



The advent of the month of Shawwāl brings with it the remembrance of Ibrāhīm عليه السلام and his memorable ḥajj. All over the world, those who are fortunate make preparations for this great spiritual experience. Ḥajj is from the five pillars of Islām and is farḍ upon every sane and mature believer who possesses the means to perform ḥajj. Allāh ﷻ mentions in the Glorious Qurʾān:

*“...As a right of Allāh, it is obligatory on the people to perform ḥajj of the House – on everyone who has the ability to manage (his) way to it.” (3:97)*

The Prophet ﷺ has said:

*“Islām is founded on five (pillars): bearing witness that there is no deity except Allāh and that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh, establishing ṣalāh, paying zakāh, performing ḥajj and fasting in the month of Ramaḍān.” (Al-Bukhārī)*

In another ḥadīth, he said: *“O people! Indeed Allāh, the Mighty, the Exalted has made ḥajj obligatory upon you; therefore perform ḥajj.” (Aḥmad)*

### Virtues of Ḥajj

The Prophet ﷺ has mentioned many virtues of ḥajj, encouraging the believers to fulfil this obligation:

*“The performers of ḥajj and ‘umrah are deputations of Allāh. If they call Him, He answers them; and if they seek His forgiveness, He forgives them.” (Ibn Mājah)*

*“There is no reward for an accepted ḥajj except Jannah.” (Al-Bukhārī, Muslim)*

*“Whoever performs ḥajj for the sake of pleasing Allāh, and therein utters no word of evil, nor commits any evil deed, shall return from it free from sin as the day on which his mother gave birth to him.” (Al-Bukhārī, Muslim)*

The performer of ḥajj becomes so pure that even that person is forgiven for whom he seeks forgiveness. The Prophet ﷺ said:

*“When you meet a Ḥajī (on his way home), then greet him, shake hands with him and ask him to beg forgiveness of Allāh on your behalf before he enters his home, for his prayer for forgiveness is accepted since he is forgiven by Allāh.” (Aḥmad)*

### Warnings for Non-performance of Ḥajj

The Prophet ﷺ has also warned those who do not fulfil this obligation despite it becoming obligatory upon them:

*“He who possesses enough provisions which will suffice for him to reach the House of Allāh, and he does not perform ḥajj, then there is no care whether he dies as a Jew or a Christian.” (At-Tirmidhī)*

Ḥajj is farḍ upon every sane, adult and healthy Muslim, when he has sufficient wealth to enable him to travel to and from the Ka‘bah. This will apply when the wealth required to take him is in excess of his needs (such as house, transport, clothing, etc.). He also needs to have sufficient wealth to leave behind for the needs of those who are dependent on him. Furthermore, the journey needs to be a safe one and a woman needs to be travelling with a maḥram. As can be understood from the great virtues and stern warnings above, a person upon whom ḥajj is farḍ should endeavour

to perform ḥajj at the earliest possible opportunity – this year. The Prophet ﷺ has said:

*“The one who intends to go for ḥajj should hurry; for sometimes he can get ill, his conveyance can go missing or some other obstacle may arise (which will hinder him from travelling).” (Aḥmad)*

### Misconceptions and Lame Excuses

Many people delay the performance of ḥajj due to misconceptions which become lame excuses for not performing ḥajj. Inshā‘allāh, I wish to clarify a few of these misunderstandings, so that those who find themselves in these situations can repent and make preparations immediately.

- Many people have enough wealth for them to go for ḥajj, but they wait to accrue enough wealth so that their spouse can also accompany them. If the husband has enough wealth then he should go for ḥajj immediately. And if the wife has enough wealth, and she has other maḥārim with whom she can go for ḥajj, then she should go immediately too. The Sharī‘ah does not give either permission to postpone the ḥajj and wait for the other.
- Many people think that it is necessary that they make arrangements for their parents to perform ḥajj before they do. This too is incorrect in light of the Sharī‘ah. Undoubtedly, to make one’s parents perform ḥajj is a great virtue and honour; however, if ḥajj is not farḍ on them, but it is farḍ upon the children, then they should not concern themselves with their parents’ ḥajj at this moment and fulfil their own obligation. It is possible that in the children waiting for the

parents - or in the case of the husband waiting for the wife or vice versa - the one upon whom ḥajj is farḍ passes away and is questioned by Allāh ﷻ for its non-fulfilment.

- Others delay embarking on the journey until certain worldly tasks have been completed. Remember! The targets of the world will never end. If it is one worldly target that is the excuse this year, then it will be another next year. The Prophet ﷺ has said:

*“No servant leaves ḥajj for some worldly objective but that he will see the people returning from ḥajj before his worldly objective is fulfilled.” (Aṭ-Ṭabrānī)*

Therefore, one should put aside any worldly goals he has in mind and fulfil the obligation of Allāh ﷻ first. It is also noteworthy to remember that it is from the ploys of Shayṭān that he will never say, ‘Don’t perform ḥajj’, rather, he will make you defer its performance, year after year, until it’s too late.

