

## The fifeth Pillar The Pilgrimage (Hajj)

The **Hajj** (pilgrimage to Mecca) is the fifth of the fundamental Muslim practices and institutions known as the five pillars of Islam.

Pilgrimage is made to the Kaaba, found in the sacred city of Mecca, the 'House of God,' whose sanctity rests in that the Prophet Abraham built it for the worship of God. God rewarded him by attributing the House to himself, in essence honoring it, and by making it the devotional epicenter which all Muslims face when offering the prayers (salah).

The rites of pilgrimage are performed today exactly as did by Abraham, and after him by Prophet Muhammad, may God praise them.

Pilgrimage is viewed as a particularly meritorious activity. Pilgrimage serves as a penance - the ultimate forgiveness for sins, devotion, and intense spirituality.

The pilgrimage to Mecca, the most sacred city in Islam, is required of all physically and financially able Muslims once in their life. The pilgrimage rite begins a few months after Ramadan, on the 8th day of the last month of the Islamic year of **Dhul-Hijjah**, and ends on the 13th day.

Mecca is the center towards which the Muslims converge once a year, meet and refresh in themselves the faith that all Muslims are equal and deserve the love and sympathy of others, irrespective of their race or ethnic origin.

Allah ﷻ says :

“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” (The Holy Qur'an 2:197)

((الْحَجُّ أَشْهُرٌ مَّعْلُومَاتٌ فَمَنْ فَرَضَ فِيهِنَّ الْحَجَّ فَلَا رَفَثَ وَلَا فُسُوقَ وَلَا جِدَالَ فِي الْحَجِّ  
وَمَا تَفَعَّلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ يَعْلَمُهُ اللَّهُ وَتَزَوَّدُوا فَإِنَّ خَيْرَ الزَّادِ التَّقْوَىٰ وَاتَّقُونِ يَا أُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ))

[البقرة: 197]

Allah ﷻ also says : “And proclaim to the people the Hajj [pilgrimage]; they will come to you on foot and on every lean camel; they will come from every distant

pass (27) That they may witness benefits for themselves and mention the name of Allah on known days over what He has provided for them of [sacrificial] animals. So eat of them and feed the miserable and poor (28) Then let them end their untidiness and fulfill their vows and perform Tawaf around the ancient House” (The Holy Qur’an 22:27-29)

﴿وَأَذِّنْ فِي النَّاسِ بِالْحَجِّ يَأْتُوكَ رِجَالًا وَعَلَىٰ كُلِّ ضَامِرٍ يَأْتِينَ مِنْ كُلِّ فَجٍّ عَمِيقٍ (27)  
لِيَشْهَدُوا مَنَافِعَ لَهُمْ وَيَذْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ فِي أَيَّامٍ مَّعْلُومَاتٍ عَلَىٰ مَا رَزَقَهُمْ مِنْ بَهِيمَةِ الْأَنْعَامِ  
فَكُلُوا مِنْهَا وَأَطْعَمُوا الْبَائِسَ الْفَقِيرَ (28) ثُمَّ لِيَقْضُوا تَفَثَهُمْ وَلِيُوفُوا نَدْوَرَهُمْ وَلِيَطُوفُوا  
بِالْبَيْتِ الْعَتِيقِ﴾ [الحج: 27-29]

### Pre-Conditions for Hajj

Certain conditions have to be fulfilled before Hajj becomes a compulsory duty on mankind:

1- The first condition is that of being a Muslim. Non-Muslims are, first and foremost, obliged to become Muslims after which the daily, monthly, yearly and once in a lifetime duties of Islam successively become requirements. Hajj is a religious duty which must be accompanied by the correct belief in order for it to be accepted by Allah.

2,3- The second and third conditions are those of sanity and puberty. A Muslim has to have reached puberty and be of sound mind for his or her Hajj to become a duty.

4- The fourth condition is that of ability based on the following Quranic verse: “And, pilgrimage to the House is duty on mankind to Allah for those who can find a way there” [The Holy Qur’an 3:97]

Similar statements of the Prophet ﷺ (peace be upon him) define ability as being sufficient provisions and transportation. Hence, a Muslim has to be economically able to make the trip. Therefore, only those who are economically and physically able to perform the rigorous rites of Hajj are obliged to do so.

5- The fifth condition, that of a **Mahram**, concerns women only and could be included under the condition of ability. women are not obliged to make Hajj unless they have a Mahram to accompany them. Thus, a woman

without a Mahram is recommended not to try to make Hajj. However, if the woman has the means and the Mahram, she is obliged to do so. Ayshah asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) ﷺ: “O, Messenger of Allah, are women obliged to make **Jihad** (holy war)?” he replied, “They must make Jihad in which there is no fighting- **Hajj and Umrah**”

### How to perform Hajj

The rituals of Hajj are performed in a five or six day’s duration, officially beginning on the 8th Dhul-Hijjah to ending on the 13th of the same month; Hajj is the largest annual religious event that takes place in Islam. Literally meaning “to take part in the journey,” The 7 steps of Hajj are as follows:

- Step 1 – Ihram and Intentions
- Step 2 – Mina aka “City of tents”
- Step 3 – Mina to Arafat, 9th day of Dhul-Hijjah
- Step 4 – Muzdalifah
- Step 5 – Rami – Stoning the devil
- Step 6 – Nahr
- Step 7 – Farewell Tawaf

- **Step 1 – Ihram and Intentions:** Making a pure intention and wearing the Ihram are the two of the first essential steps when going for Hajj. After making the niyat, Muslim pilgrims are advised to wear the Ihram- two pieces of unstitched sheets for men and a loose-fitting Abaya for women, properly covering the whole body. It is recommended that the pilgrim should wear the Ihram on Dhul-Hijjah before entering Miqat – the outer boundaries of Makkah. The five entry points or relevant Miqats for pilgrims are as follows:

