

THE HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE OF HAJJ (PILGRIMAGE)

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ نَحْمَدُهُ وَنَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ. وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا وَمِنْ
سَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا. مَنْ يَهْدِهِ اللَّهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ لَهُ وَمَنْ يَضِلَّ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ.
أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ سَيِّدَنَا مُحَمَّدًا
عَبْدَهُ وَرَسُولَهُ. اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ وَبَارِكْ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ
وَأَصْحَابِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ.
أَمَّا بَعْدُ،

فَيَا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ، اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ أَوْصِيَكُمْ وَإِيَّايَ بِتَقْوَى اللَّهِ، فَقَدْ فَازَ الْمُتَّقُونَ.

Let us all increase our obedience towards Allah the Almighty by doing everything that He prescribes and avoiding all that He prohibits. Hopefully, we will receive forgiveness and achieve happiness in this world and in the hereafter.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

All praise be to Allah the Almighty. Some of the *Hajj* pilgrims are returning home. Let us pray that their worship will be accepted and that they will arrive home safely.

Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca) is an act of worship performed by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) to renew and continue the teachings of Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham). According to a well-known scholarly opinion, *Hajj* was made obligatory on Muslims in the sixth year of *Hijriah* (Islamic calendar) following the revelation in the Quran in Chapter 3 (Surah Ali Imran), verse (*ayat*) 97:

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

﴿١٧﴾ وَلِلَّهِ عَلَى النَّاسِ حِجُّ الْبَيْتِ مَنِ اسْتَطَاعَ إِلَيْهِ سَبِيلًا وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ عَنِ الْعَالَمِينَ

Which means: *In it are Signs Manifest; (for example), the Station of Abraham; whoever enters it attains security; Pilgrimage thereto is a duty men owe to Allah,- those who can afford the journey; but if any deny faith, Allah stands not in need of any of His creatures*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) performed *Hajj* only once during his lifetime. This pilgrimage was called *Hajjatul Wada'*. The Prophet (pbuh) took nine days to travel from Medina to Mecca with his wife and thousands of his companions.

Hajj develops a sense of equality among Muslims. There is no difference between the rich and the poor, the light-skinned and dark-skinned; they are all the same as when they will be resurrected in the hereafter. Millions of Muslims come from all over the world with the same intention, which is to perform *Hajj*.

Although they differ in language, culture, customs, tradition, race, and nationality, they all put on the same dress, hold the same belief, and have the same intention which is to glorify the greatness of Allah the Almighty. They perform the same acts of worship, such as the stoning pillars (*jamarat*), circumambulating the *Kaaba* (*tawaf*) and walking between Safa and Marwah (Saie). They go with pure intentions solely to worship Allah the Almighty and to gain acceptance from Him as well as to receive forgiveness of all sins. The Prophet (pbuh) said in a *Hadith* which was narrated by Imam al-Bukhari:

مَنْ حَجَّ هَذَا الْبَيْتَ فَلَمْ يَرْفُثْ وَلَمْ يَفْسُقْ رَجَعَ كَيَوْمِ وَلَدَتْهُ أُمُّهُ

Which means: *Whoever performs Hajj and does not speak ill or does evil, he returns as pure as the day he was born of his mother.*

Hajj strengthens the Islamic brotherhood which may frighten the enemy of Islam. Although Muslims come from far, they are all brought together by Allah the Almighty to Mecca, the birthplace of Islam. Mecca is the ideal place to gather and plan the future of Muslims. The city of Mecca is the symbol of unity, pure monotheistic (*tauhid*) belief and Islamic brotherhood to all parts of the world.

This massive gathering is certainly feared by the enemies of Islam as it shows that Muslims are united and have mutual respect and affection. They are joined together by a strong Islamic faith. Allah the Almighty says in the Quran in Chapter 22 (Surah Al-Haj), verse (*ayat*) 27:

وَأَذِّنْ فِي النَّاسِ بِالْحَجِّ يَأْتُوكَ رِجَالًا وَعَلَىٰ كُلِّ ضَامِرٍ
يَأْتِينَ مِنْ كُلِّ فَجٍّ عَمِيقٍ ﴿٢٧﴾

Which means: "Which means: *And proclaim the Pilgrimage among men: they will come to thee on foot and (mounted) on every kind of camel, lean on account of journeys through deep and distant mountain highways;*"

Those who are near the *Kaaba* (*Baitullah*) in the Sacred Mosque are reminded of the time when two Prophets of Allah were building the *Kaabah*, namely Prophet Ibrahim and his son Prophet Ismail (Ishmael). They are also reminded of the event when Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) kissed the black stone (*Hajar Aswad*) and when he destroyed the idols worshipped by the ignorant Arabs.

Similarly, when they are at the hills of Safa and Marwah, the pilgrims will recall the event where Hajar (Prophet Ibrahim's wife) was running back and forth in search for water for her son Ismail. When they are throwing stones at the three pillars in Mina, the pilgrims will be reminded of the event in which Prophet Ibrahim fought against Satan's persuasion. While in Arafah, the pilgrims pray for the blessings and forgiveness of Allah the Almighty.

To end today's *khutbah* (sermon), let us unite in uplifting Islam and the prosperity of our beloved country. Let us not delay in performing our *Hajj* pilgrimage as mentioned in the Quran in Chapter 2 (Surah Al-Baqarah), verse (*ayat*) 196:

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

وَأَتِمُّوا الْحَجَّ وَالْعُمْرَةَ لِلَّهِ

Which means: *And complete the Hajj or 'umra in the service of Allah.*

Those who have performed *Hajj* must strive to continuously obey Allah the Almighty by praying congregationally in the mosques and maintaining noble character as Muslims. Those are some of the signs of an accepted pilgrimage.

بَارِكْ اللَّهُ لِيْ وَلَكُمْ فِي الْقُرْءَانِ الْعَظِيْمِ، وَنَفَعْنِيْ وَإِيَّاكُمْ بِمَا فِيْهِ مِنَ الْآيَاتِ
وَالذِّكْرِ الْحَكِيْمِ، وَتَقَبَّلَ مِنِّيْ وَمِنْكُمْ تِلَاوَتَهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيْعُ الْعَلِيْمُ، أَقُولُ قَوْلِيْ هَذَا
وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ الْعَظِيْمَ لِيْ وَلَكُمْ، وَلِسَائِرِ الْمُسْلِمِيْنَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ، وَالْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ
وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ، فَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ فَيَا فَوْزَ الْمُسْتَغْفِرِيْنَ وَيَا نَجَاةَ التَّائِبِيْنَ.