

Pilgrimage

— Hajj —

The Fifth High Grade of At-Taqwa

(Seeing by Al'lah's Light)

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The great humane eminent scholar

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(His soul has been sanctified by Al'lah)

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Foreword by Prof. Abdul-Kadir John alias Al-Dayrani



1- Prof. A. K. John Alias Al-Dayrani

All praises are to God, the Provider of all worlds; best and perfect communication with Him and peace are through our master Mohammad (cpth)¹, the first guide and teacher over all creation. Oh God of all, our Provider! Glory to You, as Your lofty Majesty and high Prestige deserve to be glorified!

How could we fail to find You, our Provider, although Your firm Robe is always stretched out to us, so that we may cling to it at any moment?!

Verily, humanity has sunk into absolute ignorance, not seeking to know the real purpose behind this life and the fate to be faced after death. We have neglected to recognize the Creator of everything, and instead have exhorted our abilities and powers to explore and enjoy what is temporal and short-lived!

The fact is that this nation will find no way to be reformed except the way that reformed its first ancestors. This is the way that was followed by our great father Abraham (pth)².

Let us resort to the supreme guidance of our Prophet (cpth). Let him (cpth) be the sun of your life and a guide for all your affairs, for you will find none other than he is an imam and teacher for yourself. It is he alone who was able to reveal the reality of this life and the weighty purpose lying behind this creation. It is he alone who can answer all your questions about worship.

With relation to pilgrimage, the subject of our research in this book, people find no answer for many obscure questions, such as the following:

Why does Al'lah have the pilgrimage take place in an arid desert? In the old days, the pilgrim had to suffer great physical pain and face many dangers. Why was a waterless and treeless valley chosen as the place for this important event? Why did Al'lah not locate it in a green land of beauty and fascinating nature, instead of this wild and distant place that is devoid of people?

Why should the pilgrims take off all their clothes and dress strangely in white pieces of cloth, like a person who is bathing? This seems to be an odd appearance that can hardly be seen in any other country, and a very strange fashion that is worn by nobody else.

Why should this person be put through these hardships and stringent conditions, and not be allowed even to scratch their heads? They must wear special untailored clothes. They cannot have any arguments, disputes, no laughter, no joking and no chatting. If they scratch their heads, they must present a sacrifice (to slaughter a sheep and distribute it to the poor before completing the ritual).

What is the wisdom of circulating Al-Ka'ba, although it is just a big stone which can neither see nor hear, and which neither harms nor brings benefit? What is the purpose of walking fast? Is it related to worship and submission, or to pride and self-admiration, as they shake their shoulders like a proud fighter in the ranks of an army?

What does this person benefit from kissing the Black Stone, if it is just an ordinary stone? Is it really, as some people have claimed, a stone that comes from Paradise?

What is the purpose of walking fast between Safa and Marwah? Is it true that the Safa and Marwah ritual is but an imitation of the example of Ishmael's mother (Ishmael is the father of the Arabs), when Abraham (p) left them (mother and baby) in that isolated place, and she walked quickly to and fro between Safa and Marwah searching for water for her baby? Whereas Ishmael's mother was troubled and afraid for her baby, the pilgrims were not in this frame of mind. Why do they walk quickly, and what are they searching for?

What is meant by Arafah? Why is Arafat essential to the pilgrimage? As Arafat is a small mountain in a large area surrounded by mountains, what is the relationship between the whole hajj and one small mountain among all the deserts and mountains of Saudi Arabia?

What is the purpose of throwing the pebbles? Is Satan standing chained in that place to be stoned by the pilgrims? Did Satan leave his favorite places, such as bars, nightclubs and brothels, and anywhere that you find great sinning and a lack of chastity, and is he instead tied up there to be pelted with small pebbles? Would these small pebbles destroy Satan, and is the corruption in the earth

Exterminated after they are thrown? Why are only seven pebbles thrown, and no more and no less?

Why are those animals slaughtered in those places? Would the money not be better for the inhabitants of those areas?

Such practices, which are merely the formal practices of worship, drove the western world to accuse Muslims of ignorance; for all that

they see are millions of them following after millions of others, like hasty and ungovernable flocks!

