

A Tactical Guide to Performing the Hajj

Hajj is the fifth pillar of Islam and its significance cannot be emphasized enough. Allah SWT has made this act of worship incumbent upon every financially able Muslim. There are many books as well as virtual guides available on Hajj so why should you read this article?

Hajj is simple with its pillars and obligations and this knowledge can be attained from any book or website. However, what we hope to achieve here, which is the most important aspect of this journey, is the preparation of the heart. These words are from my heart meant for yours. Hopefully, *bi-idhnillah*, we will comprehend the true meaning of Hajj with its outward laws, as well as its spiritual crux.

What gives beauty to any deed is the manner in which it is performed. If you go to a dinner, the most important and lasting impression is not that of the variety of food or even the taste of it, but of the manners of the host serving it. Just as the manners of the host enhance the experience of an otherwise routine event, our manners enhance the acts of worship we perform. Manners are what give our worship depth, beauty, and allow us to reap its benefits. Though we have discussed the manners of Hajj in our previous article, their importance cannot be emphasized enough and I would like to reiterate them here as a reminder.

Emphasizing the Manners of Hajj

These are a few things we should do before embarking on this momentous journey:

- ❖ It is very important that we purify our intention for Allah SWT. We should go only for the sake of Hajj and not have other agendas, such as completing a shopping list. It is not prohibited, but it shouldn't be a goal and shouldn't occupy our thinking or time in anyway.

- ❖ We should perform two *raka'a Salat-ut-Tawba*, repenting to Allah SWT for our previous life style before we are purified by this journey.
- ❖ Right before leaving the house, we should perform two *raka'a nafl* where we recite surah *Al-Kafiroon* and *Al-Ikhlas*. When stepping out of the door we should say the following *du'a*:

(i) 'Allah is the greatest, Allah is the greatest, Allah is the greatest, How perfect He is, The One Who has placed this (transport) at our service, and we ourselves would not have been capable of that, and to our Lord is our final destiny. O Allah, we ask You for birr and taqwa in this journey of ours, and we ask You for deeds which please You. O Allah, facilitate our journey and let us cover its distance quickly. O Allah, You are The Companion on the journey and The Successor over the family, O Allah, I take refuge with You from the difficulties of travel, from having a change of hearts and being in a bad predicament, and I take refuge in You from an ill fated outcome with wealth and family.'

...upon returning the same supplication is recited with the following addition:

(ii) 'We return, repent, worship and praise our Lord.'

- ❖ Pay off all our debts and return anything that we might owe someone. If we have taken a personal loan from someone and haven't paid it off, we would need the permission of the lender to go on this journey; that is, in case we die, he forgives us the loan. If we have mortgage or any other corporate loan, then if our assets can cover the loan, we can travel; however, we should leave a will behind stating that in case of our death our assets should be liquidated and loans be paid.
- ❖ Seek the forgiveness of those who we might have oppressed in any manner; this includes backbiting, slander etc.

- ❖ Make promises to Allah SWT of changing our life in accordance to His will rather than coming back to our old lifestyle. Have a sincere intention to migrate to the life of *Akhirah* and away from the materialistic lifestyle.
- ❖ Do not perform Hajj because someone else wants you to or just to gain the title of a Hajji. Our intention has to be purely for Allah SWT—to get His pleasure and reward, and to fulfill the final pillar of Islam.
- ❖ Money used to perform Hajj has to be from *halal* sources. If the money is not *halal* the Hajj will not be accepted.
- ❖ Seek forgiveness of family members and neighbors for any intentional or unintentional abuse from our end.
- ❖ Choose a wise and pious companion for our journey. This companion should be someone who can help us remain focused on the purpose of Hajj, encourage us to do good deeds, and help us to be patient.

RasulAllah SAW said: "*The believer is the mirror of the believer.*" (Abu Dawud)

Imagine if you go out and you don't know what you look like? It is a disease in the *Ummah* now that no one wants to have a mirror that projects the reflection of one's inner being. Everyone believes he is perfect the way he is and doesn't need any advice or correction. This is the arrogant attitude that *Shaytaan* maintains; a believer on the other hand carries himself with humbleness and humility.

Can we honestly go to Hajj with this attitude that we don't need any help and are perfect the way we are? Would that attitude not defeat the entire purpose of Hajj?

- ❖ Prepare *taqwa* (fear/awe of Allah), which is a high level of *iman*. This is what we hope to help you attain with our work, *InshaAllah*.

