole day of ʻArafāt in ʻibādah, you will be rewarded for your intention, regardless of whether you succeed in doing so or not. It is entirely possible that you reach ʻArafāt early, but by the time of ʻAṣr, some sickness overcomes you and you are not able to worship for much longer. It is also possible that you get held up in traffic and only reach ʻArafāt later on in the day. Because of your original intention, you will, inshā'allāh, still receive the full reward in situations where, due to factors out of your control, you are unable to complete your intended ʻibādāt.

ʻArafāt

The time spent in ʻArafāt is indeed very precious. Consequently, you should try your utmost to value every second of this great day. Performing wuqūf outside your tent in a standing position, facing the qiblah, from Ẓuhr to Maghrib is the preferred method of wuqūf. But if you find this difficult to do due to weakness, it is advisable to sit inside the tent and perform ʻibādah. However, you should at least do wuqūf standing outside the tent between ʻAṣr and Maghrib. Make duʻā with great humbleness and with

the firm conviction that Allāh ﷻ will definitely accept it.

A Special Du'ā for 'Arafāt

It is mentioned in a ḥadīth that on the day of 'Arafāt, whosoever recites the following du'ā 100 times after zawāl, facing the qiblah:

لَا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ وَحْدَهٗ لَا شَرِيْکَ لَهٗ لَهُ الْمُلْکُ وَ لَهُ الْحَمْدُ

يُحْيِيْ وَيُمِيْتُ وَهُوَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ

Lā ilāha illallāhu waḥdahū lā sharīka lahū lahul mulku wa lahul ḥamdu yuḥyī wa yumītu wa huwa 'alā kulli shay'in qadīr

There is no deity except Allāh alone, He has no partner; His is the sovereignty and for Him is all praise; He gives life and He gives death, and He has power over all things.

and thereafter recites Sūrah al-Ikhlāṣ 100 times, then recites the following ṣalāt 'alan-Nabī:

اَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلٰى مُحَمَّدٍ وَّ عَلٰى اٰلِ مُحَمَّدٍ كَمَا صَلَّيْتَ عَلٰى

اِبْرَاهِيْمَ وَ عَلٰى اٰلِ اِبْرَاهِيْمَ اِنَّکَ حَمِيْدٌ مَّجِيْدٌ ، وَعَلَيْنَا مَعَهُمْ

Allāhumma ṣalli 'alā muḥammadin wa 'alā āli muḥammadin kamā ṣallayta 'alā ibrāhīma wa 'alā āli ibrāhīma innaka ḥamīdum majīd wa 'alaynā ma'ahum.

O Allāh! Send salutations upon Muḥammad and upon the family of Muḥammad just as you sent

salutations upon Ibrāhīm and upon the family of Ibrāhīm - truly, You are worthy of all praise, the exalted - and upon us along with them.

Allāh ﷻ says to the angels:

> O My angels! What is the reward of My servant who glorified Me, praised Me, mentioned My Oneness and Greatness and sent salutations on My Messenger ﷺ? I have forgiven him and accepted his request regarding his needs and if My servant intercedes for all who are in Arafāt, I will accept it. (Al-Bayhaqī)

The Greatest 'Ibādah in 'Arafāt

With regards the day of 'Arafāt, pilgrims tend to feel joy at being granted the blessed opportunity to be there, but also anxiety about their ability to carry out the required amount of 'ibādah, in the required manner. The answer to this is that according to your health, time, circumstances and ability, you should carry out as much 'ibādah as you can.

If nothing else, continue to recite the fourth kalimah and ṣalāt 'alan-nabī. However, from the time you set foot on the plain of 'Arafāt until the time you depart, try your utmost to ensure that you commit no act of sin. Through this course of action you will be successful in making the most out of the day of 'Arafāt, inshā'allāh.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ has mentioned something similar in a ḥadīth:

> Today (the day of 'Arafāt) is such a day that whosoever

controls his ears, eyes and tongue, will be forgiven. (Aḥmad)

Muzdalifah

Moving from ‘Arafāt to Muzdalifah and from Muzdalifah to Minā can sometimes be very difficult. This is because every ḥājī is trying to do the same thing at the same time. You may get stuck in traffic or your allocated bus may arrive late. Shayṭān takes advantage of this situation and we see ḥujjāj immediately lose all they have gained in ‘Arafāt as they get involved in fights and arguments at this stage.

