

THE INNER
DIMENSIONS OF
HAJJ

Zohreh Borujerdi

Editors-in-Chief
Hamid Reza Matin
Ja'far Ali Muhibullah



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Zohreh Borujerdi

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**Islamic International Foundation
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(IslamIFC)**



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Foreword

Hajj is known to most people around the world as a journey to Makkah to visit the Kaaba, the ancient House in the tradition of Abraham. As one of the pillars of Islam it must be performed by every Muslim who is able to do so once in their lifetime.

Hajj is an endeavor to reach the pinnacle of existence. It is a meeting with God — a sacred migration that frees pilgrims from worldly attachments. It is a feast to which God invites the traveler to be His guest, in a place where hidden realities are manifest. Hajj is an ocean into which flow all the acts of worship. Every Muslim intending to embark upon this journey must not only learn and follow the outer rules, but should also understand the inner rules and their objectives so that the essence of this journey in its hidden aspects comes to life and the heart becomes the sanctuary of God.

This book has been adapted from a number of lectures given by Mrs. Zohreh Borujerdi.¹ A draft of the English translation of

¹ Founder of the Educational Institute of al-Sultan Ali ibn Musa al-Rida, Tehran.

the script was then prepared by Mr. and Mrs. Abuzar and Ashraf Ahmadi. Dr. Rebecca Masterton¹ has reviewed and revised the text, while a team of scholars, Sayyid Morteza Alawi Talari and Dr. Sayyid Moslem Madani² have reviewed and authenticated the content, concepts and references. Finally, the text has been edited by Shaykh Ja'far Ali Muhibullah, Shaykh Ahmed Haneef and Dr. David Cook.³

Both academics and the general public will benefit from this book. It is a useful source of information for researchers and a guide for those who wish to make the pilgrimage. The text takes the pilgrim through the rites of Hajj and opens up the inner meaning of each act so that the spiritual dimensions of the journey can be more appreciated.

References to the Quran and prophetic narrations elucidate the particular significance of each stage in the journey. Technical terminology has been explained in the footnotes. In addition to inspiring the reader, this book offers a greater understanding of Islam's philosophy of life.

The editorial team has significantly revised the original text by summarizing traditions and the views of exegetes and scholars. In addition, an effort was made to ensure the reliability of reported traditions.

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It is hoped that this drop from the boundless ocean of Hajj is accepted by Almighty God.

﴿... رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ﴾

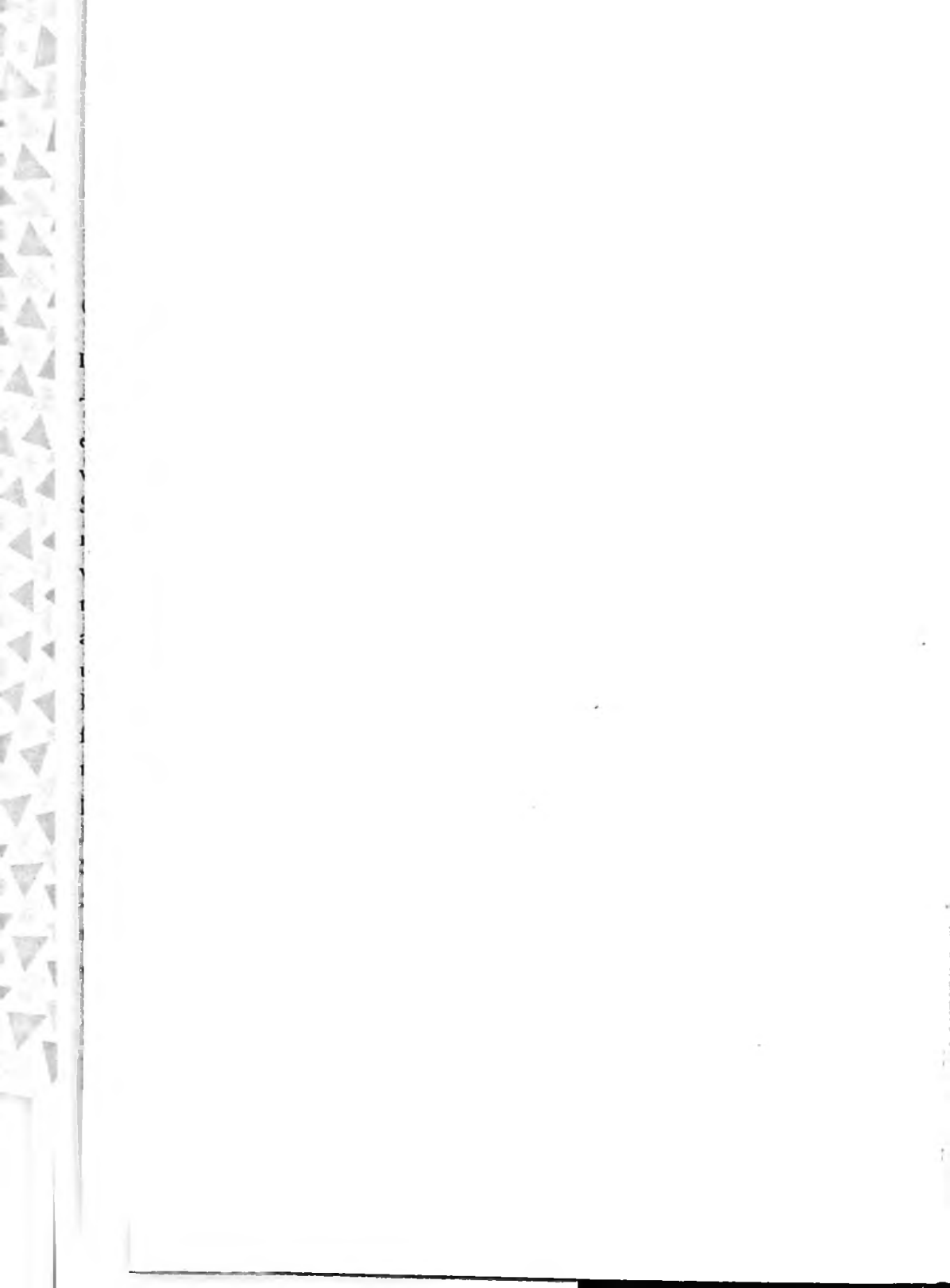
... Our Lord! Please accept it from us! Indeed You are the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing.¹

Hamid Reza Matin, President of IslamIFC

January 2018

Qom, Iran

¹ Quran, Baqarah 2:127.



The Necessity and Importance of Hajj

The Quran states:

﴿...وَلِلَّهِ عَلَى النَّاسِ حِجُّ الْبَيْتِ مَنِ اسْتَطَاعَ إِلَيْهِ سَبِيلًا وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ عَنِ الْعَالَمِينَ﴾

... and it is humanity's duty toward Allah to make a pilgrimage to the House for Hajj, for whoever is able to make the journey; but if any renege [on his duty], then verily, Allah is Self-sufficient and independent of all creation.¹

This verse clearly stipulates the necessity for performing the rites of Hajj.² It proclaims that someone who is able and can afford to carry out this obligation and yet refuses to do so, has reneged on one of the pillars of the religion, as shown by the term ﴿مَنْ كَفَرَ﴾ [*man kafara*], meaning 'one who denies.'

¹ Quran, Aal-'Imran 3:97.

² حَجٌّ [*hajj*] is a pilgrimage to the Kaaba (كَبَّة [ka'bah]) for which specific rites are performed during the Hajj season (the lunar months of Shawwal, Dhul-Qa'dah and Dhul-Hijjah).

Kufr,¹ which literally means 'to cover,' in Islamic terminology means 'to cover or conceal the truth.' A *kaafir*² is a person who disregards the truth of the divine invitation. According to certain scholars such as Shaykh Tabarsi³ and Allamah Tabataba'i,⁴ كَفَرَ in this verse does not mean absolute infidelity, as the term is used in theology, but rather infidelity in a jurisprudential sense, meaning 'to refuse a legal command in *fiqh*.'⁵

The wording ﴿مَنْ كَفَرَ﴾ can demonstrate the shamelessness of the servant. In other words, this is a case where God has summoned His servant to perform an act of obedience,⁶ but the servant is unwilling to answer His call.

Regarding the essence of Hajj, Ali ibn Abi-Talib⁷ has stated:

وَفَرَضَ عَلَيْكُمْ حَجَّ بَيْتِهِ الْحَرَامِ، الَّذِي جَعَلَهُ قِبْلَةً لِلْأَنَامِ، يَرِدُونَهُ
وَرُودَ الْأَنْعَامِ، وَيَأْتَهُونَ إِلَيْهِ وُلُوءَ الْحَمَامِ.

He has made obligatory upon you the pilgrimage to His

¹ كُفْرًا [*kufra*].

² كَافِرًا [*kāfir*].

³ Abu Ali Fadl ibn Hasan Tabarsi also known as Shaykh Tabarsi (d. 1154).

⁴ Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tabataba'i also known as Allamah Tabataba'i (d. 1981).

⁵ Tabarsi, *Majma' al-Bayan*, vol. 2, p. 799; Tabataba'i, *Al-Mizan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an*, vol. 3, p. 355.

⁶ 'Act of obedience' here is equivalent to عِبَادَةٌ [*'ibādah*]. As a term in *fiqh*, it refers to any devotional act or rite for which the intention of seeking proximity to God is required for the act to be accepted by Allah — e.g., ritual prayer (صَلَاةٌ [*ṣalāh*]), fasting (صَوْمٌ [*ṣawm*]), Hajj (حَجٌّ [*hajj*]), full ablution (غُسْلٌ [*ghusl*]), *wudu* (وُضُوءٌ [*wuḍū'*]), *khums* (كُمُسٌ [*khums*]), *zakat* (زَكَاةٌ [*zakāh*]), etc.

⁷ الإمام عليّ [al-Imām 'Alī]. Ali ibn Abi-Talib (d. 661) was the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad, and according to the Imamiyyah (*Imāmiyyah* [إِمَامِيَّة]) the first of twelve Imams to succeed him.

Sacred House for Hajj, which He has established as the direction of prayer for humanity; they will come to it (in droves) as livestock come (to a place) and they are drawn to it like the yearning of pigeons (for their nests).

جَعَلَهُ - سُبْحَانَهُ - عَلَامَةً لِّتَوَاضِعِهِمْ لِعَظَمَتِهِ، وَإِذْعَانِهِمْ لِعِزَّتِهِ،
وَأَخْتَارَ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ سُمَاعًا أَجَابُوا إِلَيْهِ دَعْوَتَهُ، وَصَدَّقُوا كَلِمَتَهُ،
وَوَقَفُوا مَوَاقِفَ أَنْبِيَائِهِ، وَنَشَّهُوا بِمَلَائِكَتِهِ الْمُطِيفِينَ بِعَرْشِهِ،
يُحْرِرُونَ الْأَرْبَابَ فِي مَنَاجِرِ عِبَادَتِهِ، وَيَتَبَادَرُونَ عِنْدَهُ مَوْعِدَ مَغْفِرَتِهِ.

He, the Most Glorified, has made it a sign for their humility before His Greatness and for their submission before His Power. He selected from among His creation those obedient listeners who answered His call and testified to His Word. They stood in the places where His prophets had been, resembling His angels who go around His Divine Throne, profiting in the business of their worship of Him and hastening toward His promised forgiveness.

جَعَلَهُ - سُبْحَانَهُ - لِلْإِسْلَامِ عَلَمًا، وَلِلْعَائِذِينَ حَرَمًا، فَرَضَ حَقَّهُ،
وَأَوْجَبَ حَجَّهُ، وَكَتَبَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَفَادَتَهُ، فَقَالَ سُبْحَانَهُ: ﴿وَلِلَّهِ عَلَى
التَّائِبِينَ حِجُّ الْبَيْتِ مَنِ اسْتَطَاعَ إِلَيْهِ سَبِيلًا وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ
عَنِّي عَنِ الْعَالَمِينَ﴾.

He, the Most Glorified, made it (His Sacred House) a symbol for Islam and a sanctuary for those that seek refuge. He made its right (the protocols and prohibitions regarding the House) obligatory and the Hajj compulsory. He prescribed that you treat it with deference, for the Most Glorified said, "And it is humanity's duty toward Allah to make a pilgrim-

age to the House for Hajj, for whoever is able to make the journey; but if any renege [on his duty], then verily, Allah is Self-sufficient and independent of all creation."¹

Hajj is a communal act of obedience. Those who are able must answer the call of the Lord. This devotional act² is not a collective obligation (*wajib kifa'i*);³ rather, it is a personal obligation (*wajib ayni*) for every individual with the ability and means to make the journey successfully.