Allah SWT says:

الْحَجُّ أَشْهُرٌ مَعْلُومٌ فَمَنْ فَرَضَ فِيهِنَّ الْحَجَّ فَلَا رَفَثَ وَلَا فُسُوقَ وَلَا
 جِدَالٌ فِي الْحَجَّ وَمَا تَعْلَمُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ يَعْلَمُهُ اللَّهُ وَتَرَوَدُوا فَإِنَّ خَيْرَ
 الْزَادِ التَّقْوَىٰ وَاتَّقُونَ يَتَأْلِمُ الْأَلْبَابُ



Hajj is [during] well-known months, so whoever has made Hajj obligatory upon himself therein [by entering the state of ihram], there is [to be for him] no sexual relations and no disobedience and no disputing during Hajj. And whatever good you do - Allah knows it. And take provisions, but indeed, the best provision is fear of Allah. And fear Me, O you of understanding. (2: 197)

- ❖ Keep performing intensive amount of *dhikr* throughout the journey. Journey of Hajj begins from the time we leave home and continues until our return, and each step of the way we receive the blessings of Allah SWT. We should recite as much *talbiyah* as we possibly can.
- ❖ Refocus all our love and fear on Allah SWT which in essence is the real meaning of *talbiyah*.
- ❖ Constantly be in the state of thanks to Allah SWT for allowing us to be Muslims, be among the *Ummah* of Muhammad SAW and for giving us the bounty of Hajj.
- ❖ Remember the glory of Allah and that Makkah is His *Haram* where no mischief is allowed.
- ❖ Remember the coffin when we see our *Ihraam*; this will help us focus and remove many unnecessary thoughts from our minds.
- ❖ Remember that the meeting with Allah SWT cannot be avoided and this journey of Hajj is a preparation for that.
- ❖ Take a portion of our money with us to help the needy Muslims. Everyone is responsible to spend according to his means but our pious predecessors used to spend most of what they had during their Hajj trips.

Not only does such spending strengthen the unity of the Muslim *Ummah*, but every penny that is spent in the way of Allah SWT multiplies up to 1,000 times in Medina and 100,000 times in Makkah. Can you think of a better investment for your *Akhirah*?

- ❖ Rituals of Hajj are reenactment of the trials of Ibrahim AS and his family. Allah SWT wants us to remember the obedience of Ibrahim, Ismail and Hajar as we perform the different rituals of Hajj. Look at their love for Allah SWT, and compare it to our love for Him SWT? And if we claim to have love for Allah and Islam, do our actions corroborate our claim?

Again, the very purpose of Hajj is to test our obedience to Allah SWT. The only time we can claim to have true love for Allah is when His SWT's and His Prophet SAW' teachings and their *sunan* (way of doing things) dictate our lives.

Pillars and Obligations of Hajj and 'Umrah

Arkaan (Pillars) of 'Umrah

1. *Ihram*
2. *Tawaf*
3. *S'aee* (walking between As-Safa and Al-Marwah).

Waajibaat (Obligations) of 'Umrah

1. *Ihram* from the Miqat.
2. Shaving or trimming (the hair of the head).

Arkaan (Pillars) of Hajj

1. *Ihram*

2. *Tawaf al-Ifada*
3. *Woqoof* (standing) in 'Arafah
4. *S'aee* between As-Safa and Al-Marwah

Waajibaat (Obligations) of Hajj

1. *Ihram* from the Miqat.
2. Remaining at 'Arafah till sunset for those who are there by day.
3. Remaining at *Muzdalifah* till Fajr until the horizon becomes clear (i.e. brightens), except for the weak/excused who may leave after half the night has passed.
4. Spending the nights in Mina during the days of *Tashreeq* (11th, 12th and 13th of *Dhul Hijjah*)
5. Pelting the big *Jamarah* (stone pillar) in addition to the other two pillars on the days of *Tashreeq*
6. Shaving or trimming (the hair).
7. The farewell *tawaf*.

If you miss some of the *waajibaat*, your Hajj will still be completed; however, you will have to pay penalty in any of the following three forms (depending on the act):

- Pay money
- Slaughter an animal
- Fast

Types of Hajj

Hajj has been grouped into three categories:

- *Ifrad*,

- *Qiran*,
- *Tamattu'*

The rules and regulations are slightly different depending on what kind of Hajj you intend to perform. You do not need to overwhelm yourself with the details as most of these affairs are now managed by the travel agents. However, for the sake of knowledge, we are providing a table below that explains these three different types of Hajj.

