

HAJJ AND ITS SPIRITUAL EDUCATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF AKHLAQ: IDEAL AND CHALLENGES

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ABSTRACT

The performance of Hajj, which constitutes the fifth of The Pillars of Islam, is obligatory ‘ibadah for those who can afford to perform it once during their lifetime. It includes particular types of devotional acts such as Ihram, tawaf, sa’e, wuquf, jamrah and so on which a Muslim can offer in Makkah alone. It essentially needs physical exertion and the bearing of hardship, the sacrificing of wealth, energy, time and love and requires great patience in order to perform its devotions properly. Muslims from all parts of the world leave their lands, home, family and travel to Makkah simply for the cause of Allah to serve Him Alone, to whom belongs all Praise, all Grace and all Sovereignty. In fact, the performance of Hajj was originally to follow the shari’at and imitate the example of the Prophet Ibrahim, who believed totally in the Oneness of Allah and rejected all other deities, who totally surrendered and submitted his whole life for the cause of Allah and sacrificed absolutely to the Will of Allah. The Muslims who perform their Hajj with a sincere intention of the pleasure of Allah will return to their fitrah of goodness in which Allah created them. However, present situation in Makkah the real destruction of the ideal Hajj is the pilgrims themselves who have lost their discipline, patience and tolerance during the performance of the acts of Hajj. We do not deny that the acts of Hajj require physical exertion, but the atmosphere of pushing and shoving and sometimes shouting and disputing among those performing the Hajj in order to carry out the acts, such as tawaf, kissing the Black Stone and so on, indicate that perhaps the verses of the Qur’an are not penetrating their hearts. Actually, these bad deeds, such as pushing others and disputing, are sins which are unconsciously committed by some of the pilgrims and may discredit the performance of Hajj before Allah. This concept paper attempt to discuss the ideal of hajj and the challenges in performing hajj for the pleasure of Allah which will return to fitrah of goodness.

Keywords: Performance of Hajj, its devotions, *fitrah* of goodness and development of *akhlaq*

INTRODUCTION

The journey to the Holy land enables a Muslim to polish his hearts with firm iman. In the performance of Hajj, an individual Muslim may realise that Allah is the Sovereign, the Creator and Provider of the whole Universe and the Master of all masters. The saying of the pilgrim from the moment he begins the act of Hajj is: “Here I am !, O Allah, here I am !, Here I am !, there is none that is a partner to You, here I am ! Surely all praise, grace and dominion is Yours, and You have no partner !” With these words a pilgrim dedicates himself to the sole purpose of worshipping Allah, seeks His pleasure and is ready to make sacrifices

for His cause. At that time a pilgrim absolutely trusts in Allah and relies on Him and engenders love for Allah and the Prophet (pbuh).

Hajj can educate and generate the concept of peace among Muslims and self-discipline, particularly when they wear *Ihram*. Muhammad Shafi has noted that,

In the course of *Hajj* peace is the dominant theme; peace with God and one's soul, peace with one another and with animals, peace with birds and even with insects. To disturb the peace of anyone or any creatures in any shape or form is strictly prohibited.¹⁴

¹⁵This is a time of very strict self-discipline and control for every Muslim, to follow the restrictions of regulations in *Ihram* whose sanctity they cannot violate. When an individual Muslim puts on his *Ihram* (unsewn white sheet of cloth wrapped by a *Hajj* Pilgrim around the body), there are some restrictions with which he needs to comply. He is forbidden to wear sewn clothes, to cover the head, to wear shoes, to hunt, to pick any plant, shed blood and have sexual intercourse.

Ideal of Hajj

According to Suzanne Haneef, "Self-discipline and self-control are essential to a Muslim's character and behaviour."¹⁶ The Qur'an lays emphasis on the attitude that peace should be kept during the time of *Ihram*. Allah says:

The *Hajj* (pilgrimage) is (in) the well-known (lunar year) months (i.e. the 10th month, the 11th month and the first ten days of 12th month of the Islamic calendar, i.e. two months and ten days). So whoever intends to perform *Hajj* therein (by assuming *Ihram*), then he should not have sexual relations (with his wife), nor commit sin, nor dispute unjustly during the *Hajj*. And whatever good you do, (be sure) Allah knows it. And take a provision (with you) for the journey, but the best provision is *At-Taqwa* (piety, righteousness). So fear Me, O men of understanding.¹⁷

He who cannot safeguard his *Hajj* from these bad deeds is far from receiving benefit by the blessing of *Hajj*. The stipulations and regulations which should be followed during the performance of *Hajj* are always available for educating people in the ways of pilgrimage. They may educate and guide the pilgrim by self-discipline, self-control and self-awareness towards Allah so as to elevate the character of a Muslim. Those who perform their *Hajj* and then return to their countries will hopefully acquaint others with the beneficence of peace.