Abbyar Ali (Dhu’l Hulaifah), (As-Sail Al-Kabeer) Qarn-al Manzil, Al- Juhfah – Located near Rabigh, Dhat’Irq, Sa’adiyah (Yalamlam), Also, once in Ihram, pilgrims are advised to recite **Talbiyah** while abstaining from all sinful acts. The Talbiyah should be recited in a loud voice:

لَبَّيْكَ اللَّهُمَّ لَبَّيْكَ، لَبَّيْكَ لَا شَرِيكَ لَكَ لَبَّيْكَ، إِنَّ الْحَمْدَ، وَالنِّعْمَةَ، لَكَ وَالْمُلْكَ، لَا شَرِيكَ لَكَ

“Ever at Your service, O Allah, every at Your service. Ever at Your Service, You have no partner, ever at Your service. Verily all praise, blessings, and dominions are Yours. You have no partner.” (Muslim 2:841)

After arriving at Makkah, Muslims intending to perform Hajj. For this, Muslims walk around the Holy Kaaba seven 7 times in an anti-clockwise direction, also known as **Tawaf Al qudum**. They then perform the ritual of Hajr-e-Aswad (Black Stone). Pilgrims start their journey towards Mina.

- **Step 2 – Mina aka “City of Tents”:** Situated 6 km from Makkah, Mina is a small town. Arriving at the tent city of Mina, pilgrims are advised to rest there until the following day. Starting with the noon prayer (Dhuhr) and ending with the dawn prayer (Fajr), pilgrims recite all five Salahs while staying in Mina.

- **Step 3 – Mina to Arafat, 9th Day of Dhul-Hijjah:** On the morning of the second day of Hajj that is 9th Dhul-Hijjah, the pilgrims start walking towards Arafat while reciting Talbiyah at the top of their voices. Muslim pilgrims observe Dhuhra – a combination of Dhuhr and Asr prayer with Qasar prayer upon reaching Arafat. This is known as Wuquf – the act of standing before Allah (SWT) and is observed near the Jabal al-Rahmah from noon to sunset.

- **Step 4 – Muzdalifah:** The pilgrims’ next destination for Hajj is Muzdalifah, a small town located between Mina and Mount Arafat. Upon arriving after sunset on the grounds of Muzdalifah, the pilgrims offer Ishaen – a combined prayer of Maghrib and Isha. Muslims spend one whole night under the open sky and collect 49 pebbles of similar sizes for the ritual of Rami (stoning of the Devil). They then leave the town of Muzdalifah on the morning of 10th Dhul-Hijjah.

**Tawaf al-Ifadah and Sa’i:** The pilgrims now head back to Makkah to perform Tawaf al-ifadah and Sa’I, the act of running between the Safa and Marwa hills. Once done, Muslims then go back to Mina to perform the acts of Rami, Nahr, and Halq.

- **Step 5 – Rami (Stoning the Devil):** On arriving at Mina, pilgrims perform the act of Rami by stoning the Jamraat al-Aqabah. Seven stones are thrown at the column structure. The stoning of Jamrat is performed in the memory of the act of Prophet Ibrahim عليه السلام when the devil tried discouraging him from following Allah ﷻ command. In reply, Prophet Ibrahim عليه السلام threw small pebbles to make the devil go away. Rami should be carried out at noon each day. Rami is performed on the 11th and 12th of Dhul-Hijjah.

- **Step 6 – Nahr:** After the completion of Rami, on 12th Dhul-Hijjah, Muslim pilgrims are advised to perform the sacrifice of an animal; it can be a camel or lamb. The meat of the sacrificed animal should be distributed to the needy.

**Halq and Taqsir:** Halq means shaving the head, while Taqsir means shortening or clipping of hair. After performing the sacred sacrifice, men pilgrims are advised to get their heads completely shaved or clipped. While forbidden to shave their heads, women are advised to get a strand or lock of their hairs chopped. The act of Halq and Taqsir symbolizes a Muslim's complete devotion to Allah ﷻ and detachment from worldly appearances.

- **Step 7 – Farewell Tawaf:** After completing the ritual, pilgrims return to the Holy Kaaba in Makkah to perform the “Farewell Tawaf,” followed by Sa’I. Though this officially marks the end of Hajj, many pilgrims also visit Madinah before heading home.

## Umra

**Umrah :** Linguistically, means to visit a particular place. In terms of Shariah, Umrah comprises of passing the Miqat in the state of Ihram, performing Tawaf of the Kaaba, doing Sa’i of Safa and Marwa and carrying out Halq (shaving) or Taqsir (shortening) of the hair.

Umrah can be performed throughout the year, although it is disliked to carry out the Umrah during the days of Hajj which take place between the 9th and 13th of Dhul Hijjah. The rites carried out during Umrah also form an integral part of Hajj itself.

## Conditions of Umrah

There are a number of conditions that need to be met in order to perform Umrah:

- 1- Islam – you must be Muslim.
- 2- Maturity – you must have reached puberty (Baligh).
- 3- Sanity – you must be mentally sound and in full control of your mental faculties.
- 4- Financially able – you must have sufficient expenses to cover travelling, accommodation and all other requirements during the course of your Umrah.
- 5- Physically able – you must be physically capable of travelling to Makkah and performing the rites of Umrah. You should be free from any illnesses or diseases that would restrict you from doing so.
- 6- Transport – you must have access to and can afford transport to travel to Makkah in order to perform Umrah. Travelling should also be safe i.e. you shouldn't be in any danger of being harmed during your trip.