Ibn Arabi⁴ states that the Lord does not summon the servant to perform Hajj on account of any distinction or special attribute that the servant may have; rather, it is due to the latter's essence.⁵

In other words, Almighty Allah does not summon mankind to Hajj because of their religion; rather, it is because of their essence that He calls them to this divine banquet. In this matter, He does not consider any specific attribute when He states

¹ Sharif al-Radi, *Nahj al-Balaghah*, sermon 1, p. 45.

² Here, by 'Hajj' is meant *Hajjat al-Islam*, the obligatory Hajj that every able Muslim must carry out, but Hajj as a general term can be *wajib kifa'i*. (See note 3, p. 36, about the different kinds of the obligatory Hajj.)

³ الواجب الكفائي [*al-wajib al-kifa'i*] means an obligation imposed on a Muslim community as a whole. This obligation on the rest of the community is removed if some members perform it. On the other hand, الواجب العيني [*al-wajib al-ayni*] is an obligation which is imposed on individual Muslims, e.g., the daily prayers, and no one can perform this duty on behalf of someone else.

⁴ Abu Abdillah Muhyiddin ibn Arabi, also known as Ibn Arabi (d. 1240), was a mystic, philosopher, and spiritual scholar.

⁵ Ibn Arabi, *Al-Futuh al-Makkiyah*, vol. 2, p. 424.

«لكونه تعالى قال ﴿وَلْيَعْبُدُوهُ عَلَى النَّاسِ﴾ وما قال «على المسلمين» ولا ذكر صفة زائدة على أعيانهم، فأرجعها على الأعيان وجوباً إلهياً. فإذا أتى بهذا الدعاء صاحب الاسم الذي هو الناس، قيل فيه إنه قد أجاب إجابة ذاتية».

that it is an obligation upon humanity.¹

This is because the human essence is a creation of Allah, it is the guest of its Lord. With the phrase 'وَلِلَّهِ' ('and for Allah'), the Quran declares that this magnificent act of obedience is solely intended for attaining nearness to the One who is worshipped. Almighty Allah accepts this act with the entirety of His Attributes.

The benefit of any act with sincerity for Allah is awarded to the people themselves, so the blessing in performing Hajj returns to them.

In Nahj al-Balaghah, Imam Ali declares the following:

إِنَّ أَفْضَلَ مَا تَوَسَّلَ بِهِ الْمُتَوَسِّلُونَ ... حَجُّ الْبَيْتِ وَاعْتِمَارُهُ؛ فَإِنَّهُمَا
يَنْفِيَانِ الْفَقْرَ وَيَرْحَضَانِ الذَّنْبَ.

Indeed that which is best for one who seeks the assistance of God is [...] making pilgrimage to the House for Hajj or *umrah*, for it banishes poverty and washes away sins.²

In the verse, عَلَى [*alā*]³ is indicative of the transcendence (استِغْلَاء [*isī'lā*]) and supremacy of Allah with regard to Hajj. In other words, even though Allah is Transcendent, His Transcendence appears to be manifested throughout the carrying out of this duty.

When you are summoned to Hajj, by carrying out each of the rites, you realize even more that Allah is All-Encompassing and

¹ The human being consists of both an essence and attributes. The essence is the human being's essential being as an entity, while the attributes are qualities that may change.

² Sharif al-Radi, *Nahj al-Balaghah*, sermon 110, p. 163.

³ See page 15 (Quran, Aal-'Imran 3:97).

predominates over not only you but all of creation in existence.

With the eye of the heart, you perceive that all creatures praise the Lord and worship Him. Until you attend the Hajj and perceive for yourself the magnificence of the Lord, discovering His greatness, you might assume that you yourself had intended to carry out the rites and had then received the grace to do so. When the grace is given to you, however, and you find yourself within the Beloved's sacred precincts and witness His magnificence and splendor, it is then that you realize that everything is from His eternal Grace, including your intention.

At the *miqat*,¹ you feel with your entire being that your mortal tongue does not have the power to invoke the *talbiyah*² — rather it is the tongue of Allah that says '*labbayk*.'³

During *tawaf*⁴ you realize that it is not your independent existence that is going around the Kaaba; rather, a force from the spiritual world is calling you to do so. During Hajj, indepen-

¹ ميقات [*miqāt*] is a station at which a pilgrim becomes a *muhrim*. (See notes 2 and 3, p. 39.)

² تَلْبِيَّة [*talbiyah*] is to say,

Labbayka Allāhumma labbayk. Labbayka lā sharīka laka labbayk.

Innal-ḥamda, wa-nni'mata, laka wal-mulk, lā sharīka lak.

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

Here I am. O Allah, here I am. Here I am. You have no partner. Here I am. Verily, all praise, grace, and sovereignty are Yours alone. You have no partner.

³ لَبَّيْكَ [*labbayk*] means 'I am at your service.'

⁴ طَوَاف [*ṭawāf*] means 'circumambulation' and it is one of the obligatory rites of Hajj. Pilgrims must go around the Kaaba seven times, in a counterclockwise direction.

dent existence disintegrates drop by drop, piece by piece, and is removed, until only the servant's devotion remains. When spiritual wayfarers seek the journey toward the Kaaba, they must travel away from themselves and their existence entirely.¹

During the Hajj, one realizes that everything is under the control of Almighty Allah and nothing endures without His Grace.

The verse ﴿...مَنْ اسْتَطَاعَ إِلَيْهِ...﴾² expresses a clear truth. It declares that the Lord does not call His servants to carry out a task unless they are able to perform it. Elsewhere, the Quran states that:

﴿لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا...﴾

God does not charge anyone with more than he can bear...³

The servant assumes responsibility for something only when it is within his power to perform it, and Hajj is no exception to this Divine Law because Almighty Allah is not in need of His servants' worship. Instead, these religious observances define the boundaries between faith and unbelief, so that every person who is capable of performing them chooses either faith

¹ Awhadi Isfahani (also known as Maraghi), *Diwan Awhadi Maraghi*, p. 47, (*tarkibat*, poem number 1).

روی چون در سفر کعبه کنند اهل سلوک از خود و هستی خود جمله سفر باید کرد

When the People of Wayfaring turn to the Kaaba,
They must journey away from themselves and their existence.

² Quran, Aal-'Imran 3:97.

... whoever is able to make it (the journey)...

³ Quran, Baqarah 2:286.

or unbelief.

Making this holy journey is actually making a migration to the Most Sacred House. Imam Sadiq¹ has stated:

إِنَّ لِلَّهِ حُرْمَاتٍ ثَلَاثًا لَيْسَ مِثْلَهُنَّ شَيْءٌ، كِتَابَهُ وَهُوَ نُورُهُ وَحِكْمَتُهُ،
وَبَيْتُهُ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لِلنَّاسِ قِبْلَةً لَا يَقْبَلُ اللَّهُ مِنْ أَحَدٍ تَوَجُّهًا إِلَى
غَيْرِهِ وَعِثْرَةً نَبِيِّكُمْ مُحَمَّدٍ.

Three things are regarded highly by God, unlike anything else. The first is His book (the Quran), which is His light and wisdom. Another is His House (the Kaaba), which He has made the direction of prayer for (all) people, and He shall not accept any other direction from anyone. The final thing is the progeny of your Prophet, Muhammad.²

According to this tradition, there is a significant difference between Hajj and other acts of obedience such as ritual prayer,³ fasting, paying *khums*,⁴ or *zakat*.⁵ This distinction is due to the fact that the destination of this journey is the House of God

¹ الإمام الصادق [al-Imām al-Ṣādiq]. Ja'far ibn Muhammad al-Sadiq (d. 765), according to the Imamiyyah (*Imāmīyyah* [إمامية]), was the sixth Imam to succeed Prophet Muhammad.

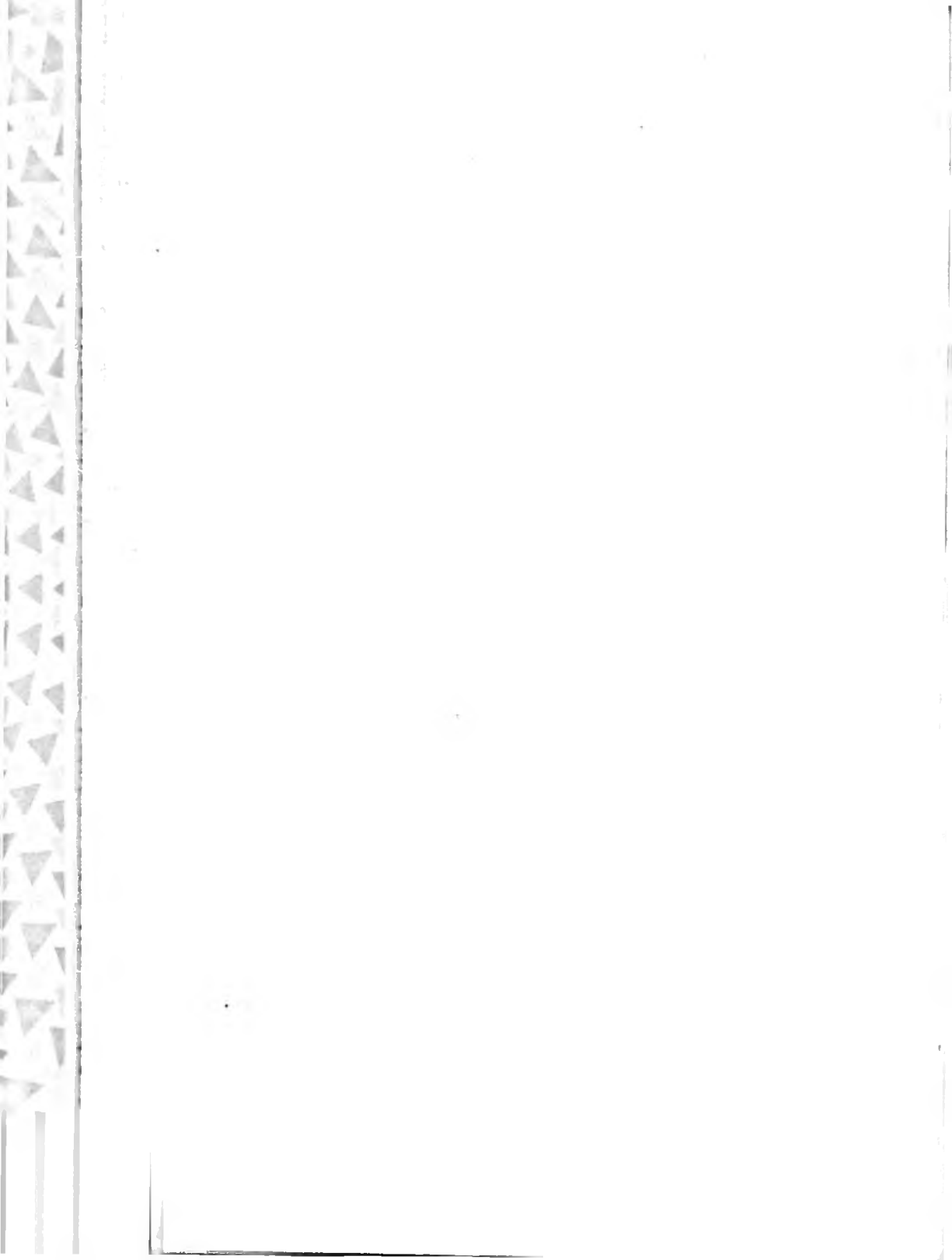
² Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 89, p. 12.

³ Ritual prayer means صلاة [*ṣalāh*], which may be obligatory (*wajib*) or recommended (*mustahab*).

⁴ خمس [*khums*], meaning one-fifth, to be paid to the Imam or his representative out of the spoils of war and other assets, such as uncovered treasure, precious metals from mines and profit from business.

⁵ زكاة [*zakāh*] is the obligatory payment of tax, the aim of which is to purify a person's wealth. It is distributed to the poor, the needy and those in debt.

which is the most sacred place on earth. On this sacred journey, the pilgrim makes an outer pilgrimage to the House, but from the spiritual point of view, he experiences an inner migration toward the House of the Beloved, which begins with dissociating the self from all attachments.



The Meaning of Hajj

Ibn Arabi states that "Hajj is a repetition of the intention proceeding toward the aim."¹ Allah continually manifests Himself in Hajj, and the servant perceives this continual unveiling. Thus, at every moment, the servant attains a new station.