From a historical point of view, the performance of *Hajj* acts as a great lesson to the pilgrims for it may inspire the spirit of sacrifice in the Muslim family.¹⁸ The sacrificial example of the Prophet Ibrahim, his wife Hajar and his son Ismail was just to show total submission and surrender to Allah. Their submission to Allah is the farthest possible extent that we can reach at the human level. Therefore Allah has ordered Muslims to follow the true spirit of Ibrahim with the true religion and the way he showed fidelity and servitude to Allah. For example, the Prophet Ibrahim left his homeland (present day Iraq) accompanied by his wife Hajar and his baby son Ismail to the undeveloped and uncultivated valley of Makkah and then settled them

¹⁴ Shafi, Muhammad (1993). *Islamic Values*. Kazi Publication, Lahore, p. 105

¹⁵ Muhammad Shafi. (1993). *Islamic Values*, Kazi Publication, Lahore, p. 105

¹⁶ Suzanne Haneef. (1994). *What everyone should know about Islam and Muslims*, Adam Publishers and Distributors, Delhi, p. 101

¹⁷ The Qur'an 2: 197

¹⁸ Amin Ahsan Islahi. (1987) *How to Attain True Piety and Righteousness in Islam*, Islamic Publications Ltd., Safat, pp. 229 – 230

there only for the cause of Allah. Moreover, due to his commitment to establish the Will of Allah (2: 124), he did not hesitate when ordered to sacrifice his beloved son, Ismail and although *Shaitan* attempted several times to dissuade him from this act, he stoned the *Shaitan* away. He proceeded in accordance with the commandment of Allah without any doubt. The real essence of the sacrifice, which was made by the Prophet Ibrahim and his family, is total surrender to the Will of Allah.

The spirit of monotheism and sacrifice for the Will of Allah must be kept alive in the life of Muslims through the acts of *Hajj*. They sacrifice simply for Allah's pleasure and in order to worship Him. This was practised by the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and his Companions who sacrificed for the cause of Allah in spreading Islam, from the valley of Makkah. The contemplation of this historical environment may produce warm inspirations to make sacrifices for Allah's pleasure and strengthen the *iman*.

Thus, the performance of *Hajj* itself needs everyone to sacrifice property, energy, time, and so on in order to achieve the pleasure of Allah. The spirit of sacrifice as a symbol of the obligation is taught by Allah in the Qur'anic verse: Say (O Muhammad [pbuh]): "Verily, my *Salah*, my sacrifice, my living, and my dying are for Allah, the Lord of the *'alamin* (mankind, jinn and all that exists)." ¹⁹ This implies that someone who achieves the state of the true believer, particularly through *Hajj al-Mabrur* is determined to sacrifice for the cause of Allah against all sorts of sinful deeds and the temptations of *Shaitan*, and to establish righteousness.

The Muslims who perform their *Hajj* with a sincere intention of the pleasure of Allah will return to their *fitrah* of goodness in which Allah created them. The Prophet (pbuh) said, "Whoever performs *Hajj* to this House and does not approach his wife for sexual relations nor commits sins (while performance *Hajj*), he will come out as sinless as a newborn child (just delivered by his mother)." ²⁰ This means that those who performed the *Hajj* properly as prescribed in the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* will return born anew and a model of piety, no longer involved in moral corruption.

The persistence of this goodness and attempts to rectify previous bad deeds after returning from *Hajj* is the sign of *Hajj al-Mabrur* (the performance of *Hajj* which is accepted by the grace of Allah). The attainment of *Hajj Mabruur* indeed, is kept by the Muslims themselves in the strength of *iman*, the purification of heart, purity from all sins and readiness to sacrifice for the sake of doing good. This atmosphere may lead someone to act well and perform a betterment of *akhlaq* in his society.

The assembly day of *'Arafah* may lead Muslims to recall and think about the Day of Judgement in which they will be reckoned by Allah for every action that they have committed in the worldly life. It may lead them not to act against the Will of Allah and to keep performing good deeds. In this congregation, a condition of unity and cooperation is created, so that Muslims may refresh their willingness to help each other in all ways.

Throwing stones at the three places of *Jamrat* in Mina is a physical movement which may be a symbol of spiritual endeavour to stone and to conquer *Shaitan* who is the enemy of Muslims. It is also an exercise in the expression of the pilgrimage to be aware of all sorts of sinful acts and to ward off evil. This kind of direct *Tarbiyyah* from Allah promotes and trains the individual Muslim to be good and righteous even when they return to their own countries.