You should remember that everything is in the hands of Allāh ﷻ. Just think, if anything was in the hands of your coach driver or group leader, would they just sit in traffic jams doing nothing? So exercise patience and abstain from losing your temper.

It is mentioned by some ‘ulamā that the night of Muzdalifah is more virtuous than the Night of Qadr. Therefore, value this night and try to perform as much ‘ibādah as you can. You should also spend some time sleeping, as this is a sunnah of our beloved Prophet ﷺ.

Leaving Makkah

Try not to leave the completion of ṭawāf-ul-widā (farewell ṭawāf) till the last minute. Ensure that there is sufficient time between ṭawāf-ul-widā and your scheduled departure. Depart from Makkah with a heavy heart and ask Allāh

ﷺ to bring you back to this blessed city again and again. At the time of migration, Rasūlullāh ﷺ turned towards Makkah Mukarramah and said:

> By Allāh, you are the best part of Allāh's earth and the most dearest to Him. Had I not been expelled from you, I would not have left. (At-Tirmidhī)

6. IN MADĪNAH

Love for Madīnah

Madīnah Munawwarah is where Rasūlullāh ﷺ migrated to, where he spent the last ten years of his life and where he is resting. Therefore, we should have immense love for Madīnah, the area around it and all those things connected to it.

Sīrah of the Prophet ﷺ

Before going to Madīnah Munawwarah, and during your journey, study a book about the life of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Through this, love for Rasūlullāh ﷺ will increase and the reality and awe of his great personality will be created in your heart.

You should also make a special effort to practice as many sunnahs of Rasūlullāh ﷺ as possible throughout the journey.

Īṣāl-al-Thawāb

Aim to send as much thawāb to Rasūlullāh ﷺ as you can before you reach Madīnah. If you are travelling from Makkah then perform an 'umrah/ṭawāf on behalf of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. If you are travelling to Madīnah first, then send thawāb by reciting the Qur'ān or by giving ṣadaqah.

The respected Shaykh Ḥājī Fārūq ﷺ would advise those travelling to Madīnah to recite Sūrah al-Kawthar

at least 1,000 times during the course of the journey and send the thawāb to Rasūlullāh ﷺ. This may seem a large number but it is a very short sūrah which can be recited with ease. As Rasūlullāh ﷺ will receive the reward of what you recite, you will, inshā'allāh, be able to derive more benefit from your visit.

Ṣalāt 'Alan-Nabī ﷺ[3]

Try to recite ṣalāt 'alan-nabī in abundance on your way to Madīnah Munawwarah. It is mentioned in a ḥadīth:

> There are angels of Allāh ﷻ who convey to me the salutations of my ummah. (An-Nasa'ī)

So it would be beneficial for your salutations to reach the beloved Prophet ﷺ even before you arrive at his blessed grave.

How Many Times?

Fix a target number of ṣalāt 'alan-nabī to be recited during your journey to Madīnah, and stick to it. If you do not fix a target, Shayṭān will mislead you into thinking that you have recited ṣalāt 'alan-nabī many times. In reality, you will have only recited it a few times and wasted the rest of the time in futility. Keep prayer beads in your hand constantly as this will act as a reminder and help you achieve your target.

[3] In Urdu, ṣalāt 'alan-nabī ﷺ is known as Durūd.

Which Ṣalāt ʻAlan-Nabī?

You may recite any version of ṣalāt ʻalan-nabī you wish; however the most virtuous is the one taught by Rasūlullāh ﷺ himself:

اَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلٰى مُحَمَّدٍ وَّ عَلٰى اٰلِ مُحَمَّدٍ كَمَا صَلَّيْتَ عَلٰى
اِبْرَاهِيْمَ وَ عَلٰى اٰلِ اِبْرَاهِيْمَ اِنَّكَ حَمِيْدٌ مَّجِيْدٌ ،
اَللّٰهُمَّ بَارِكْ عَلٰى مُحَمَّدٍ وَّ عَلٰى اٰلِ مُحَمَّدٍ كَمَا بَارَكْتَ عَلٰى
اِبْرَاهِيْمَ وَ عَلٰى اٰلِ اِبْرَاهِيْمَ اِنَّكَ حَمِيْدٌ مَّجِيْدٌ

Allāhumma ṣalli ʻalā muḥammadin wa ʻalā āli muḥammadin kamā ṣallayta ʻalā ibrāhīma wa ʻalā āli ibrāhīma innaka ḥamīdum majīd. Allāhumma bārik ʻalā muḥammadin wa ʻalā āli muḥammadin kamā bārakta ʻalā ibrāhīma wa ʻalā āli ibrāhīma innaka ḥamīdum majīd

