

FRIDAY SERMON

23rd June 2023

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As most members might already have heard, we will be celebrating Eidul Adha here in Mauritius on 30th June 2023, that is, next Friday. It is however to be noted that in Saudi Arabia, Eidul Adha will be celebrated on Wednesday 28th June. We will insha Allah be performing Salat Eid at 9 am here in Baitul Rahma Mosque and later on we will perform Salat ul Jumma at around 12:30 pm insha Allah.

We have one week before the celebration of Eidul Adha here and we should try to multiply our good deeds during these days as best as we can as I explained in last week's Khutbah Jumma. May Allah grant us the opportunity to do so insha Allah. Ameen.

The Hajj rituals start on the 8th day of Dhul Hajj, that is, on Monday 26th June. The next day is day of Arafat which will be on Tuesday 27th June and Wednesday next will be Eidul Adha day in Saudi Arabia and many other countries in the world. The Hajj days are from the 8th day of Dhul Hijja to 13th day of Dhul Hijja. Note that the entire month of Dhu Al Hijja is holy, with a series of days important to the Muslim faith. Dhul Hijja is considered one of the four sacred months for Muslims, called *Al Ash-hur Al Hurom*. The other three months are *Zulkaedah* (11th), *Muharram* (1st) and *Rajab* (7th). It is forbidden to fight in these months.

The main rituals of the Hajj are as follows: each person walks seven times around the Kaaba, jogs back and forth between the hills of *Safa* and *Marwah* seven times, drinks from the Zamzam Well, goes to the plains of Mount Arafat to stand in vigil, spends a night in the plain of *Muzdalifa*, and performs symbolic stoning of the devil by throwing stones at three pillars. After the sacrifice of an animal, the pilgrims must either shave their hair for men or trim the ends of their hair for women.

This year, the Saudis have made provisions for the number of hajis to reach the pre Covid-19 numbers. In other words, they are expecting about more than 2.6 million Hajis. They have an impressive setup to welcome and cater for all these people for the duration of the hajj. Among other things, they will distribute 300,000 copies of the Quran in the Grand Mosque in Mecca and the Prophet's Mosque in Medina. Translation services and guides will be available throughout the sites in 51 languages to cater to the millions coming from all around the world. They will also distribute 40 million liters of Zamzam water in the Two Holy Mosques through over 30,000 distribution points, providing at least two million bottles to pilgrims daily. Digital technology including mobile applications and robots at the sites will be utilized to enhance the overall

worshipper experience. A record-breaking 14,000 staff members, as well as more than 8,000 volunteers, will be deployed on the ground to help the millions of pilgrims who are expected to take part in Hajj this year. Great precautions have been taken for the prevention of accidents. Let us hope and pray that everything goes on smoothly over there and that all pilgrims might return home safe and sound insha Allah.

Now I will share with you some hadiths about Hajj.

Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that one day the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) addressed people saying:

“O people! Allah has prescribed Hajj upon you, so perform it.”

A man asked, ‘Every year, O Messenger of Allah?’

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) kept silent. When the man repeated his question thrice, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

“Had I answered in the affirmative, it would have become a (yearly) obligation, and this would have been beyond your capacity.”

Then he added:

“Leave me alone so long as I leave you alone (i.e., do not ask questions about things I didn’t mention). What caused the destruction of the people before you was that they used to ask so many questions, and disagree with their Prophets. So, when I command you to do something, do it to the extent of your ability, and if I forbid you from doing something, avoid it.” (Muslim)

Abu Hurairah reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, “The reward for a Hajj *mabroor* is nothing but Paradise” (Al-Bukhari and Muslim).

A’ishah narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said,

“There is no day on which Allah frees servants of His from Fire more than [those freed on] the Day of `Arafat. And, verily, He draws near and then proudly speaks about them [i.e., the pilgrims] before the angels, saying, ‘What do these seek?’ (Muslim)

In another hadith, he said:

“The one striving in the cause of Allah and the one performing Hajj and the one performing `Umrah are all the guests of Allah. He calls them and they respond to His call, and they ask Him and He answers their supplication.” (Ibn Majah)

Now, we will recount a dialogue between a Sufi Sheikh and his pupil who had just performed Hajj.

