



UMRAH

It is that time of the year when thousands of people will be flocking to the *Mubarak* lands of *Makkatul Mukarramah* and *Madinatul Munawwarah* for the performance of *Umrah* and *Ziyaarah*. Indeed, it is very encouraging to note that the trend of spending thousands of rands on idle holidays overseas is gradually fading. Instead many people are now opting to spend their money to perform the tremendously great *ibadah* of *Umrah*. May Allah *Ta'ala* accept their *Umrah* and make it a means of guidance for one and all. *Aameen*.

While those blessed with this excellent opportunity are extremely fortunate, nevertheless it is important to fully appreciate the significance of this noble journey. Rasulullah (*sallallahu alaihi wasallam*) is reported to have said: "The *Haji* and the person going for *Umrah* are the delegations of Allah. If they ask, it will be granted to them. If they seek forgiveness, they will be forgiven" (*Ibn Majah*). It is also recorded in *Sahih Muslim* that Rasulullah (*sallallahu alaihi wasallam*) said: "*Umrah* in *Ramadhaan* is like performing *Haj* with me!" *Subhanallah!* What an absolutely excellent journey this is.

DIFFERENT BENEFIT

While the virtues and significance of this journey are extremely great, what each individual will personally derive from this journey will differ from person to person. Some will attain the forgiveness of Allah *Ta'ala* for all their past sins. They will be showered with *hidayah* (guidance), as a result of which they will return as new people — people who have been blessed with a fervour and zeal to live as true *Muslims* every moment of their remaining days on this earth, people who have sought forgiveness for the past and also made sincere *tawba* (repented for the future), people who will be themselves on the path of guidance and be a means of guiding others as well.

INTENTION OF HIDAYAH

This group will be those who, together with utmost sincerity, performed *Umrah* with the intention of gaining *hidayah* (guidance). *Umrah* is really very simple. It entails donning the *ihraam*, performing *tawaaf* and *sae* and shaving off/cutting the hair. From these aspects, the most important is the *tawaaf* of the *Ka'ba Shareef*. As for the *Ka'ba Shareef*, it has been described by the Noble Qur'an in the following words: "*Verily the first house (of Allah) that was built for the people is the one in Makkah, which is blessed and a place of guidance for the worlds (3:96)*." Thus the *Ka'ba Shareef* is a house of guidance. However only those people will truly attain

hidayah who visit the *Ka'ba Shareef* with the intention of seeking guidance, and who will fully apply themselves in such actions that will draw down the showers of mercy and guidance on them. They indeed will return as changed people.

A second group will be those who will perform much *ibadah* for which they will be greatly rewarded. They will also seek forgiveness for the past (without truly resolving to abstain from sin in the future). They will side-by-side spend a great amount of time roaming the bazaars. Finally they will return to their previous lives.

THAWAAB ONLY

This second group, inspite of their sincerity, are those who undertake the journey only for *thawaab* (reward). They will, *Insha-Allah*, be blessed with much *thawaab* (which is a great thing) but upon their return the signs of the *Umrah* will be non-existent. Despite having sought forgiveness for the past, due to the lack of sincere *tawba* for the future, their life pattern remains the same. Hence life comes back to **ABNORMAL** (as far as the Shariah is concerned) upon return. Therefore it is necessary to rectify one's intention and ponder over the true purpose of this journey. *Umrah* is not just "a trip" or "a tour." It is an *ibadah*. It is a means of building one's contact with Allah *Ta'ala*. Therefore, the intention for this journey must be to attain the pleasure of Allah *Ta'ala* and to be blessed with *hidayah*.

There will yet be a third group who will come back worse off, compared to the time when they left. They are the ones who involved themselves in sins in the *mubarak* lands. They indulged in sins of the eyes and washed away the spiritual benefit of their *Umrah*. Their tongues remained occupied in backbiting (especially about the locals). This is indeed a great tragedy.

Therefore the most important aspect is the determination of the object and purpose of this journey. Furthermore, it is important to keep in mind the following important aspects when going for *Umrah* or *Haj*.

INTERMINGLING

The laws of *hijaab* are an integral part of the Shariah. They are to be upheld at all times, moreso when one is on such an auspicious journey such as *Umrah* or *Haj*. Many families often travel together and

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UMRAH

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sometimes also live in the same quarters. The laws of *hijaab* are violated and suddenly total strangers (non-*mahrams* i.e. a person with whom marriage is permissible) become “brother and sister.” Many unspeakable problems with drastic consequences have ensued from such situations. Therefore no intermingling between non-*mahrams* should ever take place. Rather this should be the journey to resolve to fully adopt the laws of *hijaab* in future — if this important command of Allah Ta’ala was not yet being implemented in one’s life. Much more care should be taken to ensure that one’s young sons and daughters do not intermingle with any non-*mahrams* while travelling or while in the *Haramain*. Do not take these aspects for granted and regret later. It should also be known well that just as the rewards of good actions in the *Haramain* are multiplied manifold, the sin of evil deeds in these places is similarly increased.

