

Hajj is the pilgrimage to Makkah. It is one of the *arkān al Islām* and a compulsory duty for all Muslims if they are physically and financially able to perform it. It is an act that they must fulfil at least once in their lifetime.



### Was Hajj commanded by Allāh?

Yes. The Qur'ān contains a direct order to that effect,

وَأَذِّنْ فِي النَّاسِ بِالْحَجِّ يَأْتُوكَ رِجَالًا وَعَلَى كُلِّ ضَامِرٍ يَأْتِينَ مِنْ كُلِّ فَجٍّ عَمِيقٍ

*And proclaim to the people the Hajj (pilgrimage); they will come to you on foot and on every lean camel; they will come from every distant pass*

*Sūrah al Hajj, 22:27*



### Who is required to perform Hajj?

To be required to perform Hajj you must be:

1. Muslim;
2. Sane;
3. Above the age of puberty;
4. Financially able;
5. Physically able.



### What do you mean by 'financially able?'

- Hajj is not recommended if it means that going with your own money will leave your family in debt or with insufficient funds.
- The money you use for Hajj should be from *halāl* (permissible) sources. A bank robber cannot use his *harām* (illegal) money to go to Hajj.



**I am a Muslim, sane, able-bodied teenager but not earning myself. Would my Hajj be valid even if it were my parents who are bearing the cost?**

Yes, it will.



### What do you mean by 'physically able?'

You should be able to get there! If you can't get to Hajj either because you have a serious health problem or a physical disability, then you are not required to go. The same applies to a woman who has no *mahram* (a permitted male companion) to accompany her.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This fact displays exactly how important the necessity for *mahram* is in Islām. Leaving aside general long distance travelling, the very act of **Hajj** itself is not allowed, if a women does not have a *mahram* to accompany her.



**Why do so many people do their Hajj at the same time? Why don't Muslims go at different times of the year?**

In other religions pilgrims visit holy sites all year round. Whilst Muslims can visit Makkah at any time, the Hajj itself can only be done at one specific time, in a specified manner. To be precise that time is between the 8<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> of the Islāmic month of Dhul Hijjah



**So, we don't just simply 'visit' Makkah and then go home?**

No. There are a whole range of rites and rituals that we must perform in order to have completed a valid *Hajj*. We have to do certain things on certain days, in certain places in and around Makkah.



**How do we know what actions to do and where and when to do them?**

The methodology of the Hajj has been shown to us by the Prophet Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم. In fact, during the last year of his life, he performed *Hajj al Wida* (the Farewell Hajj) in which he demonstrated, in front of his companions رضي الله عنهم, exactly how the Hajj is to be performed.

Many of the rites of Hajj are based around incidences involving the Prophet Ibrahīm عليه السلام during his time in, what was then, the deserted valley of Makkah.



**Can you tell me about some of those actions? I have heard of them. They have unusual names.**

We will discuss the Hajj more fully in the next chapter, Insha'Allāh, but in the meantime, I am happy to be your Hajj dictionary. What particular actions with 'unusual names' would you like to know about?



***Tawāf* around the Ka'bah?**

The Ka'bah is the distinctive cube structure in the Holy Mosque in Makkah. It was built by Ibrahīm and his son Isma'īl عليه السلام, as a place of worship of the one deity worthy of all worship, Allāh سبحانه وتعالى.



During *Hajj*, the pilgrims perform '*Tawāf*' around the Ka'bah. This involves moving in a circle seven times around the structure, anti-clockwise. *Tawāf* is an act of worship and is followed by two *rakāh* of *salāh* at the nearby *Makām Ibrahīm* (Station of Ibrahīm).



***Ihrām*?**

*Ihrām* is a state of being that pilgrims must enter before they start their Hajj. Once in *ihrām*, certain rules apply to the pilgrim, certain actions that they can and can't do.

For men, the word *ihrām* also applies to the clothing that the believer is required to wear whilst in this state. Basically, it comprises of two large pieces of unstitched plain, white cloth. One is worn around the waist, whilst the other is draped across the back, shoulders and chest. When in *ihrām*, pilgrims are not permitted to wear any other clothing. The pilgrims should don these garments and enter the state of *ihrām* before reaching the *mīqāt* points around Makkah. Next question - what is the *mīqāt*?



**Yes, what is the *mīqāt*?**

The *mīqāt* are boundary points outside Makkah that pilgrims must go to, to don their *ihram* and start their *Hajj*. There are five of them in total, situated all around Makkah to serve pilgrims coming from different directions.

***Halaq* and *Taqṣīr*?**

*Halaq* is a full shaving of the head. *Taqṣīr* is the cutting of the hair only. Either of these is required to be done during *Hajj* on 10<sup>th</sup> *Dhul Hijjah*. The *halaq* is more meritorious than the *Taqṣīr*. The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said,

"O Allāh have mercy on those who shave their heads." They (the people) said: "And those who shorten their hair O Rasoolullāh? " He said: "O Allāh have mercy on those who shave their heads." They said: "And those who shorten their hair O Rasoolullāh? " He added on the fourth time: "And those who shorten their hair."