By performing *ghusl*² and purifying yourself from external pollutants and internal vices, you take your place under God's name, *Mutahhir*.³ Then, under the shadow of the name *Hadi*,⁴ you begin to move from the sanctuary of the heart. When you set out, the name *Qadir*⁵ manifests itself before you.

Making these migrations is beyond your human capability; rather, it is only the many blessings of Allah that assist you in carrying out this obligation. At one moment you are under the influence

¹ Ibn Arabi, *Al-Futuhāt al-Makkiyah*, vol. 2, p. 419.

«اعلم... أن الحج في اللسان تكرر القصد إلى المقصد».

² غُسل [*ghusl*] : full ablution.

³ مُطَهِّر [*mutahhir*] : Purifier.

⁴ هَادِي [*hādī*] : Guide.

⁵ قَادِر [*qadīr*] : the All-Powerful and the Omnipotent.

of *Alim*¹ while at the next you are under the name *Khabir*.² At one moment you pass the time with the name *Hakim*,³ and at another with the name *Karim*,⁴ *Qadir*, *Jawad*,⁵ and so on.

﴿...كُلُّ يَوْمٍ هُوَ فِي شَأْنٍ﴾

... At every moment He is (manifested) in some affair.⁶

The hidden Essence of Allah is manifested at every moment, and at every instant Allah reveals a new aspect of Himself. Throughout the Hajj, conditions for perceiving the manifestations of Allah are more conducive than at other times. The glory of each moment during this act of obedience is different here. Whatever the condition, Almighty Allah places His servant under His special patronage. The more someone leaves behind their attachments, the more they are blessed by the support of Allah. Although these divine Lights are not dependent upon any particular time or place, Hajj creates a better opportunity for Allah's servants to receive them.

In this material world, people are usually caught up in the routines of daily life; however, during Hajj they are separated from these routines, and they sense the manifestations of their Beloved being unveiled. It is for this reason that the travails and difficul-

¹ عَلِيم [alīm] : the All-Knowing.

² خَبِير [khabīr] : the All-Aware.

³ حَكِيم [hakīm] : the All-Wise.

⁴ كَرِيم [karīm] : the Generous.

⁵ جَوَاد [jawād] : the Freely-Giving.

⁶ Quran, al-Rahman 55:29.

ties of this pilgrimage do not wound the heart or trouble the soul.

The apprehension of the Beloved's manifestations makes the difficulties of this journey easy. At this feast, Allah's welcome is incomparable. The pilgrim is a newly-arrived guest of Allah. As the guest enters this ceremony, Allah receives him with all of His Divinity; at every moment He shows a new manifestation of His Names and Attributes, and the servant continually moves among these Names and Attributes.

Of course, this movement toward perfection becomes possible only when the pilgrim forgets the self and closes his eyes to his lower desires. It is the reason that mystics and spiritual guides have defined Hajj as the repetition of intention, since during Hajj, when one looks in every direction, one repeatedly sees new manifestations of the Divine Attributes. If instead of being a repetition of intention, Hajj consisted of a single intention, then with every Attribute that was manifested, the servant would remain to witness that particular manifestation, staying there and not desiring any repetition or increase in the manifestation of the Divine Attributes.

Integral to this obligation, then, is the aim, which is to spiritually witness¹ the manifestations of all the Divine Attributes; it is a vision that starts from the Realm of the Heart and which can

¹ Here, the word 'witness' is used as an equivalent to the term شُھُود [*shuhūd*]. *Shuhūd* as an Islamic term in *irfan* means the perceiving and knowing of an object, not through the senses nor through the mind, but rather, it is a direct insight of the essence of the object by an internal power of sagacity (interpreted as 'the heart') which is experienced by attaining a particular spiritual condition.

continue to the utmost limit of human nature. If you become a true pilgrim, you shall see what repetition of intention means, and you will receive manifestations of Divine Names and Attributes in your heart. Your insights during the pilgrimage will tear away the veils and give you the courage to witness the repetition of these manifestations.

With regard to this concept, meaning the repetition of intention, the pilgrim attains something during Hajj that he never had before, and now that obtaining this insight has become possible, he endeavors to perpetuate it. For instance, he has the belief — whether it be in his hometown, at the *miqat*,¹ at Makkah, Arafat,² the Mash'ar al-Haram,³ or Mina⁴ — that his Lord is Omnipotent but, as he proceeds through the rites of Hajj, he comes to understand the Omnipotence of Almighty Allah differently than before, and the manifestation of this name takes on a different hue at every stage. Your Lord has the power to make you hear; to free you of your attachments, and to cause you to flee this world. He has the power to bless you with the divine opportunity to go around the Kaaba; to say the prayer during the *tawaf*;⁵ to go back and forth between Safa and Marwah, and to carry out other rites. He has the power to make you His own pilgrim and with each degree that you come closer to the heart of

¹ See note 1, p. 20.

² عَرَفَات [‘arafāt].

³ الْمَشْعَر الْحَرَام [al-Mash'ar al-Ḥarām].

⁴ مِيْنَى [minā].

⁵ See note 4, p. 20.

Hajj, the more the veils and barriers between you and your Lord are lifted. Since Almighty Allah and His Attributes are eternal, the repetition of intention in Hajj is without end.

The essence of Hajj is the continual process of recognizing the manifestations of Almighty Allah, and realizing that His manifestations may be revealed through His representative on earth,¹ the Imam of the Age,² Baqiyatullah.³ In the supplication of Nudbah⁴ the worshipper cries:

أَيْنَ بَابُ اللَّهِ الَّذِي مِنْهُ يُؤْتَى؟
أَيْنَ وَجْهُ اللَّهِ الَّذِي بِهِ يَتَوَجَّهُ إِلَيْهِ الْأَوْلِيَاءُ؟
أَيْنَ السَّبَبُ الْمُتَّصِلُ بَيْنَ الْأَرْضِ وَالسَّمَاءِ؟

¹ خَلِيفَةَ اللَّهِ [khalīfatu-llāh] literally means 'representative of God.' The term is used in the Quran, Baqarah 2:30,

﴿...إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً...﴾

Regarding this matter Ibn Arabi explains that Imam Mahdi is the representative of God on the earth (Ibn Arabi, *Al-Futuhāt al-Makkiyah*, vol. 6, p. 51).

«اعلم... أن الله خليفة يخرج وقد امتلأت الأرض جورًا وظلمًا، فيملؤها قسطًا وعدلًا، لو لم يبق من الدنيا إلا يومٌ واحدٌ طَوَّلَ اللهُ ذلك اليوم حتى يلي هذا الخليفة من عترة رسول الله ﷺ من ولد فاطمة يواطئ اسمه اسم رسول الله ﷺ جده الحسين بن علي بن أبي طالب...»

² [Imām al-Mahdī]. Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Mahdi (b. 869), according to the Imamiyyah (*Imāmīyyah* [إمامية]), is the twelfth and last Imam to succeed Prophet Muhammad and is considered to be alive. He is also known as Hujjat ibn al-Hasan, al-Qa'im, the Awaited Imam, Baqiyatullah and the Imam of the Time.

³ بَقِيَّةَ اللَّهِ [baqīyatu-llāh] literally means 'anything God leaves over.' As one of the titles of Imam Mahdi, it means 'God's Legacy upon the Earth.' This term is mentioned in the Quran, Hud 11:86.

﴿بَقِيَّتُ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ...﴾

⁴ دُعَاءُ النَّذْبَةِ [du'ā' al-nudbah] is a supplication attributed to Imam Sadiq about Imam Mahdi.

Where is the gate of Allah through
which people reach Him?

Where is the manifestation of Allah through
which His faithful friends journey toward Him?

Where is the means of the connection
between Heaven and Earth?¹

Mulla Hadi Sabzevari² states that Hajj has an inner dimension through which the intellect witnesses the truth of Allah. On this path, a person is in need of a wise guide that has knowledge of the paths to perfection. The pilgrim needs a fellow traveler who is free of the material world; he also needs the provisions of knowledge and God-consciousness. The pilgrim needs the companionship of patience; his strength during the journey must be great, and he must bear the hunger and difficulties of the path.³ Outer hardships do not trouble him in his search for the people of God.

¹ Sayyid Ibn Tawus, *Misbah al-Zaa'ir*, p. 450.

² Mulla Hadi Sabzevari (d. 1873) was a philosopher, mystic and jurist.

³ Sabzevari (also known as Mulla Hadi Sabzevari), *Sharh al-Asma' aw Sharh Du'a al-Jawshan al-Kabir*, chapter 26, p. 308.

«الحجّ في التحقيق عبارة عن قصد حرم الحلال بالسير عن أطوار النفس إلى العقل حتى تشاهده وتلتحق به؛ فلا بدّ من قائم عالم بالطريق، عارف بعلم الطريقة، وقافلة؛ هي إخوان التجريد، وزاد: هو العلم والتقوى، وراحلة؛ هي الصبر؛ فإنّ حال السالك لا بدّ أن يكون كحال الحمل؛ فإنه يحمل الثقل، ويأكل القليل، ويصبر على الجوع وقلة المهجوع، ويحتمل العطش والنصب وطول السير وشدة التعب، وينقاد للصغير والكبير، ويقنع شوك القتاد، وكذا السالك قليل الكلام، كثير الصيام، لا يظهر عليه في كثرة العمل شيء من الملل إلى ساعة الأجل؛ فلا بدّ للسالك إلى درب الحجّ الإقلاع عن الذنوب، والخروج عن الطباع البشرية، والانفصال عن الأحكام الدنيوية، والاعتبار من خلق الله، والرياضة في الخلوة، والانفراد، وملاقة رجال الله، وزيارة آثار الأنبياء والأولياء والصالحين، وتكميل العبادات المفروضة».

Similarly, he says¹ that the outward aspect of al-Bayt al-Haram² is the well-known House in Makkah, but its inward aspect is the heart of the perfect human being,³ and it applies to one that has conquered his lower desires so as to reflect the Attributes of Allah. Here it refers to the Imam of the Time, Imam Mahdi.⁴

Hajj is not just reaching the House; it is the process of knowing and understanding the Divine Attributes of Almighty Allah and coming into union with Him. Prophet Muhammad says,

الْحُجُّ عَرَفَةٌ.

Hajj is *Arafah*.⁵

In this tradition, *Arafah*⁶ has an outer meaning, which is the place of Arafat, and it means that Hajj is not considered complete without arriving and staying at Arafat, but it may have an inner meaning, which is 'learning, knowing and understanding.' Ibn Arabi states that the inner meaning of *Arafah* in Hajj is the

¹ Ibid., p. 305.

«البيت الحرام ظاهره معروف، وباطنه قلب الإنسان الكامل.»

² المكمل. (المراد) الآن (بالإنسان الكامل) خاتم الأولياء المحمدي، وهو المهدي صاحب

الزمان عيسى بما ثبت عند أهل الله عقلاً ونقلًا وكشفًا، و(بما) ثبت نحن أيضًا كذلك.

³ واليه أشار النبي ﷺ في قوله: لَوْلَمْ يَبْقَ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا يَوْمٌ وَاحِدٌ لَطَوَّلَ اللهُ -تعالى- ذَلِكَ اليَوْمَ لِيَخْرُجَ رَجُلٌ مِنْ وَدْيِ، اسْمُهُ اسِي، وَكُنْيَتُهُ كُنَيْتِي. يَمْلَأُ الأَرْضَ قِسْطًا وَعَدْلًا كَمَا مَلِئْتُ جَوْزًا وَظَلَمًا.

⁴ Amuli (also known as Haydar Amuli), *Introduction to Nass al-Nosus fi Sharh Fous al-Hikam*, vol. I, p. 279.

⁵ Ibn Majah, *Sunan Ibn Majah*, vol. 4, p. 477, *hadith* no. 3015 in the *Manasik*.

⁶ عَرَفَةٌ [*arafah*].

station of knowing Allah, which He has made obligatory for us.¹

Hajj: A Rebirth

﴿...وَتَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِي...﴾

... and I breathed into him of My Spirit...²

Human beings have two aspects: the aspect turned toward the Lord, which is described in the verse above, and the aspect turned toward the imperfect lower realm, the human ego. The aspect directed toward the Lord is invited to Hajj. Only to the extent that a person separates himself from the ego does he go on Hajj with this aspect.