	IFRAD	QIRAN	TAMATTU'
Definition	<p><u>Isolated Hajj</u>: The pilgrim performing it is called Mufrid.</p> <p>This type is allowed only for those living within the boundaries (Miqat) from which Ihraam is put on.</p>	<p><u>Accompanied Hajj</u>: The pilgrim performing it is called Qarin. It can only be done by those living outside the Miqat.</p> <p><i>"This concession is only for those whose homes are not near the sacred Mosque."</i></p> <p>[Noble Quran 2:196]</p>	<p><u>Enjoyable Hajj</u>: The pilgrim performing it is called Mutamatti'. It can only be done by those living outside the Miqat.</p>
Ihraam	A pilgrim is required to enter the state of Ihraam with the intention of doing Hajj only.	This is Hajj combined with 'Umrah without coming out of Ihraam. The Qarin should enter the state of Ihraam with the intention of performing 'Umrah and Hajj together. The Qarin is not allowed to come out of the Ihraam no matter how long the period between his 'Umrah and Hajj may be.	Umrah is combined with Hajj under this type; however, a new Ihraam is made for the Hajj. After coming out of the Ihraam of 'Umrah, the Mutamatti' is allowed to do everything that was permitted before going into the state of Ihraam.
'Umrah	If a Mufrid performs 'Umrah during the months of Hajj (Shawwal, Dhul-Qa'dah & Dhul-Hijjah) prior to the beginning of the Hajj rites proper (8th of Dhul-Hijjah), he is no longer considered a Mufrid. He must now shift to one of the other two types of Hajj combine 'Umrah along with them and their regulations must instead be followed.	For Hajj Qiran, the 'Umrah has to be done within the months of Hajj (Shawwal, Dhul-Qa'dah & the first ten days of Dhul-Hijjah) and completed before beginning the rites of Hajj.	The 'Umrah has to be within the months of Hajj and must be completed before beginning the rites of Hajj. After completing 'Umrah, the pilgrim making Hajj Tamattu' must come out of his or her state of Ihraam.
Tawaf	When he reaches Mecca, he performs Tawaf for his arrival and S'aee for Hajj known as Tawaf al Qudum (the arrival circuit). It is permissible for him to postpone his S'aee for Hajj until after his Tawaf for Hajj.	When he reaches Mecca, he performs Tawaf for his arrival and S'aee for Hajj.	The Tawaf made for 'Umrah takes the place of the arrival Tawaf (Tawaf al-Qudum). This is then followed by 2 Rak'as Salah near to Ibrahim's station (In case of heavy traffic he may do the Salah anywhere in the general area to avoid causing problems with those making their Tawaf).
Tahallul	No shaving or clipping hair, as he doesn't disengage from Ihraam. Instead, he remains in Ihraam till after he stones Jamarah Al-'Aqabah on the Eid day.	The Qarin should clip his hair after 'Umrah instead of shaving it.	The Mutamatti' should clip his hair instead of shaving it to come out of his state of Ihraam after completing the 'Umrah part of his pilgrimage.
Sacrifice	May offer an animal sacrifice if he wants to, but he is under no obligation to do so.	Must offer an animal sacrifice which he brought along with him from the boundaries known as the Miqat.	Must offer an animal sacrifice, but if he is unable to do so, he is required to fast for ten days

From Heart to Heart

In this section of the article, I will try to give you a detailed overview of the steps of Hajj. *InshaAllah*, by the will of Allah SWT, I will try to create common and intimate understanding; something that we can all relate to and internalize.

- ❖ Hajj is supposed to be a journey full of promises, sacrifices, obedience, love and devotion from the slave to His master Allah SWT. From the onset of the journey, a pilgrim starts to recite *talbiyah*, which is the declaration of a slave's love and obedience to His Lord and affirms his commitment to serve Him SWT.

'Here I am O Allah, (in response to Your call), here I am. Here I am, You have no partner, here I am. Verily all praise, grace and sovereignty belong to You. You have no partner.'

These words are to be uttered in the same manner that expressions of devotion and promises are uttered by a lover to his beloved.

The constant recitation of *talbiyah* helps you to maintain focus on the service that you are supposed to provide Allah SWT. From its beginning to its end, this journey contains all that is great and offers deals such as mercy and ultimate forgiveness of our Lord SWT. The moment your eyes touch the *Ka'bah*, your *du'a* is accepted. That is the welcome of *Akram-ul-Akrameen*—the owner of generosity!

- ❖ There are many beautiful supplications for this time, though the best prayer is which comes from the heart with humility and unshakable conviction. Some of the prayers that one can make at this time are:

وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَقُولُ رَبَّنَا وَرَبِّنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةٌ وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ
حَسَنَةٌ وَقَنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ

- "Our Lord! Grant us good in this world and good in the hereafter, and save us from the chastisement of the fire." (2:201)
- O Allah, make this a blessed Hajj, with sins forgiven and effort that is accepted.