Abu Bakr as-Shibli al-Maliki once encountered a disciple who had completed the Hajj and returned to Baghdad. The Shaykh immediately began to question the disciple about the realities of all the outer rituals of Hajj in order to impress upon him the deeper and more profound realities of this final act of worship.

It is the disciple who recounts this insightful exchange.

“As-Shibli said to me: ‘Did you make the covenant to make the Hajj?’ I said: ‘Yes’. He then said to me: ‘By means of this covenant did you then revoke every other covenant that you made from the time that you were created, that contradicted this covenant?’ I replied: ‘No’. He then said: ‘In that case you did not make the covenant of Hajj.’

He then asked: ‘Did you get rid of your clothing?’ I said: ‘Yes’. He then responded: ‘At that time, did you eliminate from yourself everything other than Allah?’ I replied: ‘No’. He then responded: ‘Then you did not really remove your clothing.’

He then asked me: ‘Did you then purify your body.’ I said: ‘Yes.’ He then said: ‘Did you then eradicate every error and fault by means of your bodily purification?’ I replied: ‘No.’ He then responded: ‘Then you have not really purified yourself.’

He then asked me: ‘Did you make the *talbiyya*?’ I said: ‘Yes.’ He then asked me: ‘Did you find the Divine answer to your *talbiyya* like it at the time you made it?’ I replied: ‘No.’ He then responded: ‘You did not really make the *talbiyya*.’

He then asked me: ‘Did you then enter the ihram?’ I said: ‘Yes.’ He then asked: ‘Did you believe when you were entering the ihram (consecrated state) that you were leaving every prohibition’ I replied: ‘No.’ He then responded: ‘Then you have not really entered the ihram.’

He then asked me: ‘Did you show honor to Mecca?’ I said: ‘Yes.’ He then said to me: ‘Did the Lord of Truth ennoble you with a spiritual state at your showing honor to Mecca?’ I replied: ‘No.’ He then responded: ‘Then you did not really show honor to Mecca.’

He then asked me: ‘Did you enter the sacred masjid?’ I said: ‘Yes.’ He then asked me: ‘Did you also enter His nearness from a direction that you knew?’ I replied: ‘No.’ He then responded: ‘Then you did not enter the sacred masjid.’

He then asked me: ‘Did you gaze at the Ka’aba?’ I said: ‘Yes.’ He then asked me: ‘When you saw it, did you also see your Objective in it?’ I replied: ‘No.’ He then responded: ‘Then you did not really gaze at the Ka’aba.’

He then asked me: ‘Did you trot three times and walked four times’ I said: ‘Yes.’ He then asked me: ‘Did you also flee from this world’s life, fleeing in way that you knew that you were cutting yourself off and alienating yourself from it, and discovered by your walking four times protection from what you fled, which then increased you in

gratitude to Allah for that?' I replied: 'No.' He then responded: 'Then you have not really trotted.'

He then asked me: 'Did you greet the Stone and kiss it?' I said: 'Yes, there was a great convulsion there.' He then said to me: 'Woe to you! It has been said – whoever greets the Black Stone has greeted the Lord of Truth, sub'hanahu wa ta'ala, and whoever greets the Lord of Truth, sub'hanahu wa ta'ala, is in the state of Divine protection. Has there manifested upon you the traces of this Divine protection?' I replied: 'No.' He then responded: 'Then you did not really greet the black Stone.'

He then asked me: 'Did you stop in front of Allah ta'ala behind the station of Ibrahim and prayed two raka'ats?' I said: 'Yes.' He then asked: 'At this station, did you stop at your spiritual place with your Lord and then saw your spiritual goal?' I replied: 'No.' He then responded: 'You have not really prayed.'

He then asked me: 'Did you then go out to Safa and stopped there?' I said: 'Yes.' He then asked: 'What did you do?' I responded: 'I made the takbir seven times, and I mentioned the pilgrimage and asked Allah for its acceptance.' He then asked: 'Did you make the takbir with the takbir of the Angels and found the spiritual reality of your takbir in that place?' I replied: 'No.' He then responded: 'Then you did not really extol Allah properly.'

He then asked me: 'Did you descend from Safa?' I said: 'Yes.' He then asked me: 'Do you also remove every fault from yourself until you were completely purified?' I replied: 'No.' He then responded: 'Then you did not really ascend or descend Safa.'