O Allāh! Send salutations upon Muḥammad and upon the family of Muḥammad just as you sent salutations upon Ibrāhīm and upon the family of Ibrāhīm. Truly, You are worthy of all praise, the exalted. O Allāh! Send barakah upon Muḥammad and upon the family of Muḥammad just as you sent barakah upon Ibrāhīm and upon the family of Ibrāhīm. Truly, You are worthy of all praise, the exalted

The shortest version of ṣalāt ʻalan-nabī which one may recite is:

صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَ سَلَّمَ

Ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam
Salutations be upon him, and peace.

or:

وَ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ الْأُمِّيِّ

Wa ṣallallāhu ʿalan nabiyyil ummiyy
May Allāh send salutations upon the unlettered Prophet.

Another version to take note of is:

اَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلىٰ مُحَمَّدٍ كَمَا تُحِبُّ وَ تَرْضىٰ

عَدَدَ مَا تُحِبُّ وَ تَرْضىٰ

Allāhumma ṣalli ʿalā muḥammadin kamā tuḥibbu wa tarḍā ʿadada ma tuḥibbu wa tarḍā
O Allāh! Send salutations upon Muḥammad as is beloved and pleasing to You, as many times as is beloved and pleasing to You.

If you are regularly reciting a short version then it is advisable that after every 15-20 repetitions the ṣalāt ʿalan-nabī taught by Rasūlullāh ﷺ is read as well.

The time spent going and coming from the Masjid can be invested wisely in sending salutations upon Rasūlullāh ﷺ. For example, if you recite the shortest ṣalāt ʿalan-nabī continuously from your hotel room to the masjid, it is likely that you will be able to complete 500 repetitions. Thus, in

one trip to and from the Masjid 1,000 ṣalāt 'alan-nabī can be recited. In a day, this equates to 5,000. The benefit of such a strategy is that you will be able to recite ṣalāt 'alan-nabī without even having to allocate any extra time.

Try to recite the *Ṣalāt & Salām* booklet at least once after every ṣalāh, and even more if possible. It is a compilation of those ṣalāt and salām that are narrated in the aḥādīth.

The Beard

It is a common belief among people that growing a beard is sunnah. Sunnah means way; it is therefore a sunnah, in the sense that it is the way of Rasūlullāh ﷺ and the Ṣaḥābah ؓ, however, in practice it is in fact wājib to grow the beard. Just as one performs three witr after 'Ishā, likewise, growing the beard is also wājib. One should also remember that a person who discards a wājib will be sinful, just as a person who discards a farḍ is sinful.

Two Persian ambassadors once came to visit Rasūlullāh ﷺ. These visitors, who were of a different faith, did not have beards, but long moustaches. Rasūlullāh ﷺ turned his blessed face away and asked who had instructed them to adopt such an appearance. They replied: "Our Lord (Chosroes)." Rasūlullāh ﷺ then said: "But my Lord has ordered me to lengthen my beard and clip my moustache." (Al-Bidāyah wan-Nihāyah)

If a Muslim does not have a beard, he should give some serious consideration to the above narration, and conclude whether Rasūlullāh ﷺ would be pleased to see him or not.

Imagine on the Day of Reckoning, when one can hope for only the Mercy of Allāh ﷻ and the Prophet's ﷺ intercession, if he were to turn his face away because of the appearance a person has adopted. Will there be any other means of salvation? If one has the habit of shaving, then this visit is the ideal opportunity to start growing the beard. For those who have shortened beards, this is the ideal chance to let the beard grow to the required length, which is one full fist from all sides (none of the four Imāms permit anything shorter than this).

From among approximately 100,000 prophets عليهم السلام none was without a beard. This is why Rasūlullāh ﷺ said that the beard is from the way of the prophets عليهم السلام.

You will also not find a single Companion of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, or a single pious predecessor of the ummah, who did not have a beard.

The Garden of Jannah

According to one opinion of the 'ulamā, the area known as the Rawḍah is a piece of Jannah. After entering it perform some 'ibādah and thereafter supplicate to Allāh ﷻ by saying: "O Allāh! The Qur'ān has informed us that after a servant enters Jannah he will never be taken out. You have blessed me by granting me entry into a piece of Jannah. Now I request you to destine for me that after I die I remain in Jannah forever."

