



ACCEPTED HAJ

Situated in a barren land in the dusty plains of *Hijaaz* and surrounded by mountains, the only attraction for the *Hujjaj* until recently was the sacred house of Allah, the *Ka'ba Sharief*. There were no distractions. The Haji's gaze was riveted to the *Ka'ba*. Likewise, Madinah Munawwarah had only one attraction — the most beloved *Rowdah Mubarak*, the resting place of Rasulullah (S.A.W.). Perhaps on a secondary level, the Haji also hoped to visit *Jannatul Mala* and *Jannatul Baqi* — the graveyards of Makkah and Madinah which are the resting places of numerous Sahaaba (R.A.), or he may also have wished to visit Mount Uhud or the plains of Badr, or Musjidul Quba, etc. in order to revive the true spirit of Islam within himself by recounting the sacrifices that were made at these places. In short, the journey to Haj was just that — it was truly Haj.

HAJ-CUM-SHOPPING TRIP

Alas.... is there anyone to lament, to grieve over the present state of affairs? Is there anyone to shed tears of grief at the fact that, due to the many distractions of the modern bazaars, for many prospective *Hujjaj*, Haj has become partly a "tour" (exactly as it is often advertised). It has been reduced to an external physical exercise that is nearly devoid of any soul and of any spirituality. For many it has become a Haj-cum-shopping trip — "killing two birds with one stone," as some people describe it!!! Lists are prepared in advance. "Sincere" friends who have already undertaken the Haj- cum- shopping trip will proffer useful tips: "Make sure you go to so-and-so shopping centre. You haven't seen anything like it," they will say. Others will guide one as to where one could buy the expensive "his and hers" watch set, or the food processor, etc. Some will even advise one to take along a "big and strong bag" so that one can easily haul back one's cargo. Is there anyone to lament over this??? Anyone to grieve? Anyone to cry? Even to shed a tear?

LIFE AFTER HAJ

Haj in reality is an absolute transformation process. If the Haj is performed correctly with its due etiquettes, it will revolutionize one's life. One's life will then cease to revolve day and night around the world with a few moments snatched here and there for Deen. Haj will put Deen in the driving seat of one's life. It has been mentioned that every Haji has the yardstick to judge whether his Haj was accepted. The yardstick is ... *his*

life after Haj. If after Haj he has become fully conscious of his five daily *salaah* and never misses them, he is punctual with his other *ibadah* as well, he shuns all *haraam* activities and indulgences, he begins to adopt the *sunnah* in his life, ... he may conclude that, *insha-Allah*, his Haj has been accepted. But if the only "signs" of Haj in his life is the long kurta which he wears on Eid day or the mini hi-fi system in the lounge, or his kid's toys ... the apparent signs will then speak for themselves!

Hence it is time to make the Haj a journey that will revolutionize one's life. This will be achieved by firstly making one's intention clear that one is not going for a tour or a shopping trip. One is going to fulfil the command of Allah Ta'ala with regards to Haj.

PROVISIONS

Secondly, take your provisions along. If a person goes to the market with just a rand or two, he will most probably only come back with a few third grade potatoes and onions. If one goes with a bag full of cash, he will return with a truck load of goods. Likewise one has to take his provisions for Haj. The best provision, as Allah Ta'ala declares in the Glorious Qur'an, is *Taqwa* (piety). The greater amount of *Taqwa* that one will develop prior to leaving for Haj, the more one will be

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able to actually acquire from the Haj itself. Then will this Haj become a turning point in one's life. Before embarking on this journey, spend some time in the path of Allah and in the company of the pious. Read the incidents of the Haj journeys of the pious servants of Allah Ta'ala and make an effort to imbibe the same spirit within one. Resort to much sincere repentance and *zikr* of Allah. Engage oneself much in Dua beseeching Allah Ta'ala and begging of Him to grant one an accepted Haj and to save it from becoming just a "tour" or a shopping trip.

IMPORTANT POINTS

Also keep in mind the following few points which will help one to perform a real **Haj** and salvage this sacred journey from becoming just one of those trips!

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ACCEPTED HAJ

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TRULY RICH

* Ensure that you have acquired sufficient knowledge of the *masa'il* of Haj. For this refer to your local Ulama and refer to authentic books dealing with this aspect. Equally important is to mentally prepare oneself with those aspects which bring the life and soul into one's Haj. For this a thorough study - not just a cursory reading - of *Virtues of Haj* by Moulana Muhammad Zakariyya (R.A.) is vital before leaving. Also take a copy along. Do not touch the in-flight magazine on the plane. Read this book instead, for the second or even the third time if you have already read it before.