Almighty Allah has commanded that:

﴿...فَلَا رَفَثَ وَلَا فُسُوقَ وَلَا جِدَالَ فِي الْحَجِّ...﴾

... there is to be no sexual contact, disobedience, or disputing during Hajj...³

The inclination toward the matters of the lower desires, debauchery, telling lies, engaging in arguments and disputes — all arise from the more inferior aspect of the self. According to the commandment of the Quran, however, Hajj is not a place for expressing the lower desires. If the carnal aspect of man obtained permission to attend the banquet of Hajj, it would not

¹ Ibn Arabi, *Al-Futuh al-Makkiyah*, vol. 2, p. 493.

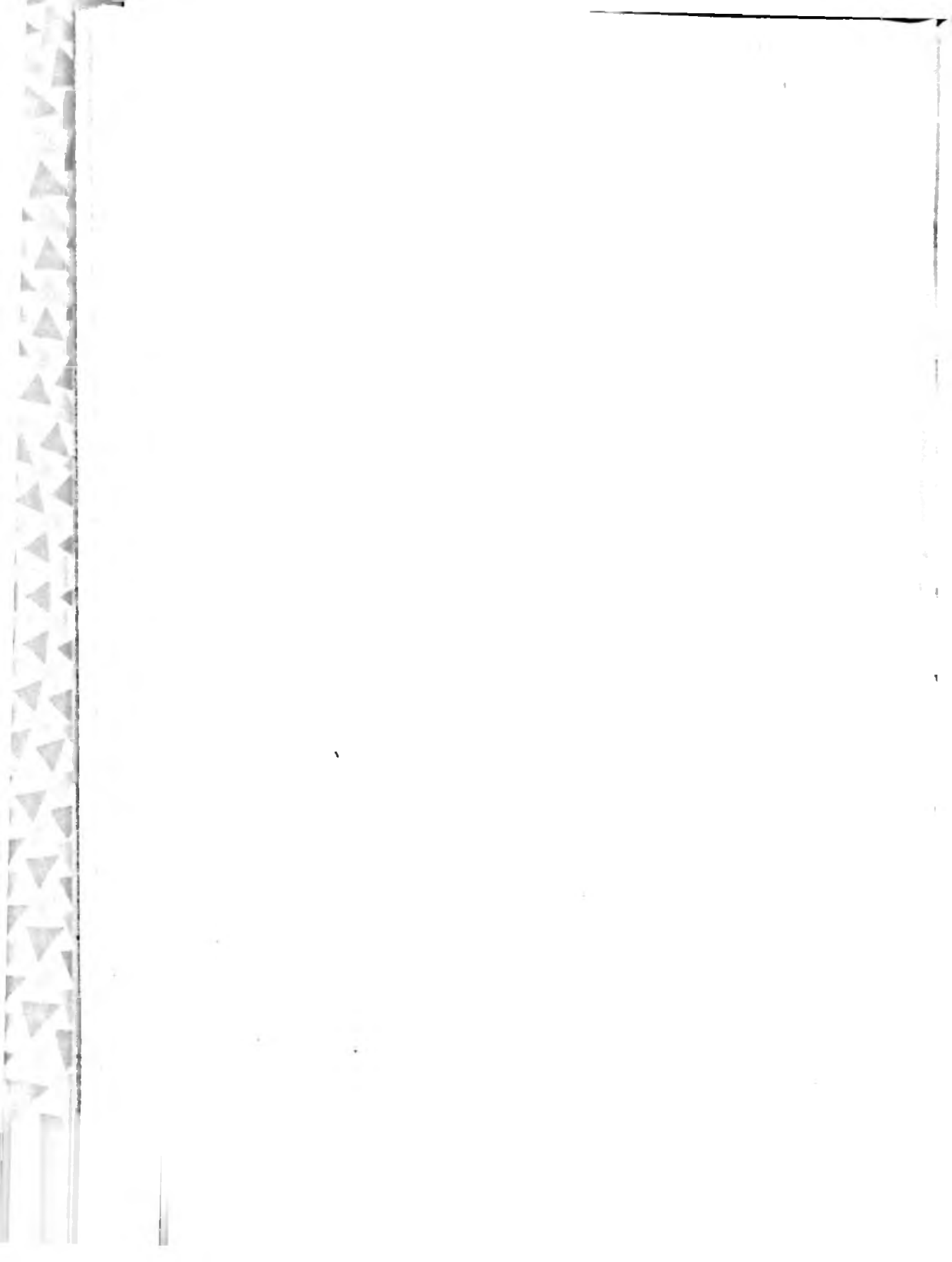
«وسبب ذلك أنه لما اعتبر في عرفة أنه مقام المعرفة بالله التي أوجبها علينا؛ فكان ينبغي أن لا نستى عارفين بالله حتى نعلم ذاته».

² Quran, Hijr 15:29.

³ Quran, Baqarah 2:197.

abstain from any vice, whether it were debauchery, lying, or arguing, since circumstances of time and place do not have any influence on it. This aspect of the human being would not refrain from its bestial nature even during Hajj; therefore the aspect facing the Lord is invited to Hajj since it is the place of the unveiling of the Divine Lights.

During Hajj, the humanity of the human being emerges from this aspect. It is born again for the pilgrim. Hajj is a rebirth since the servitude of the human being is reborn in the essence of humility and submission. It is as if pilgrims are born of their own free will for obedience and servitude to Almighty Allah.



The Intention for Performing Hajj

With the inner allure of Hajj, there is a moment we reach where we must become engaged with the rites, and the first step in carrying out these rites is intention.¹

Every act of obedience must include the intention to accomplish the act itself. In a tradition from Prophet Muhammad, it is stated:

إِنَّمَا الْأَعْمَالُ بِالنِّيَّاتِ.

Verily, actions are only determined by intentions.²

All commands that fall within the bounds of religious obligation require an intention. Some acts perhaps may seem outwardly similar, but from a jurisprudential perspective they are distinct from each other; some are obligatory (*wajib*),³ and oth-

¹ نِيَّة [niyyah] technically means the intention and determination of doing or performing an act of obedience.

² Hurr Aamili, *Wasail al-Shi'ah*, vol. 6, p. 5.

³ وَاجِب [wajib] is an act that is obligatory in Islamic law; a religious duty commanded by Allah. One is rewarded by God for performing it and punished by Him for deliberately not performing it without an excuse.

ers are recommended (*mustahab*).¹ For instance, a ritual prayer² may be carried out with the intention for it to be obligatory or recommended.

Hajj is the same; it can be either *wajib* or *mustahab*,³ but here we are not speaking about the rules; rather, we are speaking about the action of the heart, that we call 'intention,' the essential reality of which is an awakening and inner awareness. The intention of Hajj is an internal vow that brings us out from our homes, and sets us on the journey toward the residence of the Beloved. The intention of Hajj is our response to the invitation of the Beloved; a longing to meet the Beloved in His Sacred Land where we have waited for years to be.

¹ مُسْتَحَبَّ [muṣṭahabb] means 'recommended'; performing a recommended act is considered to bear a particular virtue since it is voluntary. One is rewarded by God for performing it, but not punished for deliberately not doing it.

² See note 3, p. 22.

³ An obligatory Hajj can be defined as one of the following:

i. *Hajjat al-Islam* (حَجَّةُ الْإِسْلَام [hajjat al-islām]), which is an obligatory Hajj to be carried out once in the lifetime of a person possessing the requisite resources;

ii. a Hajj which becomes obligatory as a result of an oath;

iii. Hajj *Niyabi* (الْحَجَّ الْبَيْعِي [al-hajj al-niyābī]), which is an obligatory Hajj performed on behalf of the deceased or for someone that does not have the physical ability to carry it out;

iv. as *wajib kifā'i* (الْوَجِبُ الْكِفَائِي [al-wājib al-kifā'ī]), which can be obligatory for all Muslims when there is no one to perform it, but if there are enough people to do so then it is no longer obligatory for the others (see note 3, p. 18, about the term *wajib kifā'i*);

v. it becomes obligatory if it was not performed correctly the first time.

If circumstances fulfill none of the above then performing the rites of Hajj is *mustahab* (الْحَجَّ الْاِسْتِحْبَابِي [al-hajj al-istiḥbābī]).

At the *miqat*,¹ intentions flow out and crystallize. The intention determines the type of Hajj, whether it is obligatory for us, or recommended; whether we come for Hajj just because we have the means, or from a longing in the heart and with the delight and eagerness of a lover to meet the Beloved.

It is due to these yearnings that each day in the Month of Ramadan, in the supplication of Abu Hamzah Thumali,² we ask Almighty Allah:

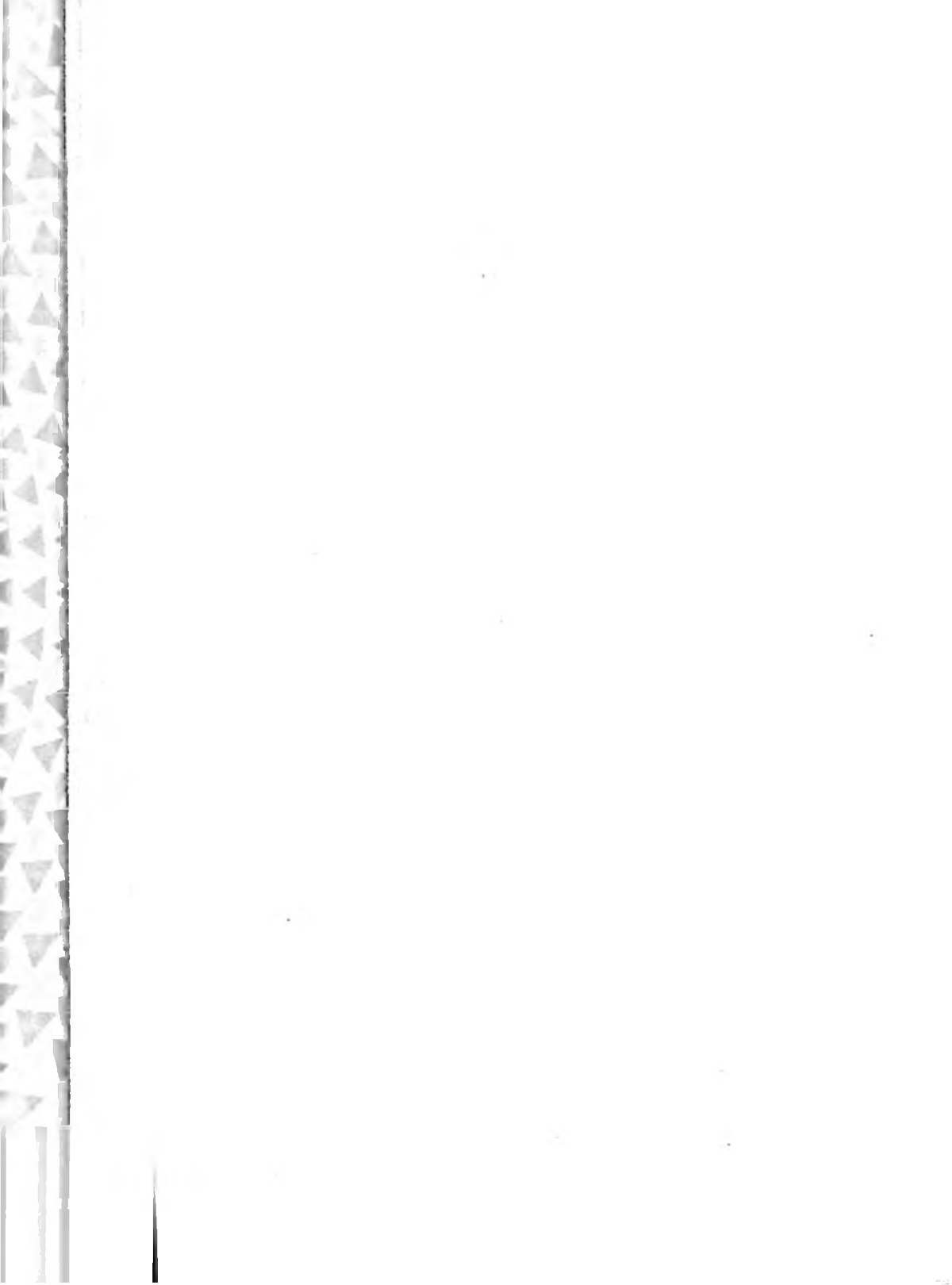
وَأَرْزُقْنِي حَجَّ بَيْتِكَ الْحَرَامِ فِي عَامِي هَذَا وَفِي كُلِّ عَامٍ.