Visiting the Blessed Grave

Do not think that you are too sinful to present yourself in the court of Rasūlullāh ﷺ; this thought, while praiseworthy, should not become a barrier. Each one of us is very sinful, but our example is like the prodigal son who, despite his misbehaviour, had no choice but to return to his father. Thus you should visit the grave of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, for it is here that you can ask Rasūlullāh ﷺ to intercede on your behalf and request him to ask Allāh ﷻ to forgive you.

Out of ignorance, some people do not return to the blessed grave after the initial visit, until just before their departure from Madīnah. Try to go regularly, but do not make these visits merely a routine matter. Rather, present yourself at the blessed grave with the utmost love, respect, zeal and enthusiasm, as many times as your circumstances allow.

The Last Salām

It is mentioned that the farewell salām should be recited as normal, but with the following words added to the end:

اَلْوِدَاعُ يَا رَسُوْلَ اللّٰهِ

Al-widā' yā rasūlullāh.

Farewell! O Messenger of Allāh ﷺ.

However, the respected Shaykh Ḥājī Fārūq ﷺ used to say that when he would go for the farewell salām, instead of saying 'farewell' he would say:

اَلْوِصَالُ يَا رَسُوْلَ اللّٰهِ

Al-wiṣāl yā rasūlullāh.

Reunion! O Messenger of Allāh ﷺ.

"Even though I may be separating from you physically, my way of life will always be in accordance with your teachings and sunnah."

It is like saying: "I am not parting but coming together with you forever." This is because the one who practices the teachings of Rasūlullāh ﷺ becomes the beloved of Allāh ﷻ and His Rasūl ﷺ.

7. UPON RETURNING

Shaykh Ḥājī Fārūq ﷺ would advise that while returning from the Ḥaramayn, the pilgrim should make abundant shukr (thanks) and istighfār (repentance). Shukr is due, for had Allāh ﷻ not granted you the opportunity and ability then you would not have been able to undertake the journey or perform any 'ibādah.

Istighfār is due because man is the servant of Allāh ﷻ and man is full of shortcomings. As a result, there will definitely have been deficiencies in both the quantity and quality of your worship.

Thus, as you return home, concentrate upon your shortcomings and ask for forgiveness. Keep prayer beads in hand and constantly recite:

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ

Al-ḥamdu lillāh.

All praise is due to Allāh.

اَسْتَغْفِرُ اللّٰهَ

Astaghfirullāh

O Allāh! I seek your forgiveness.

Criticising the Host

Even though you may have experienced comfort and ease for 95-99% of the journey, Shayṭān will constantly remind you of the slight difficulties that you faced. Thus, it happens that some pilgrims utter words of criticism

due to which the spiritual blessings of their pilgrimage are wiped out. If due to someone's negative comments, another servant of Allāh ﷻ is put off from performing ḥajj or visiting the Ḥaramayn then he will be held responsible and accountable.

During the period of ḥajj there are approximately 2.5 million people in one place all undertaking the same rituals at the same time. With such a multitude, it is in reality only through the Faḍl of Allāh ﷻ that each year the ḥajj is completed with 'āfiyah. By emphasising the negative aspects of our ḥajj, we are implicitly criticising our host, Allāh ﷻ.

So, when you return, try not to be negative, and remember that in every journey that is undertaken there are always some difficulties. This is why it is mentioned in a ḥadīth:

> Travelling is a portion of punishment. (Al-Bukhārī)

Keep Your Pilgrimage Sincere

If you had the good fortune of performing lots of 'ibādah during your trip or were blessed with the opportunity of helping your fellow travellers, then abstain from talking about these acts upon your return. By unnecessarily disclosing your good deeds you run the risk of succumbing to the sin of riyā, through which the reward of all that has been acquired is erased.

Shaykh Mawlānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānwi ﷺ has mentioned

that once a Shaykh visited someone who had just returned from ḥajj. Upon the Shaykh's arrival the individual said to his servant: "Bring Zamzam for Shaykh! But don't bring it from the surahi[4] which we brought back this ḥajj, nor the one we brought last time; instead bring it from that surahi which we brought during our first ḥajj. And be careful while lifting it; hold it by the middle and not its neck so it does not break."

The Shaykh ascertained from the tone of the man's voice that he was trying to impress upon those present that he had performed ḥajj three times, so he commented: "Whether your surahi breaks or not, your ḥajj has definitely broken."