Abu Dawood

***Umrah*?**

*Umrah* is a minor pilgrimage. Unlike *Hajj*, it can be done at any time of the year. Also, it is much shorter, taking place only in *al Masjid al Haram* (the Grand Mosque in Makkah). It also happens in a state of *ihram* and consists only of *tawāf*, *sa'ī* and *halaq* or *taqṣīr*.

***Ramy*?**

In the Valley of Mina, near Makkah, stand three stone structures, one large, one medium sized and one small. These are called the *Jamarāt* and are meant to symbolise *Shaytān*. They represent the time when *Shaytān* tried to deceive and tempt Ibrāhīm from fulfilling a commandment from Allāh. That command was to sacrifice his son, Ismā'īl.



Jamarāt in recent decades

During the *Hajj*, pilgrims are required to stone these *Jamarāt* in a specified manner. This stoning is called the *Ramy*.

***Dhabh*?**

As mentioned above, the Prophet Ibrāhīm عليه السلام was commanded by Allāh to sacrifice his son, Isma'īl. The *Hajj* pilgrims commemorate this event by a sacrifice of an animal themselves. This action is called the *Dhabh*.



***Talbiya*?**

Through the first part of the *Hajj* journey, the pilgrims are required to keep speaking aloud certain words. This is called the *Talbiya*, and the words are as follows:

لَبَّيْكَ اللَّهُمَّ لَبَّيْكَ، لَبَّيْكَ لَا شَرِيكَ لَكَ لَبَّيْكَ، إِنَّ الْحَمْدَ وَالنِّعْمَةَ لَكَ وَالْمُلْكَ لَا شَرِيكَ لَكَ

**Labbaik Allāhumma Labbaik, Labbaika laa shareeka laka labaik.**

**Innal Hamda, Wa nya mata, Laka Wal Mulk, La Shareekalak**

I do respond O Allāh, I do Respond, I do respond, You have no partner,  
All Praise, Grace and Dominion are Yours, and You have no partner.



**Why not simply just get to Makkah and pray? Why do all those things?**

These actions are amongst the so-called *Manāsik al Hajj* (the Rites of Hajj). The reason we do them is very simple: **because we are commanded to do them**. Hajj is a direct order which, like everything else in the Qur’ān, as Muslims, we must follow without question. This attitude of acceptance lies at the very heart of our faith in *Al Ghaib* – the unseen.



**So, ‘We hear and we obey?’<sup>2</sup>**

Yes. It is sufficient that the Hajj, with all its various rites, has been commanded by Allāh and demonstrated by his Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم. We could ask ‘why this’ and ‘why that’ about so many aspects of the Hajj. But as devout and sincere slaves of Allāh, we don’t. Allāh سبحانه وتعالى commands and ‘We hear and we obey.’



**You say we could ask ‘why this, why that?’ Can you give me some examples?**

- I mentioned the *Ramy* above. This stoning must be done with a specific number of stones at specific times, otherwise the Hajj can be rendered invalid. Why?
- Throughout the Hajj, the pilgrims have to stay within specific boundaries for particular periods and only leave those boundaries *en mass* at specific times. Why?
- Why not rotate groups of people at different times between different places? Why?

Why? Why? Why? Why? Why? The ‘whys and wherefores’ are numerous but, for Muslims, they are all irrelevant. It is enough for us that they have been sanctioned. Again, WE HEAR AND WE OBEY.



**What are the merits of performing Hajj?**

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### We can worship in Allāh’s House

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(The Prophet) Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم said that “One prayer in my mosque is better than one thousand prayers elsewhere, except the Sacred Mosque (in Makkah), and one prayer in the Sacred Mosque is better than one hundred thousand prayers elsewhere.”<sup>3</sup>  
رضي الله عنه Jābir as related by Ibn Majah

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### Paradise is guaranteed

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(The Prophet) Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم said, “(The performance of) Umrah is an expiation for the sins committed (between it and the previous one). And the reward of *Hajj Mabrūr* (the *Hajj* accepted by Allāh) is nothing except Paradise.”  
رضي الله عنه Abu Hurairah as related by Bukhari

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<sup>2</sup> Qur’an 2:285

<sup>3</sup> This is *al Masjid al Haram*, the Grand Mosque in Makkah.

## Our sins are forgiven

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(The Prophet) Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم said, "The person who makes Hajj to Allāh's House without committing any acts of indecency or disobedience to Allāh will return home as (pure from his sins as) he was on the day his mother bore him."

Sahih Bukhari as related by Abu Hurairah

## Hajj reminds us of the Day of Judgement

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Many *ulema* comment that the Day of Arafāt, which we attend on Hajj, carries many of the hallmarks of *Yawm Al Hashr*, the Day of Crowding, one of the names of Judgement Day. For example,

- We are gathered together on the Plain of Arafāt;
- We are crowded together tightly under the burning sun;
- We immerse ourselves in intense supplication;
- A degree of selfishness can overcome people - in the throng, many people become selfishly preoccupied with completing their own rights properly and serving themselves first.