* Select the proper company from the very start. Totally avoid the company of those who are more inclined to lounging around in the hotel or roaming the bazaars. If you are not resting in your room, spend your time in the *Haram* engaged in *Ibadah*, *Zikr*, etc.

* Make a programme of *ibadah* for yourself. For example, resolve to recite at least five *paras* daily while sitting in the *Haram*. Resolve to recite *durood sharief* at least a thousand times daily - especially while in *Madinah Munawwarah*, etc. (— this may sound much but considering the time that is available, it is really very little). Keep yourself occupied in these aspects. You will have no time to roam around. Also find out in advance where and when programmes are being conducted by the Ulama and make a point of attending.

* It is naive to expect that people will not purchase anything there, nor is it impermissible to do so. However, totally avoid planned shopping trips. At the very least if something has to be bought, postpone the shopping to the very last day or the day before departure. Until that point focus one's attention exclusively onto *ibadah*. However, never bring any device that is itself *haram* or leads to sin - (T.V.'s, Videos, etc.) Remember! The apparent signs will speak for themselves as to what one has achieved from one's Haj. Among these signs is what one brings back, both spiritually as well as in the form of material possessions.

* If upon entering the hotel room you find a T.V. placed there, unplug it immediately and leave it unplugged.

* The journey to Haj is a journey to fulfil a *fardh ibadah*. Hence do not ever miss any other *fardh* while undertaking this journey. Perform your *salaah* on time, be it at airports or even on the plane.

* Rewards for good deeds are increased in the *Haramain*. Likewise the sins of all forbidden actions are also much more severe. Sayyidina Umar (R.A.) is reported to have said: "It is more severe upon me that I commit one sin in *Makkah* than committing seventy sins outside *Makkah*." Especially refrain from gazing at strange women. Once a person was overheard making *dua* in the following words: "O Allah, I seek refuge in You from Thyself!" Being a strange *dua*, he was asked as to why he prayed in those words. He explained that while making *tawaaf* of the *Ka'ba* he gazed once at a strange woman. Immediately a hand came out from the corner of the *Ka'ba* and slapped him so hard that one eye fell off. He then heard a voice saying: "This was the punishment for gazing at women while making *tawaaf* around our house. In future if you look again, we will take greater revenge" (*Virtues of Haj*). Thus sometimes Allah Ta'ala manifests His power in this way as well.

There are many other points of importance. Take advice from the Ulama before departing. Once again, Haj is NOT just a "trip." It is NOT a "tour." It is the fifth pillar of Islam and an obligation from Allah Ta'ala which, if fulfilled correctly, MUST transform one's life.

May Allah Ta'ala accept the Haj of the *Hujjaj* and make it a means of *hidayah* (guidance) for the entire mankind. Aameen.

WHO IS TRULY RICH? The answer to this question will vary from person to person. The most common answer is bound to be: "The one who has the most amount of money." However, let us hear the answer from the Leader of all mankind, from the one who was granted the most amount of knowledge by Allah Ta'ala, from that heart which was blessed with direct divine guidance, from none other than Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). Abu Hurairah (R.A.) reports that Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said: "A person's being rich is not dependent upon him owning much worldly possessions. Rather, being truly wealthy is to be rich in one's heart" (Sahih Bukhari).

If one is "rich in his heart" by being content with whatever Allah Ta'ala has blessed him with, irrespective of the amount, he is rich. On the other hand if a millionaire is hankering after the "next valley of gold," he is indeed poverty stricken. Excessive wealth can never grant a person peace until and unless his heart is also at peace. If one's heart is tormented by worldly worries, despite all the wealth in the world there will be really no "life" — it will just be a dreary existence living from day to day.

The peace of the heart which comes as a result of contentment is acquired by the remembrance of Allah Ta'ala. The remembrance of Allah Ta'ala means total obedience to Him, i.e. fulfilling all that He has commanded and refraining from that which He has forbidden. Included in this is the aspect of continuously engaging in verbal *zikr*, which will liven the soul and generate life in one's *ibadah*.