Another beautiful *du'a* that one of our pious predecessors advised his son to make is:

- Oh Allah, give me the happiness of this life and the hereafter and take care of all my affairs in this life and the hereafter.
- ❖ The manner of entering *Haram* is to perform *Tawaf-Qudoom* (*Tawaf* of entering Makkah) as soon as possible. However, if you are in *Ihraam*, this *Tawaf* will be part of your '*Umrah*'. Try to enter from the door called *Bab-as-Salaam* (As-Salam Door) as it is the *sunnah*, however it is not mandatory and you can enter from any other door. *Tawaf* is to perform seven circuits around the *Ka'bah* during which you admit your weaknesses to Allah and beg to be cleansed.
- ❖ It is the *sunnah* to kiss the black stone before starting the *Tawaf*; however, today it is almost impossible due to overwhelming crowd and lack of *adab* (manners) and knowledge in the *Ummah*. There is shoving and pushing in the vicinity and it is especially not recommended for sisters to place themselves in that kind of situation. Remember, you are responsible for your manners as others are for their own. Even if you get pushed and abused, you cannot retaliate. That is why I recommend maintaining a calm and composed attitude and only attempt kissing the black stone when the crowd is at a bare minimum.
- ❖ *Tawaf* starts with the sign '*bidaya wa nihaya*' at the corner where the black stone is situated. If you can't kiss the stone, you can wave your hand as if you are touching the stone saying "*Bismillah, Allah-u-Akbar*" and have the *niyyah* of performing *Tawaf* in your heart. Now, this *niyyah* will differ according to what kind of Hajj you are performing. This is why it is very important to have a knowledgeable companion in your journey. If that is not possible, make sure you are very clear about the kind of Hajj you are performing and the regulations related to that.

Tawaf is a symbol of your attachment to Allah SWT, as well as your longing and your need for His proximity. There are certain *sunnahs* of *Tawaf* especially for men. Men are encouraged to perform the first three circles while speed walking, demonstrating physical strength. However, there is absolutely no need to be rushing and pushing people out of the way

in order to maintain speed. This practice was encouraged by Prophet Muhammad SAW in order to display strength and power when Makkah was still in the hands of disbelievers. Remember, this is a *sunnah* whereas respecting others and not abusing them is mandatory!

While performing the first three circuits of *Tawaf, Ihraam* for men has to be worn in a way that the upper cloth covers only the left shoulder and the right shoulder remains uncovered. After the first three circuits both shoulders need to be covered. There are of course no such restrictions for women who can wear any of their regular clothing as *Ihraam*.

It is best to perform *Tawaf* individually in order to focus wholeheartedly on Allah SWT and not to get distracted by trying to hold hands, remaining together, etc. Large groups moving together cause accidents as people are pushed out of the way or can slip and be trampled over.

- ❖ After performing the *Tawaf*, you should leave calmly from the moving crowd and proceed to *Maqam-e-Ibrahim* in order to pray two *raka'a* thanking Allah for this bounty, and to make *du'a* to Him SWT. You can pray anywhere behind *Maqam-e- Ibrahim* irrespective of how far you are from it, as long as you are within the Haram. Another point you might want to keep in mind here is that the restriction of not passing in front of a praying person is not applicable in the Haram, so do not get distracted if it happens while you are in prayer. Perform two *raka'a nafl* there and then move on to the well of Zamzam.
- ❖ The well has been closed now so you can go to any Zamzam fountain and drink. The *sunnah* is to drink until you are full and cannot take anymore. It is as if Allah is telling us: 'go ahead, cleanse yourselves, get washed and along with your spirit fill your body with blessings too.' I would advise to drink the water slowly and make lots of *du'a* since Prophet SAW said:

"The water of Zamzam is good for whatever one intends (while drinking it). If you drink it seeking healing, Allah will give you healing. If you drink it to satisfy your hunger, Allah will satisfy your hunger. If you drink it to quench your thirst, Allah will quench your thirst. Zamzam is a well dug by the angel Gabriel by which Allah quenched the thirst of Ismail." (Related by AdDaraqutni and Al-Hakim.)

- ❖ From there proceed on to perform S'ee between Safa and Marwa in order to imitate Hajar, the mother of Ismail AS. The desperation of Hajar AS that caused her to run between mountains to search for sustenance for her child is what

our imitation is to reflect. It was only after her resignation and pure surrender to Allah, that He SWT opened Zamzam, which not only sustained them but caused a whole civilization to spring at this barren valley. All because of the belief of a woman in Allah SWT and her obedience to her husband!

Why does Allah SWT want to remind us of that? So that we will do the same—absolute surrender, if we want to receive any opening from Allah SWT.