Grant me the opportunity to make the pilgrimage to Your Holy House for Hajj in this year and every year.³

¹ See note 1, p. 20.

² أَبُو حَمْزَةَ الثُّمَالِي [Abū Ḥamzah al-Thumālī] (d. 767) was a companion of four Imams: Sajjad, Baqir, Sadiq and Kazim. The Supplication of Abu Hamzah al-Thumali (دعاء أبي حمزة الثمالي) is a *Du'a* narrated by him from Imam Sajjad to be recited at dawn in the Month of Ramadan.

³ Sayyid Ibn Tawus, *Al-Iqbal bil-A'mal al-Hasanah*, vol. 1, p. 172.



Ihram

فَإِنْ قِيلَ: فَلِمَ أُمِرُوا بِالْإِحْرَامِ؟ قِيلَ: لِأَنَّ يَخْشَعُوا قَبْلَ دُخُولِهِمْ حَرَمَ اللَّهِ.

If it were asked, 'why was it ordered (for us) to be in the state of *ihram*?' the answer would be, 'because the pilgrim should have a sense of humility before entering the Sanctuary of Allah.'¹

Being in the state of *ihram*² and becoming a *muhrim*³ is the starting point for Hajj. The first step in *ihram* to separate oneself from the external attachments of this world. In *ihram*, we must remove the garb of worldly debasement, and put on the garments of humility and servitude; we remove the garment of sin and wear the garment of obedience.

Hajj is a kind of voluntary death and a journey toward the

¹ A narration from Ali ibn Musa al-Rida, in Ibn Babawayh Qummi, *Ilal al-Sharayi'*, vol. 1, p. 274.

² إحرام [*iḥrām*] is a state that consists of making the intention of *ihram*, in which the pilgrim must observe specific prohibitions, reciting phrases known as *talbiyah* and putting on the garment of *ihram*.

³ مُحْرِم [*muhrim*] is someone in the state of *ihram*.

Resurrection, and from this perspective its garment is the color of the garment of the Resurrection. On this journey, everyone experiences the moment of their own death; they separate themselves from all worldly attachments and pass away of their own free will. They put on their own shroud and call out '*labbayk*'¹ in response to the Lord's invitation, participating in their own funeral procession. Before the journey, they prepare their wills, which symbolizes their readiness for death. By putting on the garment of *ihram*, egos are buried. In the state of *ihram*, we become examples of the following Quranic verse:

﴿...إِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ﴾

... Indeed we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him do we return.²

With regard to this verse, we can say that when the servant returns to the land of servitude — his place of origin — he will have no anxieties or worries. By returning to the Beloved, he is not only not agitated, but rather he is happy. The beautiful scent of this return is intoxicating in the presence of the Lord, he forgets his poverty. This dignity, tranquility, contentment, and lack of worry are because the servant has returned to the Divinity of God. 'Allah' is the all-encompassing Name of Almighty Allah, meaning that the servant returns to Allah in all His Divinity — Allah, who is the All-Forgiving, the Merciful, the Beneficent, the Benevolent, the Provider, the Sustainer, and so forth.

¹ See note 3, p. 20.

² Quran, Baqarah 2:156.

The servant has trust in the generous Host, who fills the empty hand of the guest at each moment. Perhaps the Hajj begins with the rites of the *miqat* so that pilgrims may have time to prepare to show their empty hands to the Beloved.

The Garment of *Ihram*

The garment of *ihram*¹ in itself is something sacred, because, with the intention of wearing it, the earthly human being ascends to a higher realm.

Like all other elements of Hajj, the garment of *ihram* has an outer and an inner aspect. Its outer aspect has certain etiquettes that must be considered, and its inner aspect, in the words of the spiritual masters, is the removal of all names or characteristics that define the ego. This garment does not have the color of worldly clothing, but rather the color and scent of the next world, so that an attachment to the Lord lives within the heart of the wearer. Almighty Allah has designated the garment of *ihram* as a symbol of the servant's honor and has bestowed it upon him. It is the garment of servitude and the primordial cloak.²

In *Du'a Makarim al-Akhlaq*³ Imam Sajjad⁴ states:

¹ For men, the garment of *ihram* consists of two pieces of non-quilted cloth, but for women, it can be regular clothing. In *fiqh*, a white garment is recommended (*mustahab*).

² 'Cloak' refers to خُرْفَةٌ [*khirqah*] which in Islamic spiritual culture the disciple receives from his master at the time of initiation.

³ دُعَاءُ مَكَارِمِ الْأَخْلَاقِ [*du'ā' makārim al-akhlāq*] is a supplication narrated from Imam Sajjad and literally means 'Supplication on Noble Moral Qualities.'

⁴ الإمام السَّجَّادِ [al-Imām al-Sajjād]. Ali ibn al-Husayn al-Sajjad (d. 713), accord-

اللَّهُمَّ... عَمَّرْني ما كانَ عُمُرِي بِذَلَّةٍ في طاعَتِكَ.

O Allah! [...] Preserve my life for as long as my life is a garment (*bidhlah*)¹ of servitude to You.²

Metaphorically, on Hajj, by putting on the garment of *ihram*, it is as if one asks the Lord to help him to intend to serve Him. By wearing the garment of service during Hajj, there is no place for indolence.

ing to the Imamiyyah (*Imāmiyyah* [إمامية]), was the fourth Imam to succeed Prophet Muhammad.

¹ بذلة [*bidhlah*] : work garment.

² Imam Sajjad, *Sahifah Sajjadiyah*, p. 94.

The *Miqat*

The *miqat*¹ is the prelude to becoming a lover during the pilgrimage; a prelude which, if understood well, will cause the spirit of worship to flow into *tawaf*,² the prayer of *tawaf*, *sa'y*,³ staying at Arafat, and other acts. The *miqat* is a forge of love in which intentions are cleansed of all impurities, and carrying out the rites of Hajj becomes smoother, easier, and more pleasant.

At the *miqat*, we make our intention to become a *muhrim*⁴ and commence a journey from the baseness of our nature to the spirituality of our *fitrah*.⁵ Through this holy journey, you must

¹ See note 1, p. 20.

² See note 4, p. 20.

³ سَعَى [*sa'y*] is the rite of hurrying back and forth seven times between hills of Safa and Marwah.

⁴ See notes 2 and 3, p. 39.

⁵ فِطْرَةٌ [*fitrah*] is the essence of the human being out of which he is created, and is the most fundamental of the inherent qualities that he has from birth. It comprises two aspects: the innate inclinations and the intuitive intellect, e.g., the inclination toward God and the knowledge of His existence.

become a *mahram*¹ inwardly in order to become a real *muhrim* outwardly. You must give your heart to the divine Essence of Lordship (*rububiyah*)² so that He purifies you of all pollution and vices and you become close to Him.

At the *miqat*, the pilgrim should leave his worldly attachments. When Prophet Moses intended to enter the sacred valley of Tuwa,³ Almighty Allah said to him:

﴿إِنِّي أَنَا رَبُّكَ فَاخْلَعْ نَعْلَيْكَ إِنَّكَ بِالْوَادِ الْمُقَدَّسِ طَوًى﴾

Indeed I am your Lord! So take off your sandals. You are indeed in the sacred valley of Tuwa.⁴

﴿اخْلَعْ نَعْلَيْكَ﴾ [*ikhla' na'layk*] literally means 'take off your sandals,' but it can have the metaphorical meaning of 'let go of your attachments.' The exegetes differ about the meaning of ﴿اخْلَعْ نَعْلَيْكَ﴾. Shibli⁵ says that it means "Leave everything entirely, then you will meet Me entirely."⁶ You should turn your eyes away from everything so as to be able to look toward Allah.

¹ محرم [*mahram*] in the legal sense is someone related by marriage or blood whom it is forbidden to marry and before whom one can discard or relax the formalities of dress and etiquette reserved for being in the presence of strangers. In the mystical sense, it means confidant, intimate and insider; a *mahram* is the one who is worthy of being an intimate of Divine secrets.

² رُبُوبِيَّة [*rubūbiyyah*] derives from the word رَبَّ [*rabb*] meaning sustainer and cherisher.

³ طَوًى [*tuwa*].

⁴ Quran, Ta-Ha 20:12.

⁵ Abu Bakr Shibli (d. 946).

⁶ Sulami, *Haqa'iq al-Tafsir*, vol. 1, p. 436.

• اخلع الكحل منك، تصل إلينا بالكحل •

Another exegete says that God commands the pilgrim to turn toward his own self, in the direction of his heart, until he no longer turns to anything other than Him.¹ Sulami² asserts that نَعْل ([na'l], sandal) is a metaphor for the soul³ which you must free so that you are able to stay in the holy land of the unveilings of the Beloved.

He has also stated that all worldly attachments must be cast away because they are not part of one's being.⁴ One's real existence is one's own self without any attachments,⁵ and He, the Almighty, who is Self-Sufficient (*Ghani*)⁶ and Self-Subsisting (*Samad*),⁷ wants to meet you with your own pure existence.

The *miqat* is a place for the prelude to the journey of love so that you become free of your past and fix your gaze solely upon the future. It is where you decide to free yourself from what is behind you and move toward the direction of the valley of Tuwa. You become free of superficialities. In this valley, you must forget who you were and look to what you will become. At the *miqat*, vanities and egos are broken. It is the place for breaking the idols that have lived with you for a whole lifetime.

You should attend the *miqat* without any greed or selfishness;

¹ Baqli, *Tafsir 'Ara'is al-Bayan fi Haqa'iq al-Qur'an*, vol. 2, p. 480.

² Abu 'Abd al-Rahman Muhammad ibn Husayn al-Sulami (d. 1021).

³ Sulami, *Haqa'iq al-Tafsir*, vol. 1, p. 436.

«النعل النفس».

⁴ 'Being' here means وُجُود [*wujūd*].

⁵ Sulami, *Haqa'iq al-Tafsir*, vol. 1, p. 436.

⁶ غَنِي [*ghani*].

⁷ صَمَد [*samad*].

likewise, you should leave behind whatever you have been distracted by, because the journey toward Him begins from there.

At the *miqat*, the destination becomes known, and carrying out the rites of the true journey begins. Everything takes on the hue of sincerity (*ikhlas*),¹ and is carried out with the intention of achieving nearness to God. In this place, intention takes on the form of the action itself and transforms into the *talbiyah*. Perhaps the reason for the recommendation of repeating the *talbiyah* is that, with each repetition, the pilgrim will focus on the action. At the first utterance, the pilgrim gives thanks for being present at the *miqat* and with the next, he declares that he has come to meet with the Beloved. It is repeated in order to say that, with the permission of Allah, he has left behind the multiplicity of the Material Realm. *Talbiyah* is a testimony of *tawhid*,² which refers to the oneness of the Attributes, Actions, and Essence of Almighty Allah.

The pilgrim may become a *muhrim* at five *miqats*: the Dhul-Halifah,³ Juhfah,⁴ Wadi al-'Aqiq,⁵ Qarn al-Manazil⁶ and Yalamlam.⁷

¹ إخلاص [ikhlas] literally means 'sincerity of intention and action.' It is the essence of Islamic practice, and is the opposite of hypocrisy.

² توحيد [tawhid] is believing and testifying to the oneness of God.

³ دُرُ الحَلِيفَةِ [Dhul-Halifah] is the *miqat* for everyone departing from the City of the Prophet (Medina) to Makkah. It is also called Masjid Shajarah.

⁴ جُحْفَةَ [Juhfah] is the *miqat* for the people of Syria, Egypt, and Morocco.

⁵ وَادِي العَقِيقِ [Wadi al-'Aqiq] is the *miqat* for the people of Iraq, Najd and those coming from the eastern parts.

⁶ قَرْنِ المَنَازِلِ [Qarn al-Manazil] is the *miqat* for the people of Ta'if and people who are not far from the Masjid al-Haram.

⁷ يَلَمْلَمَ [Yalamlam] is the *miqat* for the people of Yemen.

These five stations are the entrances to the center of the universe, the Masjid al-Haram.¹ The Prophet and the Holy Household became *muhrim*s many times at Masjid Shajarah.² The spiritual atmosphere of the mosque tells of the hallowed footsteps of the Prophet and his Family. It is better for each one of us to seek the intermediacy of the Holy Prophet³ in the solitude of the *miqat*, as the Holy Prophet is the father of the Muslim community. In one tradition, the Prophet says:

أَنَا وَعَلِيٌّ أَبَا هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ.