[4] A surahi is a long-necked clay pot, used in South Asia for storing and cooling water.

8. SOME COMPREHENSIVE ADVICE

During a recent visit to the Ḥaramayn, I was frequently asked by friends, well-wishers and Muslim brothers for some guidelines to help them make their stay in the blessed lands truly productive, and to help them avoid wasting the great opportunity they had been given.

By the sheer Mercy, Grace and Help of Allāh ﷻ, I was able to advise them to follow the following points, so that they would be able to fulfil all the obligatory things required of them and also acquire the maximum benefit from the blessed journey:

1. Make Sure You Do Not Disobey Allāh ﷻ

Your goal should be to abstain from not only all major sins, but also every minor sin. Remember, the filth of sins, be they major or minor, erodes and destroys all the spirituality the heart acquires through blessed devotions in blessed places during blessed moments. Be attentive, especially towards the use of your eyes, ensuring complete abstinence from casting evil glances. In order to preserve the spirituality and blessings acquired, you must refrain from every disobedience to Allāh ﷻ, whatever it may take to do so.

2. Do Not Waste a Single Second

These opportunities do not knock at everybody's door. Value this favour of Allāh ﷻ and make sure every second

is spent in the correct manner, doing only those things that bring His pleasure and enlighten the heart. If you have a choice between two actions then choose the one that will be most fruitful. Distance yourself from all those things that lead to wasting time. Ensure time is not spent in futile and wasteful talk or wandering around in the shopping areas. I advise you to prepare a timetable, according to your personal circumstances, and strictly adhere to it so that you are able to manage your time in the best manner. Remember, make full use of this opportunity as you may not have it again!

3. Reflect and Prepare

Whilst you are in these blessed places, sitting in Al-Masjid-ul-Ḥarām and Masjid-un-Nabawī ﷺ, take out some moments daily to reflect upon the past. Reflect upon your past life and prepare for the future.

Ask yourself these questions:

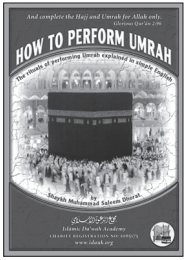
- Why did Allāh ﷻ create me?
- What is my goal in life?
- How far have I come in securing this objective?
- How much of my life has already passed and how much more remains?
- What is the percentage of evil in my life and what is the percentage of good?
- How can I change and turn over a new leaf in my life?

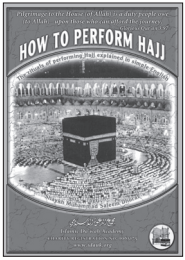
- What do I need to do, and what do I intend to do from now on to make amends for the past?

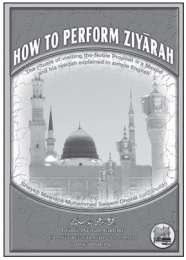
Meditate over these questions frequently and resolve in these blessed places to live your life according to the wishes of that Merciful Creator whose extreme love for you has brought you to these centres of blessings, despite your being undeserving. Prostrate before Him; shed tears and repent sincerely and ask Him to help you mend your ways and live a life of a muttaqī (God-fearing believer) upon your return.

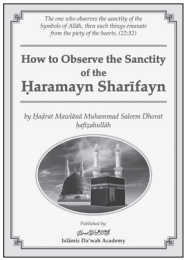
I hope this will help every Muslim brother and sister of mine who visits the most blessed places on the surface of this earth. Please pray for and convey salāms on behalf of this humble servant of Allāh ﷻ, his parents, mashā'ikh, teachers and associates.

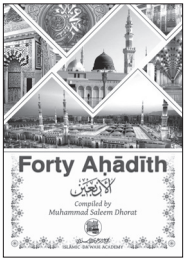
Our Other Publications

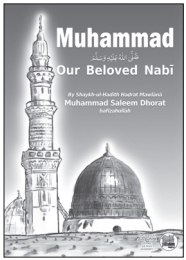


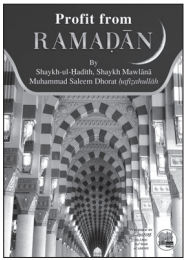


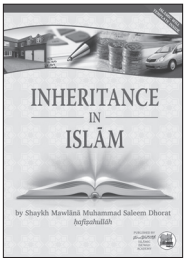


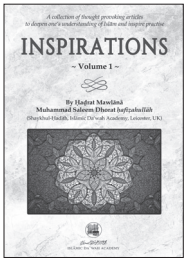












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