**Did people still come for Hajj before the days of planes, trains and automobiles?**

Yes. Believe it or not, they did. Just imagine the distances they had to cover.



**It must have been much tougher than today?**

Today's Hajj journey is relatively luxurious compared to days past. 500 years ago, Saudi Arabian Airlines did not have multiple daily, chartered flights from Jakarta to Jeddah, obviously not! Over the past 1,400 plus years travelling to Hajj meant leaving your village or city for months to face possible disease, starvation, harsh weather, hostile terrain, bandits and even death. Many of them in fact drafted their wills and settled their affairs, before leaving, because they had little certainty in their hearts that they would return.



**It seems like a major test of a believer's patience and self-sacrifice?**

Yes. Hajj is most definitely an onerous task. It is by no means an easy feat to accomplish. It involves travel away from home and business for long periods of time, giving up your comfort and security, spending of your wealth and living and journeying in confined and awkward conditions.



**But still Muslims came in big numbers?**

Yes. Over the centuries Muslims have attended in their hundreds and thousands and today continue to attend in their millions. It is estimated that by the year 2050, the Hajj congregation will total some six million, Insha'Allāh. They attend despite the severest odds and not, as is said in England, 'for love nor money'. They do it to seek Allāh's pleasure.

Hajj allows Muslims to witness, firsthand, the sheer scale and diversity of the Ummah, the international community of Muslims. The numbers physically present at Hajj are phenomenal. They are of all different shapes and sizes, different dimensions, cultures and colours speaking a multitude of different languages. Amidst all that diversity, they all wear the same simple garments, worshipping one Creator. It gives us all hope and strength.



**Can I go to Hajj more than once?**

Yes, you can, but the first Hajj is the one that is counted as your once-in-a-lifetime *fard* obligation.



**My aunty told my mother that she's not ready for Hajj yet. She said she will do it later, Insha'Allāh. She was scared about having to change her ways after doing Hajj and become a better Muslim.**

This is a misguided and, regrettably, prevalent attitude amongst many Muslims. It should be noted:

1. The *Shari'ah*<sup>4</sup> states that as soon as a person becomes physically and financially able to perform the Hajj, it becomes binding upon them;
2. Hajj is not an easy task to fulfil. Does it not make sense to undertake it when we are fit and able rather than when we are old and infirm?
3. Why is she '**waiting**' to become a better Muslim? We should all strive to be obedient servants of Allāh all our lives, not just after Hajj. What if she was to die tomorrow without having done *Hajj*? Our Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said,

*Expedite the performance of Hajj for nobody knows what may obstruct him (Ahmed);*



**So, the younger and fitter, the better!**

It makes sense. Instead of going inter-railing around Europe or backpacking wherever, *umrah* and Hajj should be the great journey that young people are passionate to make.



**Is the method of doing Hajj the same for everybody?**

In the main, yes. However, there are three different types of *Hajj* that can be done, depending upon your circumstances:

1. **Hajj Ifrād (The Isolated Hajj)**
  - Here the pilgrim has the intention to do *Hajj* only and not *Umrah* (minor pilgrimage) with it. This person is not obligated also to offer an animal sacrifice.
  - A person who does *Hajj Ifrād* is called a *mufriid*.
2. **Hajj Qirān (Accompanied Hajj).**
  - Here the *Hajj* is combined with an *Umrah*. The pilgrim must do *umrah* and remain in *ihram* right up until he starts the *Hajj*.
  - A person who does *Hajj Qirān* is called a *qārin*.
3. **Hajj Tamattu (Relaxed Hajj)**
  - The pilgrim here does *Hajj*. However, he may come out of *ihram* after completion of the *umrah*.
  - A person who does *Hajj Tamattu* is called a *mutamatti*.



**I am going on Hajj Insha'Allāh next year. Could you summarise for me all the things I need to do?**

Insha'Allah, in the next chapter, we will do that.

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<sup>4</sup> Islāmic jurisprudence or legal code

## *The pilgrimage to Makkah (Hajj) (part a)*

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### Questions

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1. Who commanded us to perform Hajj? Be precise.
2. Who is required to perform Hajj?
3. A person should do Hajj only if they are 'financially able.' What does this mean?
4. Would the Hajj of a teenager be valid even if it is his or her parents that are bearing the cost?
5. A person should do Hajj only if they are 'physically able.' What does this mean?
6. Why do so many people do their Hajj at the same time? Can't different groups of Muslims go at different times of the year, thereby avoiding congestion?
7. How do we know what actions to do during the Hajj, and where and when to do them?
8. What does the expression '*manāsik al Hajj*' mean?
9. What do the following words mean: *tawāf*, *sa'ī*, *ihrām*, *halaq*, *taqsīr*, *umrah*, *ramy*, *dhab*, *talbiya*?
10. What are some of the merits of performing Hajj?
11. Can a person go for Hajj more than once?
12. Why should Muslims not delay in doing their Hajj?
13. Name the three types of Hajj?

### Islām around the world

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The cleaners of the Haram, Makkah, Saudi Arabia

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