BAZAARS

Also keep in mind that these *mubarak* places are the heart of Islam. Whatever actions will be practiced here will remain with one upon returning home. One leaves behind an environment of materialism back home in order to imbibe the spiritual effects of the *Haramain*. What a tragedy it will be if we become engrossed in the material environment even in those *mubarak* lands! The bazaars have been described in the Hadith as the “worst parts of the earth.” Hence only genuine necessity should compel one to venture into the bazaars. The real gifts of the *Mubarak* lands are only the water of *zam zam* and the dates of *Madinatul Munawwarah*. Other items can be purchased anywhere else in the world. Thus the precious little time we have should be spent fruitfully in *ibadat*, *ta’lim*, etc., and should not be wasted in idly roaming the bazaars. Especially ensure that that one’s young daughters do not ever venture into the bazaars even for the most urgent necessity without the father or any other *mahram*. Some people have suffered dreadful experiences in this regard.

Another extremely important aspect is to be extra careful in protecting the gaze. This applies while travelling and especially in the *Haram Sharif*. While performing *tawaaf*, it is incumbent that you do not intermingle with non-*mahrams*.

PREPARATION

Since *Umrah* is a great *ibadah*, one’s preparation for this journey can never be restricted to tickets, passports, visas and packing bags. A top priority and fundamental part of the preparation is the spiritual preparation. Repent from one’s past sins before departing, read authentic literature in this regard and take advice from the Ulama. Read the section on visiting *Madinatul Munawwarah* from the book “Virtues of Hajj” by Sheikh Zakariyya (R.A.) to the family before departing. Chalk out a programme in advance as to how one will spend one’s time in the blessed lands. If one leaves time free, one will inadvertently end up in *gheebah*, nonsensical talk and other sinful actions. Long before leaving, daily make fervent *dua* to Allah Ta’ala to enable one to make this journey a turning point in one’s life. Beseech Him to enable one to fulfil the etiquettes of those *mubarak* places. Remember! Allah Ta’ala has granted you this opportunity out of His special mercy. Many wealthier people have not been blessed with this opportunity. Therefore, true gratitude for this bounty is to use this opportunity to revolutionise and transform one’s life and enter into COMPLETE DEEN — not partly in and partly out.

Nevertheless, *Umrah* is a great *ibadah*. It is an excellent opportunity to sit in solitude and ponder upon the purpose of one’s existence on this earth, upon the shortness of life, about the life in the grave and about the reckoning of the day of Judgement. Let us ponder about the innumerable favours that Allah Ta’ala has blessed us with and how we have “re-paid” these favours with sin and disobedience, more sin and more disobedience,

SWEET WORDS

If one’s feet slip, it can be extremely dangerous. One could lose one’s balance and fall. This could result in fractured bones, perhaps even a heart attack. Undoubtedly these are serious consequences. However, these effects of the slip of the feet can never compare to the harm that can ensue from the slip of the tongue. It can result in several people suffering a heart attack. When the tongue slips, it pierces hearts, breaks marriages, splits families, estranges bosom friends and results in a host of other social evils.

The soft and fleshy tongue can cause a wound far worse than the wound of the hard teeth. As a poet says: “*The wound of the sword will heal - But the wound of the tongue will not.*”

Once Rasulullah (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) was asked: “What is the path of salvation (from the *fitna* that is engulfing us from all directions)?” He replied: “Guard your tongue, let your house be sufficient for you and cry over your sins” (Mishkaat).

The tongue often slips when one gives advice to others. However, even when giving advice, kind words and a gentle approach should be adopted. When Allah Ta’ala sent Moosa and Haroon (*alaihimas salaam*) to Firoun, He gave them the following command: “*And say to him (Firoun) soft words (20:44).*” There really cannot be any person today worse than Firoun, nor is anyone among us better than Moosa and Haroon (*alaihimas salaam*).

Harsh words often lead the opposite party to obstinacy. As a result, the faint hope of getting the person to understand the truth is also extinguished. When this pertains to the manner of talking to even the *kuffaar* under general conditions, how much more important it is that a fellow Muslim should be addressed in kind terms. Indeed at times to discipline a child or subordinate, a visible display of sternness has to be adopted. However, the general rule is to always adopt kind words even when reprimanding a person upon some wrong action.