Involvement in sins destroys peace of mind and the contentment of the heart. As a result the world becomes one's object in life, as Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) says: "If the son of Adam (A.S.) had a valley of gold, he will wish that he had two valleys of gold. And nothing will fill his belly except the sand of the grave, but Allah forgives those who repent" (*Mishkaat*; p.450).

II APRIL FOOL II

Q THE FIRST OF APRIL is regarded as a day to play practical jokes on people. Generally a person is told something which perturbs or even shocks him. However he shortly thereafter realizes that what he was told is not true but it was rather a joke. According to the Shariah is it permissible to play such practical jokes on people?

A This is a very pertinent question. Hence it is appropriate that it be dealt with in some detail. The aspect of playing practical jokes on the first of April is much more serious than what most people generally regard it to be.

Firstly it must be understood well that to deliberately cause any inconvenience to anybody is totally Haraam and a grievous sin, irrespective of how apparently trivial and insignificant it may seem. This is applicable even if the inconvenience was caused merely in jest and in a light-hearted manner.

Secondly, the practical jokes played on people involves lying. Speaking lies is also totally forbidden. Allah Ta'ala declares in the Glorious Qur'an: "The curse of Allah is upon the liars." Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) is reported to have said: "Destruction to the one who speaks lies in order to make people laugh. Woe unto him, woe unto him" (*Abu Dawood*). In another narration it is reported that "a person is not a complete Believer until he forsakes lying in joking" (*Kanzul Ummaal*).

DECEPTION

Making people "April fools" also involves one in the serious sin of *khiyanah* (deception). Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) is reported to have said: "It is a great *khiyanah* that you say to your brother something regarding which he believes you to be true but you are in fact lying to him" (*Mishkaat*). Another Hadith pronounces the declaration of Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) thus: "The one who deceives us (Believers) is not from among us" (*Mishkaat*).

These aspects alone make it apparent that engaging in "April fool" antics involves one in a host of major sins.

IMITATING THE KUFFAAR

Over and above this is the fact that playing tricks is a custom of the Kuffaar. According to the Funk and Wagnalls New Encyclopedia, playing tricks on the first of April "is a custom among European peoples" (vol.2; pg. 263). The World Book Encyclopedia records that the observance of April Fools' Day "began in France after the adoption of the reformed calendar by Charles IX in 1564" (vol. 1; pg. 557). Thus the aspect of *tashabbuh* (imitating) the kuffaar also becomes applicable. Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) is reported to have said: "He who imitates a nation, he is from amongst them" (*Mishkaat*).

Hence when playing April fool tricks involves one in such serious sins, how can a person who claims to love Allah Ta'ala and His beloved Rasul (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) ever engage in it? If one has played such tricks in the past, one must sincerely repent and seek the pardon of those who were

Allah Ta'ala says: "And if you are in doubt of what We have revealed to Our servant, produce one chapter comparable to it. Call upon your helpers besides Allah to assist you, if you are truthful" (2:22)

Before anybody considers it, this challenge can NEVER be met. It is not a challenge of some ordinary mortal being. It is an open challenge by the Qur'an itself. This challenge of the Qur'an is itself sufficient proof that the Qur'an is not the product of any human mind, but rather it is the revealed word of Allah Ta'ala.

The challenge of the Qur'an was not ignored by the *kuffaar*. They indeed called their helpers, only to fail miserably and suffer obvious defeat. One such incident is that of ibn-al-Muqaffa (d.727 A. D.), a great scholar and celebrated writer of Persian origin. He was called upon by the *kuffaar* to counteract the widespread influence the Qur'an was having on people. Being a man of extraordinary genius, he felt quite confident that he could accomplish the task in one years time if his needs were taken care of so that he could give his undivided attention to the task. Six months passed and, naturally, certain people were eager to know how much work was accomplished. **When they went to see him, they found him sitting, pen in hand, staring at a blank piece of paper. Around him were innumerable pieces of paper. This great, learned and eloquent writer had done his best to write a book comparable to the Qur'an, but had failed pathetically.** Highly embarrassed, he admitted that even after working for all these six months he had not been able to produce even a single sentence which could match up to the excellence of the Qur'an. Ashamed and hopeless, he gave up the task he had been entrusted with. This incident was recounted by the orientalist Wollaston, in his book, *Muhammad, His Life and Doctrines* (p.143) to show that, "Mohammad's (S.A.W.) boast to the literary excellence of the *Quran* was not unfounded." (Adapted from: *God Arises*; p.160)

FEARING THE TONGUE

Sufyaan bin Abdullah Saqafi (R.A.) reports: "I once enquired from Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) as to what he feared most with regards to myself. Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) held his tongue and said: "This." (*Nasai*)

THE STENCH OF LYING

Ibn Umar (R.A.) reports that Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said: "When a person lies, the angels (that protect him) flee away to the distance of one mile due to the stench of the lie that he has spoken.