Indeed, whenever you ask those same Muslims about the wisdom and the purpose of such deeds, they give you no answer except to say: “these are religious obligations that should be performed in special places and on certain days!”

This is what their fathers—the scholarly imitators—said, and they blindly follow them. They say: “we have no knowledge about the wisdom or the aim of these acts. All that we know is that this is a Godly Command through which you display your worship of God. Our forefathers said so and we have only to obey, whether we understand or do not understand the reasons for these rituals. Therefore, follow us— you who questions us— without asking questions or making objections, otherwise you will be thrown out. It is forbidden to interfere in the jurisprudence of our scholars. We have only to imitate them!”

Oh my Lord! Until when we shall keep straying, having lost the right path for us?!

Now, time has come full circle and it is the turn of truth to manifest itself. In this time, sun of Supreme Knowledge has risen with light, majesty, truth and perfection to disclose the reality of Islam and its loftiness. It is time for the false scholars to stand aside, and for error to be wiped out, for wisdom and illumination have shone through the tongue of the humane scholar Mohammad Amin Sheikho (God made his soul sanctified) to bring forth a scientific demonstration that enlightens hearts with the light of knowledge, thought, science and explanation.

He uncovered illuminative facts to us, which put an end to all forms of blindness and benightedness. He removed the veils from our hearts and minds and helped us to sense the greatness and sublimity

of the rituals of pilgrimage, thus allowing us to drink from their supreme sources. All of this was inspired to him through the best of creation, Mohammad (cpth).

Let us now, dear reader, sail into this research which leads us to the straight path and ensures no deviation from it, so that we may live a life of eternal happiness. Let us seize the opportunity to gain a span of life, before which our worldly life is not worth mentioning. Let us start now, for when death knocks at the door, regret will avail us nothing, and how great will be the loss of those who turned away from their Provider!

— *Prof. A. K. John Alias Al-Dayrani*

Chapter One

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

In the previous books in this series, we have talked about faith, prayer (communication with Al'lah), Az-Zakat (purification) and fasting.

Now we turn to talk about the last thing referred to in the holy saying "Islam is based on five pillars." This is when the Prophet (cpth) says: "... and making the pilgrimage to the House by he who can do so."



2-It is He who has sent His Envoy with guidance and the religion of truth to proclaim it over all religions, even though those who obey other gods beside Al'lah may detest it

The Aim of Pilgrimage

The aim of making the pilgrimage is like that of fasting. It is to allow the believer to become illuminated by Al'lah's Light. God says, revealing the aim of fasting, "You who believe, fasting is decreed for you as it was decreed for those before you; so that you may come to acquire Al- Taqwa (seeing by Al'lah's Light)."

The Holy Qur'an,
Fortress 2, Al-Baqara (The Cow), verse 183

Some believers gain this illumination in Ramadan, the month of fasting, and then become even more illuminated by pilgrimage because piety—or seeing by Al'lah's Light—grows exponentially, just like belief.

You may find a great distance between one believer and another, and between one who is pious and another who is less so. God says: "The most pious shall be kept away from it (the blazing fire)."

The Holy Qur'an,
Fortress 92, Al-Lail (The Night), verse 17

This demonstrates that there are believers who are pious and others who are even more pious.

Some believers may not gain their enlightenment in Ramadan. The pilgrimage, therefore, can serve as another opportunity for those who fail to gain piety by fasting.

However, when someone fails to become illuminated by Al'lah's Light either by fasting in Ramadan or by making the pilgrimage, it means that they are not trying hard enough in either of the two situations.

The Almighty God clarifies the purpose of pilgrimage when He says: "The pilgrimage is to be done in the appointed months. He that

intends to perform the pilgrimage in those months must abstain from sexual intercourse, from straying from the right path, and from disputes while on the pilgrimage. Al'lah knows everything that you do. Provide well (do good deeds)—the benefit of this provision is Al-Taqwa (to become illuminated by Al'lah's Light). Be under My Light; then, it is you that is endowed with realization.”