S'aee is not easy. It is full of obstacles in the form of crowd, sweaty odorous bodies of the pilgrims and long walks, but again if the eyes are on the prize and the heart is busy with the remembrance of the purpose of this ritual, the task becomes meaningful and the soul is full of strength. In order to perform S'aee you have to enter from the door of Safa on to the pathway and walk towards Marwa. Each walk between Safa and Marwa is considered one circuit and you have to perform a total of seven. Every time you reach the peak of Safa and Marwa, you should look toward the *Ka'bah* and make *du'a* and the best *du'a* to make there is:

*There is no true god except Allah. He is One and He has no partner with Him;
His is the sovereignty and His is the praise, and He is able to do all things.*

- ❖ At the end of the seventh circuit, you perform the last condition of the 'Umrah, which is the shaving of the hair for men and trimming for women. This service is available for men just outside the doors of Haram for a small amount of money. Women, as they can't display their hair in public, can do it once they return to their hotel rooms. Women can cut a few centimeters or so and that would suffice, *InshaAllah*. Each hair that is snipped, removes one sin from the scroll of the person.

How generous is Allah SWT and how great is His mercy! How easy is it to get rid of something that you know you will get back such as hair, but how high is the reward of such simple obedience! After this, how can one not utter *talbiyah* with even more reverence and love!

This is the conclusion of 'Umrah. It is recommended to perform two *raka'a nafl* asking Allah SWT to accept it from you. Those performing *Tamattu'* Hajj are free to remove their *Ihraam* and the restrictions that are placed in that state are lifted from them such as applying perfume etc. They will wear their *Ihraam* again on the 8th of *Dhul Hijjah* while preparing for 'Arafah.

Now you wait to perform the Hajj; the main washing cycle of this journey as 'Umrah was only the pre-wash.

- ❖ At the 8th day of *Dhul Hijjah*, we set out for Mina for the main day—*Yawm Al-'Arafah*. We arrive in Mina one night before '*Arafah* in anticipation and preparation for this big day. One should think of it as the preparatory time before a big surgery when a patient is kept under close surveillance and special conditions are applied to prepare his body for the surgery. Just like the night before the surgery, the waiting night in Mina is the preparation for the soul and a time for reflection before the great day of '*Arafah*—unarguably the greatest day in one's life. All the Muslims are encouraged to fast this day except the pilgrims, in order to be united as one spiritual body—begging Allah for His mercy and His forgiveness for the entire Muslim *Ummah*.
- ❖ For the pilgrim, the experiences of the Day of '*Arafah* are a reminder of the Day of Judgment; the difference is that now we are alive and have a chance to make amends, whereas that Day, we would have run out of all chances. While standing in the land of '*Arafah* we should remember that Day when we will hear the sound of *Jahannam* and will see the angels of Allah SWT for the first time. The Day when everyone will be standing in front of Allah SWT and will be so overcome with fright and concern for their salvation that they will refuse to acknowledge even their own children.
- ❖ This journey to the land of final standing is supposed to wake us up from our slumber and remind us of the reason of our lives in this world—that this is the harvesting ground for the hereafter and our final destination lies with Allah SWT. Pilgrims should reflect over the last sermon of Prophet SAW which was delivered on this very ground and inculcate its message in their lives.

Prophet SAW said:

"O People, lend me an attentive ear, for I know not whether after this year, I shall ever be amongst you again. Therefore listen to what I am saying to you very carefully and TAKE THESE WORDS TO THOSE WHO COULD NOT BE PRESENT HERE TODAY.

O People, just as you regard this month, this day, this city as Sacred, so regard the life and property of every Muslim as a sacred trust. Return the goods entrusted to you to their rightful owners. Hurt no one so that no one may hurt you. Remember that you will indeed meet your LORD, and that HE will indeed reckon your deeds. Allah has forbidden you to take usury (interest), therefore all interest obligations shall henceforth be waived. Your capital, however, is yours to keep. You will neither inflict nor suffer any inequity. Allah has Judged that there shall be no interest and that all the interest due to Abbas ibn 'Abd'al Muttalib (Prophet's uncle) shall henceforth be waived...

Beware of Satan, for the safety of your religion. He has lost all hope that he will ever be able to lead you astray in big things, so beware of following him in small things.

O People, it is true that you have certain rights with regard to your women, but they also have rights over you. Remember that you have taken them as your wives only under Allah's trust and with His permission. If they abide by your right then to them belongs the right to be fed and clothed in kindness. Do treat your women well and be kind to them for they are your partners and committed helpers. And it is your right that they do not make friends with any one of whom you do not approve, as well as never to be unchaste.

O People, listen to me in earnest, worship Allah, say your five daily prayers (Salah), fast during the month of Ramadan, and give your wealth in Zakah. Perform Hajj if you can afford to.