- Similarly, many delay their ḥajj because of this ḥadīth: *“He who performs forty ṣalāh in my masjid in such a way that he does not miss a single ṣalāh, then Allāh prescribes his freedom from the Fire of Jahannam, freedom from punishment and freedom from hypocrisy.” (Aḥmad)* Many think that it is necessary to perform forty ṣalāh in Al-Masjid An-Nabawī, and some have the desire and greed for this virtue, so they delay their performance of ḥajj as they cannot spare enough time or money to stay in Al-Madīnah for the duration of forty ṣalāh. Ḥajj is for five days only, and it becomes farḍ upon that person who can

only afford to go for the minimum time. The inability to travel to Al-Madīnah will not be a valid excuse not to perform ḥajj. Of course, after reaching so close to the blessed city of Al-Madīnah, one should endeavour to at least spend a day in the blessed city and visit Al-Masjid An-Nabawī, and present himself in the Court of Rasūlullāh ﷺ.

- Some believe that if their children have reached a marriageable age and are not yet married, then the parents cannot perform ḥajj until the children are married. This too has no basis whatsoever in the Sharī'ah.
- Some delay in travelling as they have small children at home. Once ḥajj becomes farḍ, they should seek suitable relatives, friends, etc. who can look after their children whilst they go for ḥajj; and they need not travel for long due to their circumstance and situation.
- Some delay their ḥajj as they think it is better to perform it in their old age closer to their death! This is a fallacy as they have no guarantee for how long they will live, and this idea is in complete contrast to the command of the Prophet ﷺ to perform ḥajj at the earliest opportunity.
- Some delay performing the ḥajj as they only obtain a set number of days off work, and they postpone their journey hoping that they may get more days off next year and can spend more time in the Al-Ḥaramayn. This too is not a valid Sharī' reason to postpone the ḥajj. They should go and spend whatever time they have available and absolve themselves of the

obligation of ḥajj.

- Some delay the ḥajj, as they cannot afford to buy gifts for people, thus deferring their obligation until they have enough money that they can buy gifts for their loved and dear ones. This again is not a valid Sharī' excuse.
- Some delay in going for ḥajj as they cannot afford the 'five star', 'deluxe' or 'golden' package. From a Sharī' point of view, as soon as they can afford the cheapest most basic package, ḥajj becomes farḍ upon them.
- Others can afford a package, but as the package includes a hotel which is far from the Al-Ḥaram, they are not able to read all five ṣalāh in Al-Ḥaram. This does not justify delaying the ḥajj. Remember, as long as the five days of ḥajj are part of the package, ḥajj will be farḍ upon them.
- Some do not go for ḥajj on the pretext that they are not yet ready to change their lives. Such a thought is from Shayṭān. Do we think the same when it comes to reading ṣalāh or paying zakāh? And if this is the case, then change your life, for it is obligatory anyway! Moreover, inshā'allāh, through the barakah of ḥajj, the life will change for the better. Some go to the other extreme and have resolved to change their lives, but make comments such as, 'My Īmān is not yet strong enough and I need to build on my Īmān.' This thought too is from Shayṭān. Ḥajj is a very important fundamental which helps to make one's Īmān stronger.

Shaykh Muftī 'Abdur Raḥīm Lājpurī ﷺ mentions

with regards the permissible reasons for postponing ḥajj:

The following are reasons for which ḥajj may be postponed:

- Becoming bankrupt.
- Fear of a tyrannical leader.
- Being imprisoned.
- An unsafe journey.
- Illness because of which the person cannot travel.
- For a woman not to have a maḥram or husband to accompany her.
- For a woman to be sitting in her 'iddah.

He further states that although these factors justify postponing ḥajj; however, it will be compulsory to proceed with the journey as soon as they no longer exist.

Therefore, it is my heartfelt plea to those upon whom ḥajj is farḍ, that they embark on this blessed journey this very year. They should have trust in Allāh ﷻ for all their affairs and fulfil this obligation. May Allāh ﷻ remove all difficulties and hurdles that anyone may have and make ḥajj easy for one and all. Āmīn.

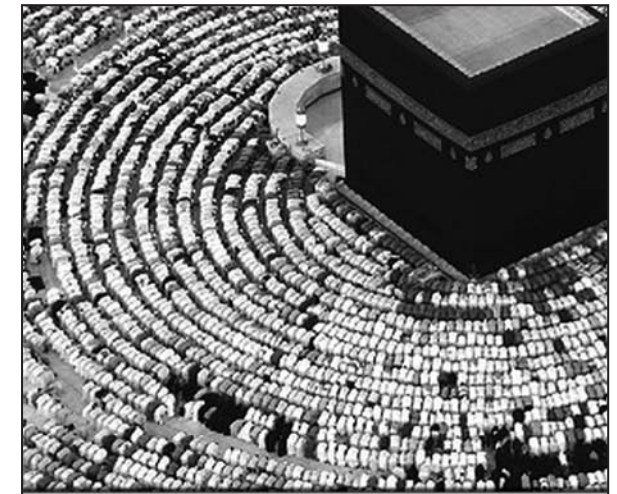
An essential read for all intending pilgrims: How to Perform Ḥajj, 'Umrah, Ziyārah and Useful Advice for Travellers to the Ḥaramayn by Shaykh Mawlānā Muhammad Saleem Dhorat ḥafīzahullāh.

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## The Obligatory Nature of Ḥajj

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