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The Spiritual Aspects of Hajj

A Complete Translation of Imām Zain al-‘Ābidīn(‘a) ’s Discourse on Ĥajj with Shiblī

Translated by Mohammed Ali Ismail

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A complete translation of Imām Zain al-‘Ābidīn’s discourse on Hajj with Shiblī. Part of the Hajj 2004 handouts prepared by scholars of the Hawza. Translated by Mohammed Ali Ismail.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

When our master (Imām) Zain al-‘Ābidīn (‘a) returned from Ĥajj, he was met by (a pilgrim called) al-Shiblī. Imām (‘a) asked him: “Have you performed Ĥajj, O Shiblī?”

He said: “Yes, O Son of the Messenger of Allah.”

Then Imām (‘a) asked: “Did you arrive at Mīqāt, remove your sewn clothes and perform ghusl?”

He said: “Yes.”

Imām (‘a) asked: “So when you arrived at Mīqāt, did you intend to take off the clothes of sin and to put on the clothes of obedience?”

He said: “No.”

Imām (‘a) asked: “And when you removed your sewn clothes, did you intend to remove showmanship and hypocrisy, and (to avoid) engaging in mistaken beliefs?”

He said: "No."

Imām ('a) asked: "And when you performed ghusl, did you intend to wash off (your) mistakes and sins?"

He said: "No."

Imām ('a) said: "Then you did not arrive at Mīqāt, nor did you remove your sewn clothes, nor did you perform ghusl!"

Then Imām ('a) asked: "Did you clean yourself, put on iḥrām and tie the knot for Ḥajj?"

He said: "Yes."

Imām ('a) asked: "So when you cleaned yourself, put on iḥrām and tied the knot for Ḥajj, did you intend that you were getting cleansed by the light of sincere repentance to Allah, The Exalted?"

He said: "No."

Imām ('a) asked: "And when you put on iḥrām, did you intend to forbid for yourself all that Allah, The Almighty, The Glorious, has forbidden?"

He said: "No."

Imām ('a) asked: "And when you tied the knot for Ḥajj, did you intend to untie all the knots which are not for Allah?"

He said: "No."

Imām ('a) said to him: "You did not clean yourself, nor did you put on iḥrām, nor did you tie the knot for Ḥajj!"

Imām ('a) asked him: "Did you enter Mīqāt, offer the two raka'h prayer of iḥrām and say talbiyah?"

He said: "Yes."

Imām ('a) asked: "So when you entered Mīqāt, did you intend that your purpose is to have a spiritual encounter with Allah?"

He said: "No."

Imām ('a) asked: "And when you offered the two raka'h prayer, did you intend to get close to Allah by means of the best of actions and the greatest of virtues of (His) servants, that is, ṣalāh?"

He said: "No."

Imām ('a) asked: "And when you said talbiyah, did you intend to say it for the sake of Allah, Glory be to Him, in perfect obedience, and to refrain from every sin?"

He said "No."

Imām ('a) said to him: "You did not enter Mīqāt, nor did you offer prayers, nor did you say talbiyah!"

Then Imām ('a) asked him: "Did you enter the Ĥaram, see the Ka'bah and offer prayers?"

He said: "Yes."

Imām ('a) asked: "So when you entered the Ĥaram, did you intend to forbid backbiting of all Muslims for yourself?"

He said: "No."

Imām ('a) asked: "And when you reached Makkah, did you intend with your heart that your purpose is (to seek closeness to) Allah?"

He said: "No."

Imām ('a) said: "Then you did not enter the Ĥaram, nor did you see the Ka'bah, nor did you offer prayers!"

Then Imām ('a) asked: "Did you circumambulate the House (of Allah), touch its corners and perform sa'ī (between Ṣafā and Marwah)?"

He said: "Yes."

Imām ('a) asked: "So when you performed sa'ī, did you intend to escape to Allah and that the Knower Of The Unseen knows this about you?"

He said: "No."

Imām ('a) said: "Then you did not circumambulate the House, nor did you touch its corners, nor did you perform sa'ī!"

Then Imām ('a) asked him: "Did you give your hand (in allegiance) to the Black Stone, stand at Maqām al-Ibrāhīm ('a) and offer two raka'h prayers there?"

He said: "Yes."

(Upon hearing this) Imām ('a) let out a cry as if he were about to part from this world and then said: "Ah! Ah!"

Then Imām ('a) said: "Whoever gives his hand to the Black Stone, (it is as if) he has given his hand to Allah, The Exalted; so look, O poor one! Do not waste the reward of that whose sanctity is great, and do not invalidate this giving of (your) hand by committing sin and by taking that which is not lawful like the transgressors."

Then Imām ('a) asked: "When you stood at Maqām al-Ibrāhīm ('a), did you intend to perform every act of obedience and to turn your back on all sins?"

He said: "No."

Imām ('a) asked: "And when you offered two raka'h prayers there, did you intend to pray the prayer of Ibrāhīm ('a) and to rub the nose of Shaitān (in the dirt) by your prayer?"

He said: "No."

Imām ('a) said to him: "Then you did not give your hand to the Black Stone, nor did you stand at the Maqām, nor did you offer two raka'h prayers there!"

Then Imām ('a) asked him: "Did you go to the well of Zam Zam and drink its water?"

He said: "Yes."

Imām ('a) asked: "Did you intend to go towards obedience and to close your eyes from sin?"

He said: "No."

Imām ('a) said: "Then you did not go to it, nor did you drink its water!"