All mankind is from Adam and Eve, an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; also a white has no superiority over black nor a black has any superiority over white except by piety and good action. Learn that every Muslim is a brother to every Muslim and that the Muslims constitute one brotherhood. Nothing shall be legitimate to a Muslim which belongs to a fellow Muslim unless it was given freely and willingly. Do not, therefore, do injustice to yourselves.

Remember, one day you will appear before Allah and answer your deeds. So beware, do not stray from the path of righteousness after I am gone.

O People, no prophet or apostle will come after me and no new faith will be born. Reason well, therefore, O People, and understand words which I convey to you. I leave behind me two things, the Quran and my example, the Sunnah and if you follow these you will never go astray.

All those who listen to me shall pass on my words to others and those to others again; and may the last ones understand my words better than those who listen to me directly. Be my witness, O Allah, that I have conveyed your message to your people".

- ❖ Pay close attention to the last few sentences. Prophet SAW has entrusted the proclamation of the message of Islam to his *Ummah*. It ends with the advice to those who are present to carry the message to those who are absent. Companions understood it as their duty and we have to realize it as ours also.

This journey is supposed to be the beginning of a new era in our lives; one filled with a sense of responsibility, wisdom and courage. But if we go back to our previous lifestyle, then we have lost the very purpose of this journey! Once we perform Hajj we have the duty:

- to proclaim the grandeur of Allah SWT to humanity;
 - to make Him *Akbar* (great) in this earth—with our actions and our speech; and
 - to work for the message of Islam in our own capacities.
- ❖ When RasulAllah SAW touched *Rukn Yamani*, the corner of the *Ka'bah* before *Hajr-al-Aswad*, he used to say that there is no living except for the hereafter. This is the understanding and zeal a Hajji is supposed to return with.
 - ❖ The rest of the day of '*Arafah*' is supposed to be spent in:
 - the remembrance of Allah;
 - recitation of the Qur'an;
 - seeking forgiveness and mercy of Allah for yourself, your ancestors, your progeny, and the entire Muslim nation;
 - supplicating to Allah SWT and making promises to Him to become a better and more obedient slave.

This has to be done in a state of complete love, devotion and conviction that Allah SWT will accept. RasulAllah SAW has told us that it is a major sin to be leaving '*Arafah*' while doubting whether Allah SWT has forgiven us or not.

Prophet SAW said:

"He who makes pilgrimage to the House, avoiding indecent and immoral behavior, emerges from his sins like a newborn baby" (Ibn Majah)

- ❖ You have to believe with conviction that Allah SWT has forgiven you. Doubting the mercy of the most Forgiving and Generous Lord is an insult towards Him SWT. One thing to remember is that you want to leave '*Arafah*' with dignity and tranquility as you have just been forgiven by Allah SWT. People sometimes get so caught up with the *sunnah* of leaving after Maghreb that they rush and become hasty, which is not a characteristic of the believer.
- ❖ After receiving this immense gift of mercy and forgiveness, the Hajji is put through a series of additional trials by Allah SWT to check his sincerity and the level of gratitude in his heart. Instead of being transported to the comfort of the hotel after standing in '*Arafah*' all day, the pilgrims are sent to *Muzdalifah*, where they spend the night under the open sky.

It is a barren desert land approximately six miles away from '*Arafah*', but it can take up to five or six hours to reach there. You might be tested with traffic congestion, dust, overbearing heat, need of using the bathroom, hunger, thirst and many other inconveniences. However, if you have really tasted the sweetness of the mercy of Allah and His closeness, being patient at this time will just add to that sweetness.

Those who have come away from '*Arafah*' with diseases in their hearts, for them every condition will be a major issue and it will cause them to lose their temper and be agitated. This night under the open sky with barely a few bathrooms for millions of people can be the most exciting and happy night of your life. It is the night when you are in a state of absolute purity; and now all your efforts and energies should be concentrated on how not to dirty your clean scroll.

- ❖ Stones are collected at *Muzdalifah* to be thrown at the three *Jamarat* for the rest of your time in Mina. Women and elderly are permitted by the Prophet SAW to leave *Muzdalifah* after spending a short amount of time instead of the entire night.

- ❖ Pilgrims wake after spending the night at *Muzdalifah* to greet the day of Eid. At this point, one should make a lot of *du'a* as that is what Prophet Muhammad SAW did. Pray Fajr and then proceed to Makkah to perform *Tawaf-e-Ifada*, which is mandatory.

What is the purpose of performing another *Tawaf* when you have already done it earlier? It is because now Allah SWT wants you to experience the sweetness of this ritual while being in the state of complete purity. He SWT wants you to renew your commitment, your level of devotion, love and need for Him with a clean heart and soul. Your *du'a* is accepted so this is the chance to beg Allah for all your wants.