FAQIHUL UMMAH

The sterling advice of Faqihul Ummah Hazrath Mufti Mahmood Saheb (*Daamat Barakaatuhum*) has helped thousands of people to overcome many problems and difficulties — especially in the line of *Islahun Nafs* (inner-self reformation). Hereunder is a reply to a letter seeking guidance.

SIGN OF ACCEPTANCE

LETTER:

Respected Mufti Saheb

For several days I have been extremely worried. The matter is that I am quite wealthy. Hence this thought continuously recurs in my mind that I am accepted in the sight of Allah, hence this wealth is being showered upon me. As a result I am feeding my children as well as the children of the madrasah, etc. Likewise many other such thoughts and other sins continuously occur all day long. This is bothering me terribly. Please guide me in this matter.

SUMMARY OF REPLY:

Respected Brother

...When one is in a state of anxiety and cannot find peace, one should at such a time turn even more to Allah Ta'ala. Only He has the power to remove one's worries and difficulties. Sins do occur frequently, and it is indeed due to the commission of sins that the peace of the heart and mind is destroyed. To be wealthy is no sign of acceptance. *Ittiba'-e-Sunnah* (following the Sunnah) is a sign of acceptance.

Furthermore, to think, say or write that "I am feeding so many children" is extremely despicable. The Creator, Sustainer and Nourisher is **Allah only**. As a result of His favours upon children, the weak and the orphans, Allah Ta'ala grants sustenance to the one who cares for them as well. Perform two rakaats of *Salaatut Tawba*, make much *istighfaar* and repent to Allah Ta'ala beseeching Him in the following words: "O Allah, forgive my sins and save me in the future. Grant me the ability to worship you at all times. Grant me Halaal sustenance which is full of blessings. Due to the children and orphans, grant me sustenance as well."

(*Maktoobaat, vol.1: pg.196*)

A DISCIPLE of Sheikh Shibli (R.A.) once came to him after having performed Haj. The Sheikh asked him many questions about his journey and commented on his answers. Four of those questions are reproduced here. The entire conversation, which is a must for every Haji to read, can be found in the book *Virtues of Haj* by Moulana Muhammad Zakariyya (R.A.) at the end of chapter four.

The disciple relates: The Sheikh asked me: "Did you make a determined intention for Haj?" I replied: "Yes. I made a firm intention for performing Haj." The Sheikh: "Together with having made a firm intention for performing Haj, did you also have a firm intention of giving up all those things you did since you were born that are opposed to the spirit of Haj?" I replied: "No, I did not." The Sheikh: "In that case you had no intention for Haj." Then he said: "At the time of entering into *ihraam*, did you remove your clothing?" I replied: "Yes, I did." The Sheikh: "At that time did you pledge to remove from you everything save Allah?" I replied: "No, I did not." The Sheikh: "In that case you did not remove your clothing. ...Did you enter the Holy *Haram*?" I replied: "Yes, I did." The Sheikh: "Did you at that time pledge to leave aside every *haraam* (prohibited) act forever?" I replied: "No, I did not." The Sheikh: "Then you did not enter the area of the *Haram* at all. ... Did you perform the *tawaaf-ul-widaa* (farewell *tawaaf*)?" I replied: "Yes." The Sheikh: "Did you at that time say a complete farewell to your whole self, desires and passions?" I replied: "No, I did not." The Sheikh: "Then you did not perform the farewell *tawaaf*. Go back and perform Haj again in the manner I have described to you."

SEVERING KINSHIP

Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) is reported to have said: "There is no sin for which the perpetrator is more likely to be swiftly punished by Allah Ta'ala IN THIS WORLD, in addition to that punishment which is reserved for him in the Hereafter, than the commission of oppression and the severing of family ties" (Tirmizi).

BEST SADAQAH

Suraqah bin Maalik (R.A.) reports that Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) once said: "Shall I not inform you of the best *sadaqah*? It is what you spend to provide for a daughter who has been sent back to you (due to being widowed or divorced) and who has nobody but you to earn her livelihood." (*Ibn Majah*)

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