Therefore, before uttering something, think about its consequences. Your words could fly like sharp arrows and cause irreparable

Corporal Punishment



As a parent, to what extent is it permissible for me to punish my child in order to discipline him?



Punishment as a means of discipline is to be resorted to only when other positive methods have failed. However, punishment is not confined to corporal punishment. Rather, corporal punishment is only to be used rarely within specifically defined limits. When the need does arise for punishment, other forms of punishment, such as depriving the child of some privilege or withholding certain benefits, often produces far better results.

Nevertheless, in many instances parents and others who have children under their care liberally resort to corporal punishment. Where genuine justification for meting out corporal punishment exists, the following *fatwa* of Hazrath Mufti Mahmoodul Hassan Gangohi (R.A.) should be kept in mind:

“A child may be hit with the open hand, not with a stick, thrice only (such as three slaps on the back). Only so much force may be exerted which the child will be able to bear (i.e. it should not bruise the child or leave marks on his body). The child must not be hit on the face or head. Anything beyond this is not permissible, otherwise the child will take retribution on the day of Judgement. Children should be treated with kindness and affection. The time of spanking children has long gone. The effects of hitting children are not positive. As a result the child becomes obstinate and fearless” (*Fataawa Mahmoodia* v.16, p.102).

MAKE A CHILD

Before laying a hand on a child, first stop and ponder: Is the child going to be punished (within the limits) because this is in the best interests of the child, or is it in order to vent one’s own anger? If it is due to the latter, it will be clear *zulm* (oppression). If the limits are exceeded, or if no justification existed for hitting the child, this will also be *zulm*. *Zulm* has drastic consequences in this world and the Hereafter. Therefore, when justification for punishment does exist, first ponder as to what is the appropriate punishment. Thereafter only mete out part of that punishment, not the entire punishment. In this way one will be saved from committing *zulm*. Remember — the object



WORSE THAN ZINA



The extent to which the Shariah detests the extremely abhorrent crime of *zina* is evident from the punishment that has been stipulated for it. An unmarried person found guilty of this crime will be given eighty lashes. A married person will be stoned to death. Aside from the *Shar’i* punishment, every straight thinking person abhors this evil totally. If the person guilty of this evil is exposed, he becomes disgraced in society. The parents of such a person, who has been exposed, will not have the courage to face society. Yes, *Zina* is a terrible deed. Everybody rightly regards it as such.

However, there is something worse than *zina*. It is worse than that evil which is punishable with eighty lashes or stoning to death. It has been declared to be worse by none other than Rasulullah (*sallallahu alaihi wasallam*). Yet, despite the fact that it is worse than *zina*, it goes on all the time. The whole family engages in it together. It is a favourite past time for many. It continues even in the Musjid. It does not even stop in *Ramadhaan*. People indulge in it even while sitting directly in front of the *Ka’ba Shareef*. The camps of Mina and the plains of Arafat are also not free of it . . . The list goes on and on.

What, then, is this terrible sin, this ghastly deed, this disgusting evil which is worse than the most despicable crime of *zina*? Yet it takes place almost everywhere. It is simply the wretched act of . . . *GHEEBAT* (backbiting). Rasulullah (*sallallahu alaihi wasallam*) is reported to have said: “*Gheebat* is worse than *zina*” (*Mishkaat*). But do we regard it as such? Do we carry the same abhorrence in our hearts for *gheebat* as we have for *zina*? Does the husband stop his wife in her tracks when she indulges in the act that is worse than *zina*, and vice versa? Rarely does this happen.

The Qur’an denounces the sin of *gheebat* in extremely strong terms. Allah Ta’ala asks: “Does any one of you love to eat the flesh of his dead brother?” *Gheebat* is thus akin to eating the flesh of a dead person.

WHAT IS GHEEBAT?

In the Hadith Rasulullah (*sallallahu alaihi wasallam*) is reported to have said: “Backbiting is to mention something of your fellow Muslim brother what he would dislike (that such a thing is being mentioned about him.” Somebody asked: “And what if it is true?” Rasulullah (*sallallahu alaihi wasallam*) replied: “If it is true you have indulged in *gheebat*. If it is a lie, you are guilty of slandering him” (*Mishkaat*). Thus the common retort to justify one’s backbiting such as “*what I am saying is true!*” will not negate the sin of *gheebat*. In fact this is *gheebat* in its totality.

WHY WORSE ?

