

Guideposts on the HAJJ ROUTE

By

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Introduction

For the intention of making hajj (pilgrimage) to germinate among the ribs of [a believer](#), one is required to do much more than what is commonly done by tourists, including viewing plain ancient monuments or visiting places with origins and memories steeped in history, which may fill them with astonishment and admiration. Rather, the experience outstrips those phenomena, going to the heart of [the values of worship](#) and the spiritual and sentimental impressions mingled with the blessing of God, the Almighty, which provide a Muslim with the spiritual provisions one needs for an [immaculate, free, noble life](#).

Hajj is one of [the pillars of Islam](#) and an [act of worship which God legislated for His servants](#). Also, it is one of [the most pious acts](#) which a person does in order to [gain the pleasure of God](#). However, most of those who can afford hajj often fail to meditate on, understand and comprehend the [brilliant indications and denotations of that great rite](#). They may even overlook the [purposes and the objectives for which this rite is legislated](#). How many people wasted their money and endured travel hardship without getting sufficient [reward for their hajj journey!](#) Therefore, we will spotlight some guideposts on the blessed hajj journey whereby the pilgrims may hopefully beware of slips and deviations and accomplish their [chief purpose of this honorable rite](#).

First: Physical Ability



We mean by “physical ability” having lawful, legitimate money free from suspicion and ill-gotten gain. God is good and accepts only good things. In the Qur’an, God says:

And (due) to God from the people is a pilgrimage to the House – for whoever is able to find thereto a way. (Aal `Imran 3:97)

The income of usury, invalid transactions, gambling, and trafficking is not good gain which one may intend for God. ‘Ability’ cannot be based on a burden resulting from a debt, pledge or the like.

To conclude, self-restraint should be exercised to seek lawful gain for everything one is going to set out in one's day-to-day life, considering that this worldly life is a farm for the Hereafter. In the Qur'an, God says:

But seek, through that which God has given you, the home of the Hereafter (Al-Qasas 28:77)

This worldly life may be likened to a journey man starts with a diaper and ends with an unsewn shroud, which resembles the hajj clothes in denotation and indication and amazes and reminds minds and hearts of death and the Hereafter. This requires a Muslim to exercise self-discipline and reconcile all of one's conditions in such a way which pleases God.

Second: Sincere Repentance

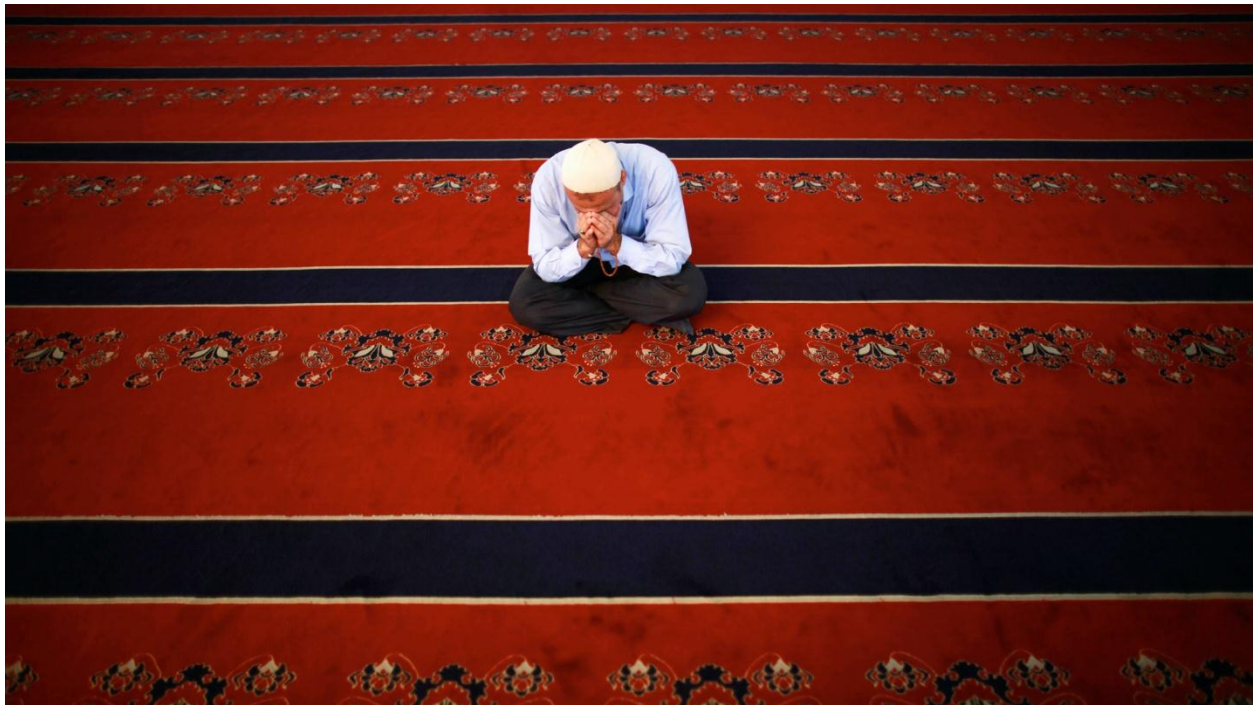


Sincere repentance reflects the extent to which a Muslim [understands the nature of the hajj rites](#) and feels their deep values and considerable magnitude. However, there are some people who go on hajj while their hearts have yet to give up evil habits, negative qualities or bad characteristics. They make hajj while overburdened with people's due rights and shouldered with such grievances which hinder them from having such [accepted hajj](#) that people hope for.