- ❖ After the *Tawaf*, you go to perform S'ee imitating Hajar's struggle to surrender and her belief in Allah SWT—again to inculcate this concept in your heart. After that you shave or cut your hair, and then conclude the Hajj by slaughtering an animal.
- ❖ Why does Allah SWT want us to end the greatest event of our life with the sacrifice of an animal? Because this sacrifice is symbolic of our willingness to sacrifice all we have—our life, family, wealth, energy, and ability in the way of Allah SWT—for the remainder of our days, *InshaAllah*. Allah wants us to remember the story of Ibrahim, Ismail and Hajar and to internalize it by living their actions to a certain extent.

Sacrificing vs. Spending

I would like to make a point here that there is a big difference between spending and sacrificing. A person can spend a portion of his wealth and he doesn't feel the absence of it, but sacrifice is to spend all that you have for a cause and purpose you believe in.

لَنْ تَنَالُوا الْبِرَّ حَتَّىٰ تُنْفِقُوا مِمَّا تُحِبُّونَ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ شَيْءٍ
 فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ

Never will you attain the good [reward] until you spend [in the way of Allah] from that which you love. And whatever you spend - indeed, Allah is Knowing of it. (3:92)

Allah SWT wants us to be ready to sacrifice our *duniya* for *akhirah* when the time comes. It shows that the love for the one you are giving to is higher than the love for what you have. So when the time comes you will give your wealth, which you love, for Allah whom you love more than your wealth.

قُلْ إِنَّ كَانَ أَبَاؤُكُمْ وَأَبْنَاؤُكُمْ وَإِخْوَانُكُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُكُمْ وَعَشِيرَاتُكُمْ
 وَأَمْوَالُ أَقْتَرَفْتُمُوهَا وَتِجَارَةً تَخْشَوْنَ كَسَادَهَا وَمَسَكِينٌ تَرْضُونَهَا
 أَحَبَّ إِلَيْكُم مِّنْ أَلَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَجِهَادٍ فِي سَبِيلِهِ فَتَرَبَّصُوا حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِيَ
 اللَّهُ بِأَمْرِهِ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ

Say, [O Muhammad], "If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your relatives, wealth which you have obtained, commerce wherein you fear decline, and dwellings with which you are pleased are more beloved to you than Allah and His Messenger and jihad in His cause, then wait until Allah executes His command. And Allah does not guide the defiantly disobedient people." (9:24)

It is very important that the wealthy of this *Ummah* take a significant portion of their money for the assistance of their needy brothers and sisters. This is the reality of the brotherhood that Prophet SAW mentioned of this *Ummah*:

"The believers, in their love, mutual kindness, and close ties, are like one body; when any part complains, the whole body responds to it with wakefulness and fever." (Muslim)

He SAW also said:

"The faithful are like one man: if his eyes suffer, his whole body suffers." (Muslim)

"...A Muslim is the brother of a Muslim. He neither oppresses him nor humiliates him nor looks down upon him. The piety is here, (and while saying so) he pointed towards his chest thrice. It is a serious evil for a Muslim that he should look down upon his brother Muslim. All things of a Muslim are inviolable for his brother in faith; his blood, his wealth and his honor." (Muslim)

Allah's Apostle SAW also said:

"Verily, Allah, the Exalted and Glorious, will say on the Day of Resurrection: O son of Adam, I was sick but you did not visit Me. He will say: O my Lord, how could I visit Thee when Thou art the Lord of the worlds? Thereupon He will say: Didn't you know that a certain servant of Mine was sick but you did not visit him, and were you not aware that if you had visited him, you would have found Me by him? O son of Adam, I asked you for food but you did not feed Me. He will say: My Lord, how could I feed Thee when Thou art the Lord of the worlds? He will say: Didn't you know that a certain servant of Mine asked you for food but you did not feed him, and were you not aware that if you had fed him you would have found him by My side? (The Lord will again say:) O son of Adam, I asked you for something to drink but you did not provide Me with any. He will say: My Lord, how could I provide Thee with something to drink when Thou art the Lord of the worlds? Thereupon He will say: A certain servant of Mine asked you for a drink but you did not provide him with one, and had you provided him with a drink you would have found him near Me." (Muslim)

This topic cannot be stressed enough. It is also one of the signs of the accepted Hajj! When Prophet SAW was asked about the signs of an accepted Hajj, he SAW said: *sweet tongue and generosity*.

After the rituals of Hajj are completed, you have to go back to Mina and camp there for two or three nights, depending on your package. It is a *sunnah* and a wajib of Hajj. We have to stay in Mina in order to perform *Jamarat*—throwing of the stones—commemorating Ibrahim AS's rejection of the enticements of *Shaytaan* when the cursed one came to dissuade him from sacrificing his son.