Ali and I are the two fathers of this community.⁴

This compassionate father gives special esteem and attention to his children during the time of *ihram*; a person who seeks refuge in the abundant grace of the Prophet of God will not return disappointed.

﴿وَإِنْ أَحَدٌ مِّنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ اسْتَجَارَكَ فَأَجِرْهُ حَتَّىٰ يَسْمَعَ كَلَامَ اللَّهِ
ثُمَّ أَبْلِغْهُ مَأْمَنَهُ...﴾

And if any of the polytheists seeks protection from you, grant him protection until he hears the Words of Allah.

Then convey him to his place of safety...⁵

¹ *al-Masjid al-Haram* [al-Masjid al-Haram] literally means 'the Sacred Mosque.'

² *Masjid al-Shajarah* [Masjid al-Shajarah] is on the outskirts of Medina, about 430 kilometers (270 miles) from Makkah.

³ *tawassul* [tawassul] in religious contexts means 'to seek nearness to God through the intermediacy of a righteous person or deed.' In Islam either a righteous person or a good deed may be considered as an intermediary (وسيلة [wasilah]).

⁴ Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 23, p. 259.

⁵ Quran, Tawbah 9:6.

In his exegesis of this verse, Ibn Ajibah says that Allah is giving a message to His Prophet, that when people come to him seeking refuge, he should give them refuge so that in the shade of this security they may hear God's invitation and answer Him.¹ In the invitation to Truth, God is the one who invites and the one who answers prayers. However, this invitation and response take the form of seeking refuge in the Prophet.

Whoever knows that the *miqat* is a meeting place with the Beloved and in those short moments declares his servitude to God, will not leave the *miqat* empty-handed, and by proclaiming such humility and servitude, the servant is included within the special favor and attention of Almighty Allah throughout this spiritual journey.

¹ Ibn Ajibah, *Tafsir al-Bahr al-Madid*, vol. 2, p. 359.

Talbiyah

Talbiyah is to say,

لَبَّيْكَ اللَّهُمَّ لَبَّيْكَ، لَبَّيْكَ لَا شَرِيكَ لَكَ لَبَّيْكَ، إِنَّ الْحَمْدَ وَالنَّعْمَةَ لَكَ
وَالْمُلْكَ، لَا شَرِيكَ لَكَ.

Labbayka Allāhumma labbayk. Labbayka lā sharīka laka labbayk. Innal-ḥamda, wa-nni'mata, laka wal-mulk, lā sharīka lak.

Here I am, O Allah, here I am. Here I am. You have no partner. Here I am. Verily, all praise, grace, and sovereignty are Yours alone. You have no partner.¹

Talbiyah is a special invocation for meeting the Beloved. It is a heavenly refrain from the Host that the guest repeats; a divine conviction heard by the ears and apprehended by the heart; a loving declaration reiterated by the tongue. The invocation is a reminder of Israfil's blowing of the Horn, and by repeating it, each person immediately detaches themselves from the material world.

¹ Kulayni, *al-Kafi*, vol. 4, p. 250.

Repeating the *talbiyah* is recommended,¹ and one can repeat it from the *miqat*² until just before entering into the precincts of the Masjid al-Haram. When entering into the Masjid al-Haram, one must abstain from repeating it, because the *talbiyah* is a means of asking permission to enter, so by entering the precincts of the Masjid al-Haram, one's request is accepted. To enter the Sacred Mosque is to set foot in the Kingdom of the Heavens and the Earth; it is to place your heart within the sanctuary of Divinity.

Discontinuing the *talbiyah* may be evidence of the following verse:

﴿...إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ﴾

... Indeed we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him do we return.³

This indicates the return of the servant to the realm of purity and primordial nature; a return to his own past; a return to his own ancient abode, an abode that was never an unfamiliar place for him. We belong to God ﴿إِنَّا لِلَّهِ﴾ and when we are at the *miqat*, we return once again to His embrace ﴿إِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ﴾. In this abode, Allah places the servant completely under His supremacy and brings him back to Himself. This return is turning away from everything other than the Truth and returning to the Truth.

¹ It is also recommended to say the *talbiyah* aloud.

² See note 1, p. 20.

³ Quran, Baqarah 2:156.

Now that the pilgrim has come close to the most sacred place on earth, it is the time to whisper his dearest requests and needs to Almighty Allah. The Quran says:

﴿ادْعُوا رَبَّكُمْ تَضَرُّعًا وَخُفْيَةً...﴾

Call upon your Lord, humbly and secretly...¹

Sometimes, before the *talbiyah*, we are governed by a strange fear, a fear caused by the whisperings of Satan in those delicate moments. It may be argued that these worries are not satanic since saints of God were also caught up in such fears. However, there is a great difference between the fear that is left by satanic whisperings, and the fear of not understanding the essential reality of Hajj. At the time of the *talbiyah*, one of Satan's primary aims is to make us see ourselves as the agents and performers of the rites of Hajj so that since we perceive that we ourselves cannot carry out these rites alone, we become immersed in worries. Satan tries to preoccupy us with the outer dimensions so that we become heedless of its inner dimensions. We become worried about whether we have performed preliminary acts such as *ghusl* and *wudu* and whether we are able to perform *tawaf*,² or whether it is possible to do *sa'y* between Safa and Marwah; these and a thousand other questions that pass through the mind are all to do with the outer dimension and are devoid of the inner dimension of Hajj.

¹ Quran, A'raf 7:55.

² See note 4, p. 20.

However, the saints of God are agitated because of their intense desire for the Beloved. They are afraid that they might not hear a response to their *talbiyah*! They worry that He will not like their *labbayk*.¹ The root of our fear is that of not being able to carry out our obligatory rites, but the fear of the saints is that their hearts may lack humility. During the *talbiyah*, we worry about our own inability, but the saints worry about Allah not permitting them to approach.

Kashifi Sabzevari says: "Hajj is of two kinds, the Hajj of the common people and the Hajj of the spiritual elite. The object of the Hajj of the common people is the land of the Beloved, whereas the object of the Hajj of the elite is the Beloved's Countenance. The common people go to His abode, and the elite go to Him."²

From another point of view, our anxiety at the time of the *talbiyah* is natural, because when we enter into a new situation, we are often accompanied by worries. One can stop these worries and anxieties from arising by seeking assistance through the intermediacy of the Imam of the Age.³ The Holy Quran states,

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَابْتَغُوا إِلَيْهِ الْوَسِيلَةَ...﴾

O believers! Fear Allah, and seek the means of nearness to Him...⁴

¹ See note 3, p. 20.

² Kashifi Sabzevari, *al-Risalah al-Aliyyah fi al-Ahadith al-Nabawiyah*, p. 93.

«حج عوام دیگر است و حج خواص دیگر، حج عوام قصد کوی دوست است و حج خواص قصد روی دوست، آن رفتن است به سرای او، و این رفتن است برای او.»

³ See note 2, p. 29.

⁴ Quran, Ma'idah 5:35.

Seeking assistance through the intermediacy of Imam Mahdi's holy personality brings indescribable peace and tranquility. Whoever seeks assistance through him, and places the reins of his existence in the Imam's hand, will be protected from every worry. Seeking the help of the Imam of the Age at this time is surely the best of all acts for pursuing intermediacy in one's lifetime.

Through the *dhikr* of the *talbiyah*, the servant places his trust in his Lord, and calls upon Him with the words '*labbayk allahumma labbayk*.'¹ It is a *dhikr* that bestows a special serenity:

﴿...أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ﴾

... Now surely by Allah's remembrance do the hearts find tranquility.²

The anxieties of the human being arise from the whisperings of Satan, and when the protection of Allah comes, the chains of Satan are broken and worries are eliminated.

It is suggested that it is better to carry out the recommended acts (*mustahabat*)³ at the *miqat* and then to say the *talbiyah* and to become a *muhrim*,⁴ because recommended acts further prepare the environment for carrying out obligatory acts (*wajibat*)⁵ and for reviving one's journey of ascension.

At the time of proclaiming the *talbiyah*, it is also befitting that

¹ 'Here I am! O Allah, here I am!'

² Quran, Ra'd 13:28.

³ مُسْتَحَبَّات [muṣtaḥabbāt] is the plural of مُسْتَحَبَّ [muṣtaḥabb]. (See note 1, p. 36.)

⁴ See notes 2 and 3, p. 39.

⁵ وَاجِبَات [wājibāt] is the plural of وَاجِب [wājib]. (See note 3, p. 35.)

we are not freely allowed into the precincts of the blessed Masjid al-Haram without reflecting upon ourselves, but rather, in commencing the preliminary duties, we prepare ourselves to enter the sanctuary of the Beloved by carrying out the recommended duties, and then we enter.

While proclaiming the *talbiyah*, we must remind ourselves that it is not I who is saying the *talbiyah*, but the *tongue of Allah* that is saying the *talbiyah*; the tongue that has attained this spiritual level by being cleansed of impurity through seeking the intermediacy and assistance of the Imam of the Age.

If we assumed that our existence were independent, then affirming God's oneness and '*la sharika laka*'¹ would no longer have any meaning because we would be seeing our existence as separate and parallel to the existence of Almighty Allah, whereas the *talbiyah* is the declaration of the negation of *ma-siwa-llah*.² *Ma-siwa-llah* is our own ego-centric human existence. There must remain no egotism to rise up and say the *talbiyah*; rather, it should be the echo of God's voice that is heard so that a reply may be given by God, '*Labbayk wa sa'dayk*' ('Here I am, to meet your needs.').³

With regard to Allah's response at the *miqat*, spiritual masters

¹ لا شريك لك [*lā sharika laka*] means 'There is no partner with You,' meaning 'You are unique and incomparable.'

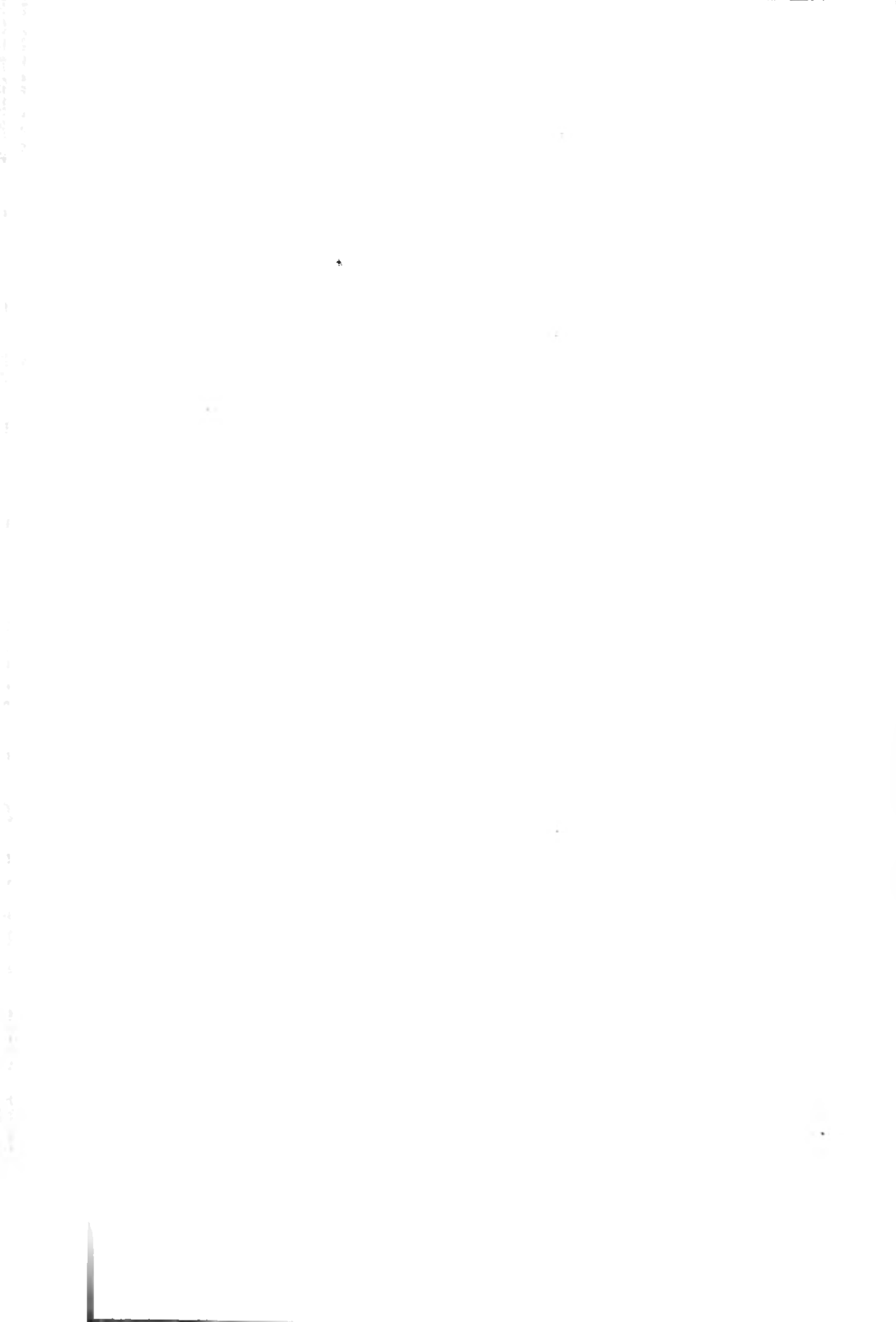
² ما سِوَى اللَّهِ [*mā siwā Allāh*] means 'Everything other than God.'