While repentance is obligatory at all times, it is more obligatory when making hajj. The Muslim going to be entertained as a guest of God is more required to lay down burdens so that one's heart will not cherish anything which may affect one's self-purity, pleasant connection or dignified meeting with God.

Repentance can be sincere only if fulfills its three conditions: giving up, regretting, and resolving not to return to sin. If any such sin is related to a right due to a human being, the acceptance of this repentance is conditional upon, along with the above three conditions, returning any such right to its recipient or asking the latter to absolve one from this right.

Third: Sincere Intention



A pilgrim must have a sincere intention when setting out on the journey to the [holy sanctuary of God](#). The most graceful thing to be imparted by such a blessed outset is giving precedence for God by curbing the appetite for money whose collection often engrosses a good deal of man's effort, health and lifetime.

Intention is the criterion for accepting or not accepting good deeds. Prophet Muhammad said: "Deeds are considered by intentions, and a person will get reward according to one's intention behind." (Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

Accordingly, the one who makes hajj for showoff, reputation, fame and honorary titles will not have one's hajj accepted and for which one will not get reward from God.

In the Qur'an, God says:

Whoever desires the life of this world and its adornments – We fully repay them for their deeds therein, and they therein will not be deprived. Those are the ones for whom there is not in the Hereafter but the Fire. And lost is what they did therein, and worthless is what they used to do. (Hud 11:15-16)

Sincere intention in hajj, and thereby [seeking the pleasure of God](#), is one of the determinants of the correct destination of the pilgrims' organs, especially heart, apart from fancy, hypocrisy and polytheism. It rather necessarily motivates a pilgrim to turn from such distractions towards the side of God when going through the [hajj rites](#).

Fourth: Detachment from Worldly Life



There is moral likeness and pedagogical similarity between the preliminaries and circumstances of hajj and those of death, which inspires imitation in terms of some arrangements and practices in both phenomena.

Therefore, a person detaches himself from [this worldly life](#) when one puts off one's usual worldly clothes for getting into the [state of ritual consecration \(Ihram\)](#). By so doing, [a pilgrim consecrates himself both physically and morally](#).

Consequently, a pilgrim should not be attached to, occupied with, pity or bemoan this worldly life in such a way which diverts one from the [hajj blessings and benedictions](#). In the Qur'an, God says:

That (is so). And whoever honors the symbols of God – indeed, it is from the piety of hearts. (Al-Hajj 22:31)

Thus, discarding this worldly life in such honorable settings is legally desirable and commendable, so that man can hover in the divine space with all tranquility and peace of mind.

There are some measures which a Muslim should adopt upon detachment from this worldly life as follows:

- Discharge from the moral rights of the others; grievances should be redressed, disputes and wrangles should be settled, and people's pardon and forgiveness, especially parents, should be sought by obeying them, seeking their pleasure and satisfaction, and asking them to pray for the acceptance and facilitation of one's hajj.
- Paying debts, returning deposits, writing down and attesting the legal will; a pilgrim is recommended to advise one's family and children to have fear of and abide by the guidance of God.

Fifth: Journey Provisions and Companionship



The mere material provisions are not intended. I rather mean such devotional tributary which provides the traveler to God with safety inspirations, [good intentions](#) and pious acts so that one will satisfy one's burning desire and reach one's destination. In the Qur'an, God says:

And take provisions, but indeed, the best provision is fear of God. And fear Me, O you of understanding. (Al-Baqarah 2:197)

Needless to say, the fear of God in this context is worthy of being taken into consideration given the fact that a number of pilgrims neglects one's copy of the Qur'an, forgets the remembrance of God, supplication and meditation on the blessings of God all around, and does not occupy himself with receiving exhortation or seeking [the forgiveness of God](#).

They rather turn to illegal sources of amusement and entertainment which, they think, may alleviate the hardship of travel. That is why they bring bawdy song tapes, not to mention ringing tambourines and the other means of amusement, including tobacco smoking, *khat* (*Catha edulis*) chewing and other practices deemed disgraceful, and improper on such a blessed, divine journey.

A pilgrim should get close to God by having such good travel companionship which helps one obey God and keeps one far away from clamor, backbiting, contention, disobedience, dispute etc.

"Choose the companion before the road to take" is a saying which should be taken into consideration in the context of a journey whose goodness and blessings may not be available twice in a Muslim's lifetime.

Good company strengthens the determination to do good, alleviates loneliness and urges the traveler to increase one's otherworldly provisions.

An old Arab poet once said:

Do you agree to accompany some people who have (otherworldly) provisions, while you have not?