¹⁹ The Qur'an 6 : 162

²⁰ Recorded by Bukhari, Sahih, translated by Muhammad Muhsin Khan. (1997). vol. 3 A, no. 1819, 1820, Darussalam Publishers and Distributors, Riyadh, p. 44

They return to their country morally exalted, they become better Muslims and their past sins are forgiven.

Philosophically, the ideal of *Hajj* may lead to virtuous *akhlaq*, great solidarity, brotherhood, and unity of *ummah*. However, Ziauddin Sardar has a different concept of the ideal of *Hajj*. He holds the idea that the preservation of the beautiful and timeless city of Makkah with its simple environment might be the ideal *Hajj* for the pilgrims. To him, the changing structure, the environment surrounding the city of Makkah, which provides facilities for the pilgrims through new technology, is the cause of the destruction of the ideal *Hajj*.²¹ In this context, we believe that the changing material aspects, well-planned development and use of an appropriate technology for the infrastructure of developments do not mean the loss of the ideal of *Hajj*. These developments may even help the efficient performance of *Hajj* whose performers grow substantially every year.

Reality and Challenges of Performing Hajj

In fact, the real destruction of the ideal *Hajj* is the pilgrims themselves who have lost their discipline, patience and tolerance during the performance of the acts of *Hajj*. We do not deny that the acts of *Hajj* require physical exertion, but the atmosphere of pushing and shoving and sometimes shouting and disputing among those performing the *Hajj* in order to carry out the acts, such as *tawaf*, kissing the Black Stone, throwing tiny stones at *jamaraat* and so on, indicate that perhaps the verses of the Qur'an are not penetrating their hearts. Allah says : “ So whoever intends to perform *Hajj* therein (by assuming *Ihram*), then he should not have sexual relations (with his wife), nor commit sin, nor dispute unjustly during the *Hajj*.”²² Actually, these bad deeds, such as pushing others and disputing, are sins which are unconsciously committed by some of the pilgrims and may discredit the performance of *Hajj* before Allah. According to Wahiduddin Khan, “Nowadays, however, the *Hajj* has been reduced to little more than an annual religious ceremony.”²³ This is because the declaration: “ I am present before You, Lord, I am present before You. None has any share in Your sublimity. All praise and blessings are Yours – Yours and Yours Alone, and all power and dominion belong to You” does not leave any effect on these Muslims' hearts.

Therefore, if they realised the meaning and could perceive these words, they would endeavour to defeat all sorts of sinful deeds, and establish *ma'ruf* in order to practise their renewing covenant with Allah and negate all others before Him. Hence, in order to restore the essential spirit of *Hajj*, every individual Muslim should have a proper knowledge of the acts of *Hajj*; only then will the performance of *Hajj* elevate the brightness of *husnul khuluq*.

CONCLUSION

Knowledge and *hajj* education is important to *hajj* pilgrims each of which not only education about knowledge of how to perform the pilgrimage, but knowledge of how to discipline an oneself in doing any activity also essential so that it is consistent with discipline by the Quran. Self-control can shape the nature of patience in carrying out the activities of pilgrims. Thus, the pilgrimage can be done in a quiet and peaceful.

Indeed, individual Muslim is a social being who needs contact with others whereby he deals

7. Ziauddin Sardar. (1985). *Islamic Futures The Shape of Ideas to Come*, Mansell Publishing Limited, New York, pp. 284 - 285

²² The Qur'an 2 : 197

²³ Wahiduddin Khan. (1986). “*Hajj* and Islamic da'wah” in Zafrul-Islam Khan and Yaqub Zaki (eds.), *Hajj in Focus*, The Open Press, London, p. 34

with his fellow men based on co-operation and brotherhood and respect for each other. If the self-control is not properly ordered then it will not save Muslim from destruction, physical or spiritual. In this regard, we are right to say that *hajj* education prepares an individual Muslim whose objective is to establish goodness in pilgrimage rites and destroy every sort of evil deeds and misbehave on the basis of iman and *taqwa*. It actually induces man to move towards good moral qualities and perfection of character. Therefore, *hajj* education is crucial to every individual Muslim concerned with a comprehensive development of self-discipline, self-control in order to achieve a peace of heart and harmony in performing hajj.

There is clear evidence to indicate that the atmosphere of hajj education ensures good moral qualities of man and elevates his *akhlaq* to a higher, noble level. Those who have a good *akhlaq* may be able to accustom themselves to the performance of good deeds and sacrifice for the pleasure of Allah. In fact, the practice of good deeds in every activity of pilgrimage life will keep stable all Muslim. Then, performance of pilgrimage rites will be in conducive nature and harmony.

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