*The Holy Qur'an,
Fortress 2, Al-Baqara (The Cow), verse 197*

In another verse, He says: “Give glory to Al'lah for a few days. He that departs on the second day brings no sin upon himself; nor does he who stays longer, if he acquires Al-Taqwa (becomes illuminated by Al'lah's Light). Be under Al'lah's Light, then, and know that you shall all be gathered before Him.”

*The Holy Qur'an,
Fortress 2, Al-Baqara (The Cow), verse 203*

According to this noble verse, we understand that a person who gains a sufficient degree of piety brings no sin upon themselves if they depart on the second day, or if they stay longer into the days of throwing the pebbles, since they have achieved their purpose.

Describing the Pilgrimage



3-The hills of Mecca

The Sacred House of Al'lah, as the Almighty told us, has been placed in a barren valley surrounded on all sides by the desert. The hajji (as the person undertaking the pilgrimage is known) has to travel a long distance across a desert that is all but devoid of people, except for a few oases placed here and there to provide the pilgrim with all they need and to help them continue their journey.

After a few days of travel, the pilgrim will have passed the last of the cities and towns, and will come face to face with the desert. Now it is time to leave the worldly life behind, and direct their spirit wholly towards Him whom they seek.

The pilgrim walks along a lifeless road where nothing can be heard except for the hissing of snakes, the chirping of grasshoppers and the howling of wild beasts. Sandstorms blow up from time to time, limiting the pilgrim's vision and making their breathing difficult. However, the caravan proceeds calmly, speaking of nothing but God, greeting the day and leaving the night behind, and then greeting the night and leaving the day behind.

Such progress is in accordance with the aim of the journey, which is to serve as a reminder of the day when you will leave your worldly life, your relatives and your dear friends. The sight and sound of

snakes and scorpions also remind the hajji of the tomb in which they will later meet such creatures. These sights remind the spirit that the lifespan of a person is limited, and that there must come a day when the Caller will call: "You! Man! Prepare yourself for departure. It is time to leave your family, your money and your close friends." This feeling incites the pilgrim to seek the truth seriously and strenuously.

In fact, the rituals of the pilgrimage were legislated only in order to make you renounce the worldly life and its pleasures, and throw them out of your heart.

In Arabic these rituals are called 'Omra', which means 'to build something', as they build the heart by its entry into God's Presence.

By following the Omra, you imitate the state of death, when you will be barefoot and bareheaded. You cannot cut a nail or take a bath or kill an insect, and you wear only loose garments. In this state, the spirit will see its sins and faults and surrender to you as you approach God. You invoke Him and kiss the Black Stone, yielding wholly to God and turning to Him in repentance, and then He will accept you.

From this description, it becomes clear to us why the Sacred House was put in a distant place in a barren valley, far from any worldly pleasure or luxury that might distract the spirit. The greatest obstacle which stands between people and their Provider is their love of the worldly life and their being distracted by it. The focus is on this life instead of the other abode, and that is what blocks our hearing, blinds our seeing and makes our heart forget God. This is the wisdom of placing the Sacred House in a barren valley surrounded by a desert.

A person may ask: "If somebody gains piety (Al-Taqwa) when fasting in Ramadan, and their spirit becomes able to see goodness

and know that it really is good, and also to see evil and know that it really is evil, so that they are always illuminated by the Light of their Provider: for what reason must that person make the pilgrimage and travel across the seas, leaving their family and children behind, facing dangers and diseases, and encountering trouble and difficulty? Can this Compassionate and Clement Creator—who created this person and obliged them with unlimited boons—not grant them what He wants to grant them in their own country? Why does God bid them go to His Sacred House which lies in a barren valley without gardens or trees, springs or rivers; where there is nothing except a little water, which is hardly sufficient for these pilgrims?! We accept that the pilgrimage is obligatory for those who live in a country close to the Sacred House; but is it obligatory for those who live in a country far away from it, who need years to reach the land of Al-Hejaz on foot, and years to return?!”