On the day of Eid, we stone only one pillar known as *Jamarat-Al-'Aqaba*—the big one. The following two or three days we have to stone all three. Why do we have to perform all these rituals if we have already been cleansed at *'Arafah*? Allah SWT wants us to prepare ourselves for the remainder of our lives. Allah SWT wants to give us some time for reflection, contemplation, making promises to ourselves and to Him SWT.

It is like a rehab unit where a post-operative patient is kept to regain strength. Allah knows that if we go back to *duniya*, our comforts, our attachments, and occupations right away, we might lose the effect of our Hajj; so He makes it obligatory for us to stay in Mina in order to maximize the effect. Allah SWT erases a major sin from our scrolls with the throw of each stone at *Jamarat*. Scholars have debated whether it is a major sin before or after the Hajj, Allah knows best. Nonetheless, we have to be grateful for this great opportunity presented to us.

Also, I assure you that during this blessed time while situated at Mina, if you make sincere *du'a* your wishes are granted. What more can you ask for? I would advise that at this time, focus your *du'as* on *Akhirah*. Though there is nothing wrong with asking for material benefit, you should elevate your needs from the transient to the eternal. Make *du'a* for every stray, sick, needy and desperate of this *Ummah*. Allah SWT loves it when we as a nation remember each other in our prayers. And most of all, ask Allah to use you for the elevation of His deen, *InshaAllah*.

I would advise you to pay for *Udhiya* or *Qurbani* (sacrifice) before time, as all the sacrifice is done early in the day of Eid and you don't want to take chances with last minute affairs. The day of Eid should be spent in *Takbeer*, *Tahleel*, and *Tahmeed* (*Allah-u-Akbar*, *SubhanAllah* and *Alhamdulillah*.)

It is *sunnah* to perform pelting of *Jamarat* a little bit after *Dhuhr*. Since everyone tries to stick to that *sunnah* it results in massive crowds converging on a place at one time, and hence the kind of terrible accidents occur that we have seen in the past. My advice is that since there is no harm in changing the timings, try to avoid that time frame and if you can, perform it later in the day—it could be done any time before *'Asr*.

After staying the recommended amount of days in Mina, pilgrims return to Makkah and stay there until their time of departure. The last thing a Muslim should do in Makkah is perform *Tawaf-al-Wada'* (farewell *Tawaf*) and then he should leave immediately as his work there is done. One should leave with sincere *du'a* to Allah asking Him to make the *Ka'bah* beloved to his heart, make it a witness to him on the Day of Judgment, and allow him to return year after year.

Visitation to Medina

The purpose of visitation to Medina is to give salaam to RasulAllah SAW and to get the blessings of the land. It is a sign of respect to our beloved Prophet SAW that we make a trip to his *masjid*. It is also one of the three *masajid* in Islam that one should visit as RasulAllah SAW said:

Do not undertake journey but to three mosques; this mosque of mine, the mosque of al-Haraam and the mosque of Aqsa (Bait al-Maqdis). (Bukhari and Muslim)

It is highly desirable to visit Prophet SAW before or after performing the Hajj. However, it is not a ritual of Hajj and inability to go to Medina does not affect your Hajj in anyway.

His Treasures Are Limitless

Hajj is a journey full of trials and tribulations. Allah SWT asks us to leave our style of life, our physical comforts, our routines, and travel in order to gain His approval. If we go back to the same lifestyle as if we had never left it, what is the point?

Ramadan is training of the *nafs* through obedience. Hajj is an even higher form of obedience and controlling of the self. Not only are we to restrain ourselves from a few acts during the day, we are required to spend money, leave our comfort, and sleep under the open sky along with millions of other Muslims—irrespective of our material status.

The purpose is to be able to start a new chapter in our lives purely for the sake of Allah SWT. During the Hajj, ask Allah SWT's assistance to remain on the right path. Connect your heart to Him SWT and ask Him for every kind of goodness in this life and the hereafter.

The treasures of your Lord are limitless and He loves to give those who ask. Don't be stingy over yourself and do not stop knocking on the door of the Most Generous Lord. Ask Allah SWT to give you wisdom, light, vision, tranquility, open heartedness, ease of soul, good ending, guidance, and acceptance. Ask Allah to remove the love of *duniya* from your heart and give you victory over yourself, your weaknesses, and your devils.

RasulAllah SAW informed us of the signs of Hajj Mabroor being softness of talk and generosity. May Allah SWT grant us all Hajj Mabroor, *InshaAllah*. May He allow us to live the real message of Islam and the real message of Hajj. May Allah allow us to reach the highest destination, the one He SWT decorated with His own hands for His chosen slaves—*Jannat-al-Firdaws*.
Ameen.