³ لَبَّيْكَ وَسَعْدَيْكَ [*labbayk wa sa'dayk*] literally means 'I will certainly remain here to obey you and to help you,' but when it is said by Allah it would mean 'I am here to meet your needs.'

state that, while you are on Hajj, Almighty Allah places both your body and soul under His own special care, responding to both your bodily and spiritual needs. After invoking the *talbiyah* at the *miqat*, the manifestation of 'I breathed into him of My Spirit'¹ becomes more apparent than before because the ego is sacrificed and the presence of Allah has entered the heart of the pilgrim. After the *talbiyah*, no stranger remains. The entire sanctuary is filled with the familiar — nobody unworthy has any place in that heavenly atmosphere, and it is the spiritual self that eagerly hastens from the *miqat* to the Masjid al-Haram in order to meet the Beloved.

¹ Quran, Hjr 15:29.

﴿...وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِي...﴾



Entering the Masjid al-Haram

اللَّهُمَّ الْبَيْتُ بَيْتُكَ وَالْعَبْدُ عَبْدُكَ وَهَذَا مَقَامُ الْعَائِدِ بِكَ مِنَ النَّارِ.

O Allah! Verily, the house is Your house, and the servant is Your servant. This is the station of the one who seeks refuge in You from the Fire.¹

There is no better refuge than the sanctuary of divine peace.

﴿فَفَرُّوا إِلَى اللَّهِ...﴾

So flee unto Allah ...²

In the exegesis of this verse, scholars state that you must take refuge from your own selves in Almighty Allah,³ which is the safest refuge. They have also advised seeking refuge in Allah from admiring one's own abilities and deeds,⁴ such as worship and charity-giving, since

¹ Kulayni, *al-Kafi*, vol. 4, p. 410. This is a part of a supplication narrated from Imam Sadiq.

² Quran, Dhariyat 51:50.

³ Sulami, *Haqa'iq al-Tafsir*, vol. 2, p. 277.

⁴ Ibid.

﴿فَرُّوا إِلَى اللَّهِ - عَزَّ وَجَلَّ - مِنْ رُؤْيَةِ الْاِكْتِسَابِ وَاجْتِلَابِ قَوْلِكَ وَفِعْلِكَ﴾. [والاجتلاب هو الجلبة]

He is the source of every ability to carry out any good deed. It is by His permission that we have the opportunity to do them.

It is said as well that you must seek refuge in Allah from everything other than Allah since everything other than Him is perishing. Take refuge in Allah from relying upon your own distinctions, noble qualities and prestige, and from paying attention to them, since Allah is the owner of all عِزَّة [‘izzah]:

﴿... فَلِلَّهِ الْعِزَّةُ جَمِيعًا...﴾

... then to Allah belong all honor, prestige, and greatness...¹

As God is the Lord of the Day of Judgment, and the reckoning of this world and the next are in His hands, we should take refuge in Him and Him alone.

أَعُوذُ بِعَفْوِكَ مِنْ عُقُوبَتِكَ، وَأَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ، وَأَعُوذُ
بِرَحْمَتِكَ مِنْ نَقَمَتِكَ، وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ.

I seek refuge in Your forgiveness from Your punishment;
in Your pleasure from Your wrath; in Your mercy from
Your vengeance, and I seek refuge in You from You.²

In this regard, it is stated: "Therefore, flee to Allah from everything other than Allah, and flee from disobedience to obedience, from ignorance to knowledge, from His punishment to His mercy, and from His wrath to His pleasure."³

¹ Quran, Fatir 35:10.

² Kulayni, *al-Kafi*, vol. 3, p. 324.

³ Baqli, *Tafsir Ara'is al-Bayan fi Haqa'iq al-Qur'an*, vol. 3, p. 346.

«ففرزوا من الله إلى الله، وفرزوا من المعصية إلى الطاعة، ومن الجهل إلى العلم، ومن عذابه إلى رحمته، ومن سخطه إلى رضوانه».

Seek refuge in the coolness of union with the Lord from the fire of separation from Him. Is it not that in the created world, if someone is caught in a fire, and seeks refuge with someone, that person will give him refuge and put out the fire for him, even if it is understood that he had been previously hurt by the one seeking refuge? When there is a burning fire it is not the time for personal scores, only a time for helping and coming to someone's rescue.

During the seventh cycle of *tawaf* around the Kaaba, the pilgrim declares before God:

... هَذَا مَقَامُ الْعَائِدِ بِكَ مِنَ النَّارِ.

... this is the station of the one who seeks refuge in You from the Fire [of separation from You].¹

It is far from the beneficence of the Merciful Lord to reprove and punish a servant whose heart burns for Him on account of the servant's insufficiency and lassitude at this time and place.

The word هَذَا (*hādhā* : 'this'), which indicates nearness, is used to signify that the fire of separation from the Lord is not far away. This inner blaze invites the servant to seek reunion with the Beloved, and when Almighty Allah hears the whispers of His anguished servant, He dresses him in the garment of union, so that the burning fires of separation are quenched.

On entering the Masjid al-Haram, it is recommended to invoke God by His Names:

¹ Kulayni, *al-Kafi*, vol. 4, p. 410.

يا جَوَادُ يا كَرِيمُ.

yā jawādu yā karīmu

O Most Generous! O Magnanimous!¹

Perhaps these two names offer company, so that no worry or anxiety remains before entering. The Beloved is generous and bountiful. In His generosity, He bestows such great security, peace, and serenity upon His guests that they enter His presence in the utmost tranquility.

The Magnanimous Lord sees the inner fire of the servant suffering from remoteness from Him, and He knows the pain of his separation. If it were not for the magnanimity of the Lord, no one would have the courage to enter the Masjid al-Haram, and it would not be possible to attain proximity to Him. It is far from the magnanimity of the Magnanimous to remind His servants of their unattractive past.

The Generous Lord does not need His servants to announce their needs; rather, before any declaration, He takes care of them. Allah is *karim al-safh*.² The *karim* is one who not only does not remind His servants of their transgressions but rather He conceals them. The one who is *karim* gives at every moment, and in His giving there is no limit. Allah the Most Generous is abundantly giving:

¹ Ibid., p. 402.

² كَرِيمُ الصَّفْحِ [*karim al-safh*] is 'the Generous in Forgiveness,' the forgiving, who honorably overlooks mistakes and bad behavior.

﴿وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ...﴾

Certainly, We have honored the Children of Adam...¹

Allah the Magnanimous created His servants out of the essence of generosity and, on this day, the servant has returned to his Lord's original generosity.

Hajj is the locus for the manifestation of the Beauty, not the Majesty, of God the Magnanimous.² Far be it from the Magnanimity of the Magnanimous to invite the guest to His house and after the invitation to judge him through the gaze of His Majesty.

According to the custom of the people, if the owner of the house invites someone as a guest, and after his guest enters, judges him by the differences that exist between them, he has not done a praiseworthy act. How could it then be possible for the Magnanimous Lord to invite His servant to His house and then investigate his old accounts and previous sins? God the Magnanimous and Generous is All-Knowing. He knows that distance and separation from the Provider are rooted in the ignorance and ennui of the human being and not in his hostility or resistance to truth.

The Generous Host does not like even a fraction of loneliness or sadness for the guest. With a breeze from the angelic realms

¹ Quran, Isra 17:70.

² God's attributes are divided into those of Beauty (جمال [jamāl]), which are qualities of mercy and immanence, and Majesty (جلال [jalāl]), which are qualities of wrath and transcendence.

He purifies their being and gives them such peace that it is as if they have known this House for years. The Kaaba is an ancient house of servitude, the primordial home, the original refuge. At the entrance of the Masjid al-Haram, the manifestation of the Magnanimity, Mercy, and Kindness of the Lord immediately becomes apparent. Perhaps the reason for this sudden manifestation is that the Host has come eagerly before the guest.

The Quran states:

﴿وَأُزْلِفَتِ الْجَنَّةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ﴾

And Paradise is brought near to the righteous.¹

The Masjid al-Haram is a manifestation of that paradise which God has prepared for the Faithful, and when someone enters this paradise, a euphony from the Unseen caresses his soul telling him that visiting God needs no preparation. The pilgrim has been invited here free of any care so that in this summons he finds the self that he had lost. It is in finding this lost self that the pilgrim offers a prostration of thanks again and touches his forehead upon the cool stones of the Masjid al-Haram. The coolness of the stones seems to tell of the pleasure for which he had been waiting.

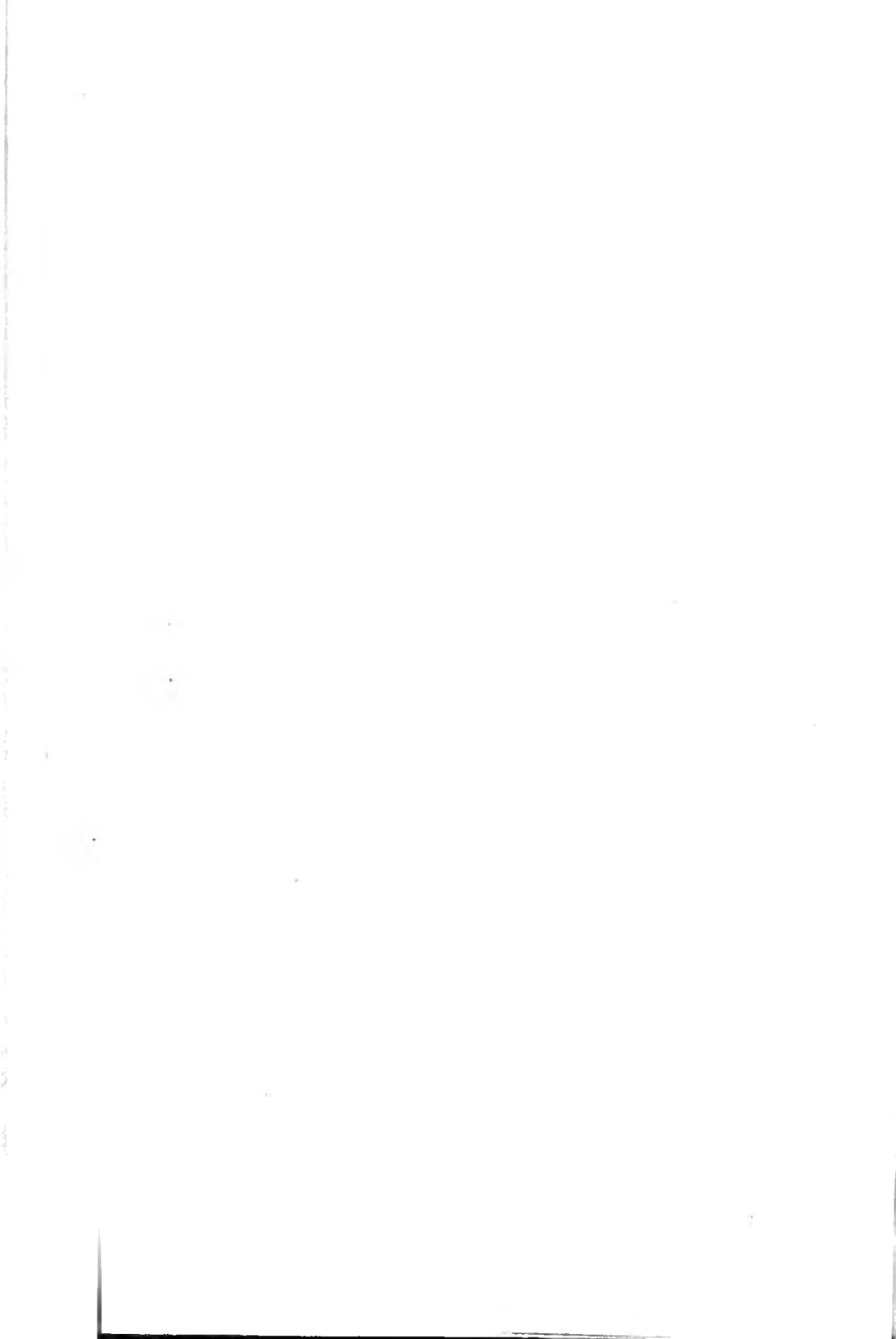
In the supplication of Abu Hamzah Thumali, Imam Sajjad pleads:

سَيِّدِي عَبْدُكَ بِبَابِكَ، أَقَامَتُهُ الْخِصَاصَةُ بَيْنَ يَدَيْكَ، يَفْرَعُ بَابَ
إِحْسَانِكَ بِدُعَائِهِ، فَلَا تُعْرِضْ بِوَجْهِكَ الْكَرِيمِ عَنِّي.

