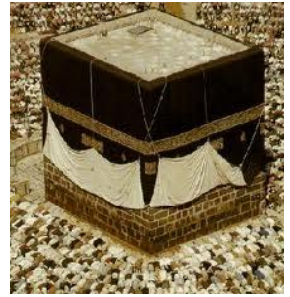


Advice for those going for Hajj or Ziyarat

The following is advice given to Hujjaj and Zawwar by scholars in Iran.



- 1) Purify your intention. Having sincerity of intention (*ikhlaas*) is very important. The pilgrimage should be 100% for the pleasure of Allah and the Ahl al-Bayt - not so that others can address you a special title of *haaji* / *haajah* or that in some gathering you will be spoken about or that someone will reprimand you for not going even when you could have gone.
- 2) In order to prepare, it's important to cleanse yourself of the trace of any sins which may otherwise weigh you down and prevent you from taking benefit from the experience. Write down any rights of Allah and rights of people that may have been violated. If possible, address these rights before you go. For example, ask those you've definitely or even likely wronged for forgiveness, and restoring misappropriated wealth and property. If you don't have time to do so, at least write these things down so you can address them when you return. Your father, mother, spouse [if applicable] and friends should not be unhappy with you (especially the first three).
- 3) Carefully calculate any outstanding khums that may be due and pay this off before going, or else it can cause problems in the a'maal of hajj. For example it can cause one's ihraam to be nullified.
- 4) Before departure perform tawbah for all of the past sins. This can be done by performing a ghusl of tawbah [see the instructions on how to do this under the a'maal of the month of Dhu'l Qa'adah - there it specifies it should be done on a Sunday in the month of Dhu'l Qa'adah, but for this purpose it can be done at any time]. Also give one sadqah for past mistakes and one for the special assistance of Allah in the upcoming trip. This second sadqah is to help prevent any obstacles along the way, and so that you can come to understand the a'maal and perform them well. If you don't find someone to give the sadqah to you can even put it aside until you find someone needy. During the trip, regularly set aside some sadqah and either give it to the needy along the way or collect it until you find someone needy (preferably Shi`ah).
- 5) During the journey be thinking about the special spiritual station of the Prophet (s), Sayyida Fatima (a) and the four Imams of Baqee`. Think of them and how they have a reality which goes beyond just their physical body. Their reality is one of divine light (Noor) and they have a special station in this regard. This may be something new for you but you can ponder upon whatever you understand of them and their role in this universe, and how they are very much alive despite having passed away and how they have their attention upon you. The shaytan will perhaps distract you from remembering them but try not to be distracted.
- 6) During the trip, tolerate the difficulties you will face from your traveling companions or from other sources, such as delayed flights or hot weather. Don't react to any provocation. For example in

tawaf people will press against you and will try to go fast. They will push you back and they might step on you. Usually be trampled like that causes someone to get angry. Instead, bear it gracefully. In fact, if such difficulties happen to you not only is it not a cause to be unhappy, but rather it's a cause to be happy. Embrace difficulties that arise with all of your heart and soul and look forward to them with anticipation. The reason is that you are the guest of One whose special attention to you is worth more than all of this. For example if you are at someone's home and you get injured in his home, as a means of apology your host will be apologetic and give you even more attention. Usually those who present difficulties don't intend to do so. Even if they do, we should forgive them and pray for them, and in return will be given something even higher. It might even be the source of our hajj being accepted.

7) We should not trouble others during the trip but rather check ourselves before any troubling happens. We should control our language, and speak softly and gently as perhaps someone next to us might want to rest.

8) As much as possible, during the trip busy yourself with dhikr. Take advantage of every moment and assume you won't get another chance to go. Don't say things that are empty, trivial, and just to pass the time. [Of course in order to be cordial and create a pleasant atmosphere the occasional humorous comment can be appropriate.] It is mustahab to recite Qur'an. If you are going to be in Madinah for a lengthy amount of time, and you are able to read Qur'an at a good pace, try to recite the entire Qur'an in Madinah. Even when doing tawaf, if it's not too crowded you can recite Qur'an. In general, busy yourself with worship and reflection as opposed to just looking at people and at the physical features of the mosque. Remember that this is the place where the Prophet (s) used to walk around, where he used to stand and sit. This is the place that used to be filled with idols but the Prophet (s) caused them to all be destroyed. Such reflection will yield rewards. Let it be a journey with reflection and perform your worship with reflection. When in masjid al-haram, try to do as much tawaf as possible (as long as it's not too crowded). If you can't do tawaf or don't feel like it, do salaah, and if you can't do salaah then just look at the Ka'abah. We're told in hadith that in that area there are 120 mercies: 60 for those who tawaf, 40 for those who engage in prayer and 20 for looking at the ka'abah.

9) From the onset, make the intention that whatever reward you receive, all those who have a right on you should share in this reward - your father, mother, teacher, etc. This doesn't mean that there won't be any reward left for you. Rather, for however many people you include in the niyyah, all will partake, and you will even be given more than you would have before.

10) When in the haram of prophet, if time allows, recite a two rak'ah salat al-hadiyyah for each of the Prophet, Sayyida Fatima, and the 4 Imams who are buried in Jannat al-Baqee` (total of 6 such prayers). These should be recited in a place where you find peace of heart and as close as possible to the actual graves. After reciting the prayer normally as you would any two rak'at prayer, gift the thawaab of the prayer to the ma'soom and tell him/her: Along with this gift I am depositing my

faith (imaan) with you as well. At the time of death i will request this back from you. The faith that they will give us at the time of our death is such that even the Shaytan won't be able to steal it away. The condition of course is that we fulfill our pledge to the ma'soom (a) and not do things that make the ma'soom unhappy such as cutting off relationships with mu'mineen and sinning.

11) Pray for all Muslims and the removal of their difficulties (such as loans, marriage, etc.) and especially all those who asked for dua. The more such dua for others the better.

12) We should be careful not to overeat during the trip. Sometimes the Shaytan incites people to eat more and makes them think that well, since we're paying for the food they're giving we should take more. Such overeating will prevent us from obtaining a *haal* (special spiritual state) in the haram. We should eat enough to take care of our hunger but eat less than the point where we are full so we can spend more time in the haram and experience better spiritual states.

13) You might see friends in the haram who are not part of your group and they might want to spend a long while chatting about their experiences thus far. In such circumstances, try to cut the conversation short by exchanging a few pleasantries and tell them you have something to attend to. This is of course is not a lie as you can intend to attend to yourself. There is plenty of time after the hajj when you return back home to connect with such people. This however is a special time which is to be made the most out of.

14) Before performing the rites of hajj, listen carefully to the scholar who is leading your caravan especially if he someone who has been for hajj previously. Try to take the manasik hajj law book of your marja with you. In any area you have any doubts be sure to clarify them. The a'amaal of hajj are very difficult to perform.

15) Be helpful to others on the trip. For example help those who lack strength with their bags if the opportunity arises. The stoning of the shaytaan is a place where you can often be helpful to others.