They may also ask: “Since this Great Creator has created humanity perfectly and created all the universe based on the most wonderful discipline, so that all that is in it tells of His Greatness and Majesty and indicates His Grand Power: why then has He ordered us to perform these rituals of pilgrimage, which may seem to the eye to be mere formalities and meaningless actions?

“Does not the Grandeur of the Grand require that all His Commands should be great, and should depend on high wisdom, and should lead to sublime results?!”

They may mention some specific rites in order to clarify their question, asking: “Why did the Almighty order us to take off our tailored clothes as we enter the state of ritual consecration, and instead to wear a garment consisting of only a robe and a wrap?! Why did He order us to go back and forth between Safa and Marwah and to stand for a while in each place?! What is the purpose

of walking around Al-Ka'ba and kissing the Black Stone? What is the aim of standing at Arafat and expressing our compliance by saying: 'Here we are, oh God of all, here we are?!'³ Isn't Al'lah the Almighty Omnipresent?! Why should we face trouble and climb the mountains to express our compliance to Him?!

“What is the purpose behind throwing the pebbles? Does Satan stand shackled in those three locations, to be pelted with seven pebbles? I wonder: can he be found at any of these three locations? Do these pebbles have any effect on the devil?! Isn't he burnt merely by our mention of God and our nearness to Him?!

“Finally, why do we slaughter and immolate sacrifices and shed the blood of thousands and thousands of sheep, although only a few people can eat from them?! What is better: to give these sums of money to poor people or to shed these rivers of blood?!”

In this way you may ask and ask. Indeed, although you may spend all your life asking, nothing shall quench your thirst for an answer unless you apply the noble saying of the Prophet (cph), which is: “Islam is based on five pillars...” If you apply this noble saying perfectly, according to what we have previously mentioned and revealed, then when Ramadan comes you will perform the fast we have talked about and become illuminated by Al'lah's Light. This means that your spirit will become able to distinguish what is good from what is evil, and tell apart the useful and the useless, so that it does not whisper evil ideas to you. This will take place after you have seen that disobedience and wrongdoing make the spirit fall into destruction and total loss, whereas obedience and the application of the Godly Commands generate happiness, repose and survival. I say that if you apply this noble saying exactly—that is, to start with belief and then perform deeds based on this—then you will move from one class to another in this sublime university and rise from grade to grade, until you perform a true fast in Ramadan.

Your witnessing of God's Majesty and Perfection will fill your heart with love and adoration for Him, and will allow you to receive a light and wear the garment of piety (Al-Taqwa). I say: if you reach this state, you will then be worthy of ascent to the final class, which is the pilgrimage.

In undertaking the pilgrimage, proof and evidence are shown to you, and the realities become obvious to your eyes. Through pilgrimage you see the details of the facts you have witnessed spiritually during Ramadan. The more truthful you are in your seeking, the clearer to your heart-eye their particulars will be, so that neither a veil nor a mist will stand between you and them.

By undertaking the pilgrimage, you see more and more, so you no longer have to ask. You will not need to ask anything of anyone because you will have a vision that enables you to witness this yourself. However, although one who has a vision needs no leader, such a person still cannot dispense with the companion and the interceding master (cpth).

During the pilgrimage, you see the facts of all the rituals of pilgrimage, so you then realize that they are based on high wisdom, just like all the other great Commands of the Grand God. You will witness that all the actions of the pilgrimage are symbols and ways to help this human spirit to reach the loftiest ranks of humanity.

By undertaking the pilgrimage, all the questions you have asked will be answered and all problems will vanish before your spirit's eyes. You will see the aim of mandating the pilgrimage and the purpose behind the Godly Command for these rituals and deeds.

By undertaking the pilgrimage, you do not only see the facts of its rituals. You see everything your spirit asks for, including the answers to all of the questions that occur to it and the solutions to all of the problems that cross its mind.

By performing the pilgrimage you will become able to truly see the reasons for all the Godly Injunctions—as well as for the prohibitions— by witnessing their specific natures, and you will also be provided with cogent, clear and decisive proof and thus become a wise scholar. The Prophet (cpth) made this clear with regard to his companions, when he said: “My companions are like the stars. Any one of them that you follow, guided you will be.”⁴

The Almighty God has called on humanity to go to the land of Al-Hejaz and perform the duty of pilgrimage there, in order to sublimate these believers—whose spirits have become illuminated through Ramadan by the Light of the Almighty—to the highest rank a person can reach.

