

Spiritual Aspects

Some of the spiritual aspects of different acts of Hajj

When one enters the desert and sees the mountain-roads and other obstacles of travel, he should remember the time of his departure from this world and the obstacles he will face in the world of Barzakh and Mahshar (where we all will be gathered). The lonely path should remind one of the loneliness in the grave; likewise, the fear of highway robbers and wild animals should remind one of the fears of punishment in Barzakh.

On arrival at Miqat, while wearing the Ihraam, one should remember the occasion when he will be wrapped up in Kafan (which resembles the Ihraam) with which he will present himself before the Almighty.

The Talbiyah is a response to the invitation of the Almighty, though while hoping for acceptance of his response, he should also fear its rejection, i.e. getting a reply of "Laa Labbaik wa laa sa'daik": your response is rejected!

Thus one should repent of his utterly worthless deeds and hope only for His grace and forgiveness. The recitation of Talbiyah marks the beginning of Hajj, which is a delicate situation, for, it is narrated that when the 4th Imam Zain ul-Abideen (A.S.) wore the Ihraam, and mounted his ride, his color turned pale and his whole body trembling, and he could not recite the Talbiyah. When asked why he did not recite the Talbiyah, the Imam replied: I fear that the Almighty may answer with "Laa labbaik wa laa sa'daik" (your response is rejected!). When the Imam did finally recite the Talbiyah, he fainted and fell from his mount on to the ground. He was brought back to consciousness and mounted the animal again. This occurred often till he finished the Hajj.

When one hears people reciting the Talbiyah, one should realize that it is the response to the Almighty's call in the Qur'an: "And proclaim among men the Pilgrimage: they will come to you on foot and on every lean camel, coming from every remote path" (Sura al-Hajj, 22:27); and from this call one should remember the Blowing of the Trumpet when all people will issue forth from their graves towards the place of Judgment on the Day of Qiyaamah.

When one enters Makkah he should remember that he has entered a holy place wherein everyone is afforded peace and security, and the hope that thereby he will be saved from Eternal punishment. He should be concerned about his salvation and forgiveness. Of course, at all times he should hope for forgiveness, as indeed, the House is a dignified place, the Absolute Owner is Infinitely Generous, His Mercy is All-encompassing and He does treat his guests in a most befitting manner.

In the majestic House of God, one should imagine beholding the Owner, and hope that as he has been successful in seeing the House, he will also be successful in meeting the Almighty, and he should thank Him for granting him such a wonderful opportunity.

When circumambulating (Tawaaf) one should fill one's mind with respect, love, hope and fear, and know that making Tawaaf makes him like Malaika-e-Muqarrabeen who continuously make Tawaaf around the Great Throne (A'rsh-e-Aazam). He should realize that the general purpose of Tawaaf is the circumambulation of the heart with the remembrance of the Lord of the House. This may be the hint thrown by the hadeeth that Bait-ul-Ma'moor is the House in Heaven similar to Kaa'ba on earth, around which the angels move similar to man's circumambulation on earth.

Kissing the Hajar al-Aswad represents kissing God's hand on earth. The people's covenant are recorded on it, for, the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) is reported to have said that the Hajar al-Aswad is God's hand amongst the creation for the pilgrim to shake hands with Him just as the servant shakes that of his master. And the 6th Imam Jafar as-Sadiq (A.S.) has said: "when the Almighty took oaths from his creatures, he ordered the Hajar al-Aswad to take it down on earth", and, thus, we say near it: "Amaanatee addaituha wa meethaaqee ta-a'hhadtuhu" i.e., I have fulfilled my promise and oath so that the Hajar al-Aswad may bear witness to it.

And he is reported to have said, "Rukn-e-Yamane is one of the doors of Heaven which has not been shut from the time it was first opened."

The purpose of kissing and hugging on to the cloth of Kaa'ba or any of its part should be to gain proximity to the almighty by loving His House and hoping for salvation of one's body from the Hellfire, just as a wrong-doer clings to the cloth of a King seeking mercy and forgiveness.

The sayee (The act of walking between the two hills - Safaa and Marwah.) resembles a place in a King's court and uncertainty of the Pilgrim of what the King will decree for him. And while traversing between the two hills he should remember his running between the two scales of deeds on the Day of Judgment.

When one reaches Arafah and sees the large crowd of people with different languages each supplicating and begging in his own tongue and each carrying out duties according to his leader's instruction and guidance, he should remember the Day of Reckoning and its fearful atmosphere with all people lost here and there, every group under its own leader and prophet. When these thoughts predominate, one should raise hands in supplication and pray with all sincerity to God to accept his Hajj and that he may be resurrected in the company of the virtuous ones. Apparently the 12th Imam Muhammad Al-Mahdi (A.S.) is also present there; thus, it is not unlikely that due to the presence of these pure souls mercy is showered on all present! Thus, there is a hadeeth: "The worst sin is that of a man who reaches Arafah and still feels that God has not forgiven him!"

When one returns from Arafah to Makkah and re-enters the Haram, he should consider it as a good omen that God has accepted him by allowing him to enter the Haram and that He has welcomed him to His proximity and has granted him protection from Hellfire.

When one reaches Mina for Ramy-e-Jamrah (throwing pebbles at Jamrah), his intention should be obedience to God's commands; in such a state he should follow the example set by the prophet Ibrahim (A.S.) when Satan appeared before him at this place and the Almighty ordered him to throw pebbles at Satan i.e. one should intend throwing pebbles at Satan.

The slaughtering of the sacrificial animal is the supreme indication of overcoming Satan and his evil-commanding-self, and thereby freedom from Hellfire. Thus at that moment he should endeavor to repent of and refrain from bad deeds.

There is a hadeeth, which says "The sign of acceptance of Hajj is that the person's condition after Hajj should be BETTER than before Hajj".

Another hadeeth says "The sign of acceptance of Hajj is refraining from all sins previously committed and changing bad friends to good ones and changing gatherings for vain purposes to gatherings for the remembrance of God."