Why is *gheebat* worse than *zina*? The person guilty of adultery realizes he is committing a grave sin. He even feels ashamed. Thus such a person would often quickly make sincere *tawba* and gain the forgiveness of Allah Ta’ala. But the one involved in *gheebat* feels that he is doing nothing wrong. He therefore does not even repent. In the meantime he has passed on his precious good deeds to the one he has spoken ill of.

Also, *gheebat* is a means of creating mischief. Those who were not involved in any way in an incident or who have nothing to do with it listen to the sordid details with relish. They in turn pass it on to others until entire families and communities are engulfed in its flames. The end-result is severe *fitna*. Allah Ta’ala declares: “*And fitna is worse than murder.*” Thus the gravity of the crime of *gheebat* is apparent.

Therefore STOP this evil. STOP passing your good deeds to those you dislike. STOP making your pet past time the discussion of the ills of your boss, employee, colleague, rival, partner, mother-in-law/ daughter-in-law/other-in-laws, or any body else. Use the time to ponder over one’s own sins and weaknesses. This will be of benefit to one. Just simply put a fullstop to backbiting. You may not always be in the



FAQIHUL UMMAH

The sterling advice of Faqihul Ummah Hazrath Mufti Mahmood Saheb (*Rahmatullahi Alaihi*) 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.

BACKBITING

SUMMARY OF LETTER:

Bismih Ta'ala

Respected Mufti Saheb

As-Salaamu Alaikum

. . . I have acquired an extremely evil habit of backbiting. I also quickly start thinking ill of others. Kindly help me to overcome this malady.

SUMMARY OF REPLY:

Bismih Ta'ala

Respected Brother

As-Salaamu Alaikum

A person generally indulges in backbiting others and thinks ill of them because he regards them as an opposition. However, in the process he transfers all his good deeds to the one who he thought ill of or who he had made *gheebat* of. Consider what utter foolishness this is? The one whom one is angry with, one transfers one's good deeds to the very person by backbiting him. Does one give such a person (whom one is annoyed with) one's wealth and material belongings? Never. Then how is one suddenly prepared to give away one's good deeds to him on the day of *Qiyamah* and become destitute? Ponder over this deeply and repeatedly until it firmly settles into the recesses of the heart. May Allah Ta'ala grant you and I the ability to practice.

(*Maktoobaat - vol.1, pg.137*)

ANARCHY

Crime, anarchy, natural calamities and other difficulties prevail all around us. What is the reason for this? As *Mu'mineen* (Believers) we are duty bound to look for the answers of all things in the Qur'an and Hadith. From the various verses of the Qur'an and the numerous Ahadith that clearly indicate to us the reasons, hereunder one hadith is quoted:

Rasulullah (*sallallahu alaihi wasallam*) has mentioned that when immodesty will become rife, people will be hit by plagues, epidemics and strange new diseases which their forefathers had never heard of. When people will cheat in weight and measure, they will be overtaken by famine, price-hikes and oppressive rulers. When zakaat will not be paid, rains will be withheld. When people will break their covenant (of being true Muslims) with Allah and His Messenger (*sallallahu alaihi wasallam*), then Allah Ta'ala will make alien enemies dominant over them. These enemies will snatch away their belongings from them without justification. When judgement will not be passed in any matter in accordance to the book of Allah Ta'ala, Allah Ta'ala will cause mutual hatred to creep into the hearts and people will become embroiled in disputes (*Ibn Majah*).

RAMADHAAN

Hazrath Ka'b bin Ujrah (*radhiallahu anhu*) relates that Rasulullah (*sallallahu alaihi wasallam*) once said: "Come closer to the *mimbar*." We came closer. When Rasulullah (*sallallahu alaihi wasallam*) placed his foot on the first step of the *mimbar* he said "Aameen" when he ascended the second step he again said "Aameen" and likewise on the third step. When Rasulullah (*sallallahu alaihi wasallam*) had completed delivering his sermon and descended the pulpit, we enquired from him: "O Rasul of Allah (*sallallahu alaihi wasallam*), today we have heard from you something which we have never heard before." Rasulullah (*sallallahu alaihi wasallam*) said: "When I ascended the first step, Jibra'eel (*alaihis salaam*) appeared before me and said: "May that person be destroyed who is alive in the month of *Ramadh*aan and yet he did not gain forgiveness. I said "Aameen" (may it be accepted). When I ascended the second step, he said: "May that person be destroyed in front of whom your name is taken and he does not send *durood* upon you. I said "Aameen." When I reached the third step, he said: "May that person be destroyed whose parents or one of them attains old-age in his lifetime and he does not gain entrance into *Jannah* through them and I said

ENROLMENTS

Students wishing to enrol for the Hifz or Aalim course in the new year should come to the Madrasah on 7 February 1998 at 8 a.m.

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