Then Imām ('a) asked him: "Did you perform sa'ī between Şafā and Marwah and walk to and fro between them?"

He said: "Yes."

Imām ('a) asked him: "Did you intend that you were between hope and fear?"

He said: "No."

Imām ('a) said: "Then you did not perform sa'ī, nor did you walk to and fro between Şafā and Marwah!" Then Imām ('a) asked: "Did you leave for Minā?"

He said: "Yes."

Imām ('a) asked: "Did you intend to keep people safe from your tongue, heart and hands?"

He said: "No."

Imām ('a) said: "Then you did not leave for Minā!"

Then Imām ('a) asked him: "Did you stop at 'Arafah, climb the Mountain of Raĥmah, know the (reality of the) Valley of Namirah and pray to Allah, Glory be to Him, at the sign and Jamarāt?"

He said: "Yes."

Imām ('a) asked: "During your stay at 'Arafah, did you have the recognition of Allah's, Glory be to Him, knowledge of all teachings and of all the branches of knowledge, and did you know of Allah's possession of your Book of Deeds and His knowledge about your inner self and heart?"

He said: "No."

Imām ('a) asked: "Did you intend by your ascension upon the Mountain of Raĥmah that Allah is Merciful to every believing man and woman and that He befriends all Muslim men and women?"

He said: "No."

Imām ('a) asked: "And did you intend at Namirah that you will not enjoin (others to do something) unless you have acted (upon it) yourself, and that you will not rebuke (others about something) unless you have prevented yourself (from doing it)?"

He said: "No."

Imām ('a) asked: "And when you stood at the sign and Namirāt, did you intend that they are a witness for you over the acts of obedience, a protection for you with the Protecting Angels, by the command of the Lord of the Heavens?"

He said: "No."

Imām ('a) said: "Then you did not stay at 'Arafah, nor did you climb the Mountain of Raḥmah, nor did you know (the reality of) Namirah, nor did you pray, nor did you stay at Namirāt!"

Then Imām ('a) asked: "Did you pass between the two signs, offer two raka'h prayers before doing so, walk in Muzdalifah, pick up stones from there and pass through Mash'ar al-Ḥarām?"

He said: "Yes."

Imām ('a) asked: "So when you offered two raka'h prayers, did you intend that it was the prayer of thanks on the eve of the tenth day, so that every difficulty is warded off and every ease is made possible?"

He said: "No."

Imām ('a) asked: "And when you walked between the two signs without wavering right or left of them, did you intend to not waver right or left of the religion of truth, neither by your heart, nor by your tongue, nor by your limbs?"

He said: "No."

Imām ('a) asked: "And when you walked in Muzdalifah and picked up stones from there, did you intend to remove all sins and ignorance from yourself, to attain all the branches of knowledge and (to perform) all (good) deeds?"

He said: "No." Imām ('a) asked: "And when you passed through Mash'ar al-Ḥarām, did you intend to make your heart realise the realisation of the people of piety and fear of Allah, The Almighty, The Glorious?"

He said: "No."

Imām ('a) said: "Then you did not pass the two signs, nor did you offer two raka'h prayers, nor did you walk in Muzdalifah, nor did you pick up stones from there, nor did you pass through Mash'ar al-Ḥarām!"

Then Imām ('a) asked him: "Did you reach Minā, throw (stones) at Jamarah, shave your head, slaughter your animal of sacrifice, offer prayers in Masjid al-Khīf, return to Makkah and perform the final ṭawāf?"

He said: "Yes."

Imām ('a) asked: "So when you reached Minā and threw (stones) at the Jamarāt, did you intend that you have achieved your purpose and that your Lord has fulfilled all your wishes for you?"

He said: "No."

Imām ('a) asked: "And when you threw at the Jamarāt, did you intend to throw at your enemy Iblīs and to anger him by completing your invaluable Ḥajj?"

He said: "No."

Imām ('a) asked: "And when you shaved your head, did you intend to be purified from all dirt and the consequences of transgression upon others, and that you have left all sins behind (and are just as you were) when your mother gave birth to you?"

He said: "No."

Imām ('a) asked: "And when you prayed in Masjid al-Khīf, did you intend to not fear (anyone) except Allah, The Almighty, The Glorious, and your sins, and to not have hope except in the mercy of Allah, The Exalted?"

He said: "No."

Imām ('a) asked: "And when you slaughtered your sacrificial animal, did you intend to cut the throat of greed by adhering to the reality of piety, and that you are following the tradition of Ibrāhīm ('a) (in the matter of the) slaughtering of his son and the fruit and fragrant flower of his heart, and that you are keeping his tradition alive for those after him, and that he (Ibrāhīm ('a)) brought him (his son Ismā'īl ('a)) close to Allah, The Exalted, for the (sake of the) One who created him?"

He said: "No."

Imām ('a) asked: "And when you returned to Makkah and performed the final ṭawāf, did you intend to proceed from the Mercy of Allah, The Exalted, and to return to His obedience, adhere to His love, perform His obligations and get close to Allah, The Exalted?"

He said: "No."

Imām Zain al-Ābidīn ('a) said to him: "Then you did not reach Minā, nor did you throw at the Jamarāt, nor did you shave your head, nor did you perform your worship, nor did you offer prayers in Masjid al-Khīf, nor did you perform the final ṭawāf, nor did you get close (to Allah)! Go back, for you have not performed Ḥajj!"

Shiblī began to weep over that which he had neglected in the performance of his Ḥajj, and continued to learn until he performed Ḥajj the following year with knowledge and conviction.

Language English

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