He then asked me: 'Did you then run in the valley?' I said: 'Yes.' He then asked me: 'Did you flee to Him and became safe from what you fled (your corrupt self) and arrived at your true existence?' I replied: 'No.' He then responded: 'Then you did not really run in the valley.'

He then asked me: 'Did you reach Marwa?' I said: 'Yes.' He then asked me: 'Did you realize the Divine tranquility that descends upon Marwa and take it, or did it descend upon you?' I replied: 'No.' He then responded: 'Then you did not really arrive at Marwa.'

He then asked me: 'Did you go out to Mina?' I said: 'Yes.' He then asked me: 'Did you then desire from Allah a spiritual state that was different from the one in which you were disobedient to Him?' I replied: 'No.' He then responded: 'Then you did not really go out to Mina.'

He then asked me: 'Did you enter the Masjid'l-Kheef?' He said: 'Yes.' He then asked me: 'Did you fear Allah during your entering and leaving the masjid and discovered a level of fear of Allah that you would never have found elsewhere?' I replied: 'No.' He then responded: 'Then you did not really enter the Masjid'l-Kheef.'

He then asked me: 'Did you depart to `Arafat?' I said: 'Yes.' He then asked me: 'Did you then realize the spiritual state for which you were originally created, and the spiritual state that you have desired and the spiritual state that was fashioned for you? Did you realize the direct experiential knowledge that is for you in these spiritual states? Did you see the spiritual station which was indicated in the Qur'an, which is the station for which all competing souls compete in every condition?' I replied: 'No.' He then responded: 'Then you did not really stop at `Arafat.'

He then asked me: 'Did you disperse to Muzdalifa?' I said: 'Yes.' He then asked me: 'Did you see the al-Mash`ar'l-Haraam (the pilgrimage station east of Mecca)?' I said: 'Yes.' He then asked me: 'Did you make remembrance of Allah with a remembrance that made you forget everything other than Him and became preoccupied with Him?' I replied: 'No.' he then responded: 'Then you did not really stop at Muzdalifa.'

He then asked me: 'Did you re-enter Mina?' I said: 'Yes.' He then asked me: 'Did you make the sacrifice?' I said: 'Yes.' He then asked me: 'Did you sacrifice your soul?' I said: 'No.' He then responded: 'Then you did not really make the sacrifice.'

He then asked me: 'Did you stone?' I said: 'Yes.' He then asked me: 'Did you throw your ignorance away from you by the increase of knowledge that manifested to you?' I replied: 'No.' He then responded: 'Then you did not really stone.'

He then asked me: 'Did you shave your head?' I said: 'Yes.' He then asked me: 'Did you diminish your false hope from yourself?' I replied: 'No.' He then responded: 'You did not really shave.'

He then asked me: 'Did you make the visitation?' I said: 'Yes.' He then asked me: 'Were you unveiled to anything from the Divine realities (al-haqaa'iq), or did you see an increase in spiritual nobility (al-karaamaat) upon by your visitation? For verily the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace has said:

'The hajji and the one making the lesser pilgrimage is the visitor of Allah and it is the right of the One being visited to honor His visitor.' I replied: 'No.' He then responded: 'You did not really make the visitation.'

He then asked me: 'Did you unfasten the ihraam?' I said: 'Yes.' He then asked me: 'Did you resolve to eat only that which is permissible (al-halaal)?' I replied: 'No.' he then responded: 'Then you did not really unfasten the ihraam.' He then asked me:

'Did you bid farewell to the House?' I said: 'Yes.'

He then asked me: 'Did you withdraw completely from your soul (nafs) and your spirit (ruuh)?' I replied: 'No.' he then responded: 'Then you did not really bid farewell to the House. It is incumbent upon you to return and repeat your Hajj.'

You should examine closely how you make the pilgrimage after this, then you will have realization of the Hajj. When you have made the pilgrimage, then make strenuous effort in being the way I delineated to you”.

This is an example of how we should try to accomplish Hajj. Many make several Hajj in their lifetime. How they do it, only Allah knows. This conversation gives us an idea of how it should be done.

May Allah help each one among us that we live our life in such a way that Allah is pleased with us. Incha Allah. Ameen.