We can liken the situation of the believer whose spirit has obtained piety (Al-Taqwa) through Ramadan to that of someone who has obtained a university degree or diploma. The example of a believer who performs the pilgrimage and achieves its sought after aim is analogous to the situation of a person who completes a doctorate in the present day, and becomes a university professor. Accordingly, we can recognize two levels, or two successive degrees of piety: the degree of piety which a person achieves through Ramadan, and that which the pilgrim gains through pilgrimage. During this latter process, a person witnesses the minute secrets of the Godly Orders and their advantages to all of human society, as well as the limitless damage that results from forbidden things. Then on every day and on every occasion, this eminent believer will witness new things and acquire new knowledge, and so on into infinity.

God says: “Say (Oh Mohammad): ‘If the ocean were ink for the Words of my Provider, the ocean would be exhausted sooner than would the Words of my Provider, even if we brought another ocean like it for its aid’.”

The Holy Qur’an,

Fortress 18, Al-Kahf (The Cave), verse 109

Thus, the Almighty God decreed pilgrimage for the believers so as to help the one who follows the way of belief to become a witness, and to help the illuminated believer to become a wise scholar, so that they can become a true humanist. This is what the noble verses refer to when God says: "...then when you pour down from Arafat, celebrate the Praises of Al'lah at Al-Mash'ar Al-Haram (the sacred monument), and celebrate His Praises as He has guided you even though, before this, you went astray. Then pass on at a quick pace from the place whence it is usual for the multitude so to do, and ask for Al'lah's Forgiveness. For Al'lah is Oft-forgiving, and most Merciful.

"So when you have accomplished your holy rites, celebrate the Praises of Al'lah, as you used to celebrate the praises of your fathers; yea, with even more heart and soul. There are men who say: 'Our Provider! Give us (Your Bounties) in this world!' But they will have no portion of creation in the Hereafter. And there are men who say: 'Our Provider! Give us goodness in this world and goodness in the hereafter, and defend us from the torment of the Fire!' To these will be allotted what they have earned, and Al'lah is Quick in account."

The Holy Qur'an,

Fortress 2, Al-Baqara (The Cow), verses 198-202

By reading these noble verses you can see the Divine Care and high wisdom that the pilgrimage contains, which is expended upon humanity. The Almighty God is not being hard upon this person when He asks them to leave their family and their country, to face dangers and to spend their money in order to perform the pilgrimage. Rather, He wants to prepare a better life and eternal bliss for them, and to uplift them to the position for which they were created and brought into this worldly life. He wants them to seek it

and obtain it, in order to enjoy perpetual bliss and everlasting happiness.

One aspect of Al'lah's Care for humanity which is hidden behind the pilgrimage may appear to you when you notice, for example, what some fathers do in the present day. You see them send their sons to the furthest lands and urge them to travel to faraway countries, no matter how much money this costs them.

They make them face the hardest circumstances and the most difficult challenges in order to make them study and get a degree at university. Thus, when they come back home after many long years, they can assume a distinguished post or acquire an important job that allows them to ascend to a higher social position.

You will see that those both near and far appreciate those fathers and consider them to be providing perfect fatherly care for the future of their sons. Nonetheless, all the money those fathers spend and all the difficulties with which they burden their sons are just for a worldly life; that is, for a few years which may not last long. After this example, we think that you can now realize Al'lah's Care for humanity, and His comprehensive Favor and wide Mercy for us.

Can anyone now regard the requirement for the pilgrimage as a difficult charge, or see it only as a devotional order of which none can know the purpose except Al'lah?

Consider the aforementioned noble verse and then you will perceive the aim and the wisdom of this obligation. The Almighty also says: "...and celebrate His Praises as He has guided you..."

*The Holy Qur'an,
Fortress 2, Al-Baqara (The Cow), verse 198*

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