¹ Quran, Shu'ara 26:90.

My Master, your servant is standing at Your door, one who is destitute before You, knocking on the door of Your Graciousness with his supplication, so do not turn Your Noble Face away from me.¹

¹ Sayyid Ibn Tawus, *Al-Iqbal bil-A'mal al-Hasanah*, vol. 1, p. 170.



The Kaaba

The Kaaba is called al-Bayt al-'Atiq (the Ancient House),¹ since, when everything was flooded at the time of Prophet Noah the House of God remained where it was and was not totally destroyed, as stated in the following tradition from Imam Sadiq:

وَأِنَّمَا سُمِّيَ الْبَيْتُ الْعَتِيقَ؛ لِأَنَّهُ أُعْتِقَ مِنَ الْغَرَقِ.

And the House is called *atiq* because it survived (lit. was freed from) the flooding.²

According to other traditions from Imam Baqir, the House of God is called *atiq* because it is inviolable and free of any inhabitant and has no owner but God:

أَنَّهُ بَيْتٌ حُرٌّ عَتِيقٌ مِنَ النَّاسِ، وَلَمْ يَمْلِكْهُ أَحَدٌ.

This is a free house, free of the people and it has never been owned by anyone.³

¹ عَتِيق [atīq] means 'ancient' and 'free from any inhabitant or any authority.'

² Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 55, p. 57.

³ Hurr Aamili, *Wasail al-Shi'ah*, vol. 13, p. 240.

قَائِلُهُ لَا رَبَّ لَهُ إِلَّا اللَّهُ - عَزَّ وَجَلَّ - وَهُوَ الْحُرُّ

It has no Lord but Almighty Allah, and it is free.¹

The heart of the perfect human being² is likewise, which is freed by its servitude toward Allah and it has no other master except Allah.

The Holy Quran states:

﴿جَعَلَ اللَّهُ الْكَعْبَةَ الْيَتِيمَ الْحَرَامَ قِيَامًا لِلنَّاسِ...﴾

Allah has made the Kaaba, the Sacred House, a support for humanity ...³

The reason this house is named al-Bayt al-Haram⁴ ('the Sacred House') is that it has a special distinction. The Kaaba has a clear eminence and a station of excellence in relation to all other places. *Ka'ab* (كَعْب) means 'elevated' and the Kaaba is the first house to have such loftiness and exaltedness on the earth.

Imam Ali has declared:

جَعَلَهُ قِبْلَةً لِلْأَنَامِ، يَرِدُونَهُ وُرُودَ الْأَنْعَامِ، وَيَأْتَهُونَ إِلَيْهِ وُلُوءَ الْحَمَامِ،
وَجَعَلَهُ - سُبْحَانَهُ - عَلَامَةً لِيَتَوَاضِعَ لَهُمْ لِعَظَمَتِهِ، وَإِذْعَانِهِمْ لِعِزَّتِهِ.

He has established it as the direction of prayer for humanity; they will come to it (in droves) as livestock come (to a place) and they are drawn to it like the yearning of

¹ Kulayni, *al-Kafi*, vol. 4, p. 189.

² See note 3, p. 31.

³ Quran, Ma'idah 5:97.

⁴ See note 2, p. 31.

pigeons (for their nests). And, He has appointed it as a sign for their humility before His Majesty and of their submissiveness before His Greatness.¹

In another sermon, Ali ibn Abi-Talib has declared:²

وَضَعَهُ بِأَوْعَرِ بِقَاعِ الْأَرْضِ حَجْرًا، وَأَقَلِّ نَتَائِقِ الدُّنْيَا مَدْرًا، وَأَضْيَقِ
بُطُونِ الْأَوْدِيَةِ قُطْرًا، بَيْنَ جِبَالِ خَشِينَةٍ وَرِمَالِ دَمِيمَةٍ، وَعُيُونِ وَشَلَّةٍ
وَقَرَى مُنْقَطِعَةٍ، لَا يَزْكُو بِهَا حُفٌّ وَلَا حَافِرٌ وَلَا ظَلْفٌ.

He placed it in the most rugged spot in a rocky terrain with the fewest hills of clay in the world, whose valleys have the narrowest of floors, among craggy mountains, soft sand, meager springs, and remote settlements, where neither camels, horses, nor other cloven-hoofed beasts can thrive.

ثُمَّ أَمَرَ آدَمَ وَوَلَدَهُ أَنْ يَتُّنُوا أَعْطَافَهُمْ نَحْوَهُ.

Then He commanded Adam and his progeny to turn in its direction.

... حَتَّى يَهْزُوا مَنَاكِبَهُمْ دُلًّا يُهَلِّلُونَ اللَّهَ حَوْلَهُ، وَيَرْمُلُونَ عَلَى
أَقْدَامِهِمْ شُعْنًا غُبْرًا، لَهُ قَدْ نَبَذُوا السَّرَابِيلَ وَرَاءَ ظُهُورِهِمْ، وَشَوَّهُوا
بِإِعْفَاءِ الشُّعُورِ مُحَاسِنَ خَلْقِهِمْ؛ ائْتِلَاءَ عَظِيمًا وَامْتِحَانًا شَدِيدًا
وَإِخْتِبَارًا مُبِينًا وَتَمَجُّدًا بَلِيغًا جَعَلَهُ اللَّهُ سَبَبًا لِرَحْمَتِهِ وَوُضْلَةً إِلَى
جَنَّتِهِ.

...so they move with the grace of humility; with hurrying feet and dusty, disheveled hair, they utter

¹ Sharif al-Radi, *Nahj al-Balaghah*, sermon 1, p. 45.

² *Ibid.*, sermon 192, pp. 293–294.

'*la ilaha illa-llah*' for Allah around it. They cast their garments over their backs, and they mar the beauty of their outward appearance by leaving their hair (uncut). This is a great test, a severe trial and a clear, profound, rectifying examination. Allah has made it a cause for His mercy and a means to His Paradise.

وَلَوْ أَرَادَ - سُبْحَانَهُ - أَنْ يَضَعَ بَيْتَهُ الْحَرَامَ وَمَشَاعِرَهُ الْعِظَامَ بَيْنَ
جَنَاتٍ وَأَنْهَارٍ وَسَهْلٍ وَقَرَارٍ جَمِّ الْأَشْجَارِ دَائِي الْقَمَارِ مُلْتَقِّ النَّبِيِّ
مُتَّصِلِ الْقُرَى بَيْنَ بُرَّةٍ سَمْرَاءَ وَرَوْضَةٍ خَضْرَاءَ وَأَرْيَافٍ مُحْدِقَةٍ
وَعِصَاصٍ مُغْدِقَةٍ وَرِيَاضٍ نَاضِرَةٍ وَطُرُقٍ عَامِرَةٍ، لَكَانَ قَدْ صَغُرَ قَدْرُ
الْحِزَاءِ عَلَى حَسَبِ ضَعْفِ الْبَلَاءِ.

If He — glory be to Him — so desired, He could have placed His Sacred House and His great places of worship among gardens and rivers in soft, level plains and watered lowlands, abundant with trees laden with fruit; or amidst closely set buildings, and inter-linked villages among golden fields of wheat; or in verdant meadows, cultivated countrysides and watered plains; or upon thriving plantations and urbanized streets, but the magnitude of the reward would have decreased due to the lightness of the trial.

وَلَوْ كَانَ الْإِسَاسُ الْمَحْمُولُ عَلَيْهَا وَالْأَخْجَارُ الْمَرْفُوعُ بِهَا بَيْنَ
زُمُرَدَةٍ خَضْرَاءَ وَيَاقُوتَةٍ حُمْرَاءَ وَنُورٍ وَضِيَاءٍ، لَخَفَّفَ ذَلِكَ مُصَارَعَةَ
الشُّكِّ فِي الصُّدُورِ وَلَوْضَعَ مُجَاهِدَةً إِبْلِيسَ عَنِ الْقُلُوبِ، وَلَتَقَى
مُعْتَلَجِ الرَّئِبِ مِنَ النَّاسِ.

¹ *la ilaha illa-llah* [لا إله إلا الله] means 'There is no god (إله [ilāha]) except Allah (الله [Al-lāh]).'

If the foundation that supports it and the stones that raise it up had been of green emeralds and red rubies, resplendent and gleaming, that would have soothed the struggle of doubt in the mind, detracted from Satan's striving against the heart and banished the agitation of uncertainty from people.

وَأَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَخْتَبِرُ عِبَادَهُ بِأَنْوَاعِ الشَّدَائِدِ، وَيَتَعَبَّدُهُمْ بِأَنْوَاعِ
الْمَجَاهِدِ، وَيَبْتَلِيهِمْ بِضُرُوبِ الْمَكَارِهِ؛ إِخْرَاجًا لِلتَّكْبُرِ مِنْ قُلُوبِهِمْ،
وَإِسْكَانًا لِلتَّذَلُّلِ فِي نُفُوسِهِمْ.

However, God tests His servants with different trials. He wishes to make them devoted through (imposing on them) various difficulties and to try them with various hardships in order to expel pride from their hearts and cause humility to settle in their souls.¹

With regard to the security of the Masjid al-Haram, the Holy Quran states:

﴿... وَمَنْ دَخَلَهُ كَانَ آمِنًا...﴾

... And whoever enters it shall be safe ...²

This safety is actually a response to the prayer of the caretaker of the Kaaba, Prophet Abraham, who stated:

﴿... رَبِّ اجْعَلْ هَذَا الْبَلَدَ آمِنًا...﴾

... My Lord! Make this land secure ...³

¹ Sharif al-Radi, *Nahj al-Balaghah*, sermon 192, pp. 293–294.

² Quran, Aal-'Imran 3:97.

³ Quran, Ibrahim 14:35.

The Kaaba has four corners: the Eastern Corner (the Rukn¹ Hajar al-Aswad); the Northern Corner (the Rukn Iraqi); the Western Corner (the Rukn Shami) and the Southern Corner (the Rukn Yamani).

The inner meanings of these corners are: testifying to the oneness of God, prophethood, imamate, and resurrection. The inner meaning of the Yamani Corner is *walayah*,² which is the divinely appointed authority of imamate. Imam Sadiq has said:

الرُّكْنُ الْيَمَانِيُّ بَابٌ مِنْ أَبْوَابِ الْجَنَّةِ لَمْ يُغْلِقْهُ اللَّهُ مُنْذُ فَتَحَهُ.

The Yamani Corner is one of the gates of heaven that Allah has never closed from the time He opened it.³

In another tradition about the Yamani Corner, Imam Sadiq has also stated:

بَابُنَا إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ الَّذِي مِنْهُ نَدْخُلُ.

It is our gate to heaven by which we enter (it).⁴

In another tradition, one of the companions of Imam Sadiq was making *tawaf* with the Imam. The narrator says that when the Imam reached the Black Stone, he touched and kissed it; but when he reached the Yamani Corner, he clung to it with his whole body. When the narrator asked him the reason, Imam

¹ رُكْن [rukna] is the strongest side of a mountain or a house; a pillar or column.

² وِلَايَةٌ [walāyah] indicates closeness. It refers to the guardianship, authority and protection that God has over the Muslims, and which He partially delegated to Prophet Muhammad and the Twelve Imams. (See Quran, Ma'idah 5:55).

³ Hurr Aamili, *Wasā'il al-Shi'ah*, vol. 13, p. 342.

⁴ Ibid.

replied that the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) has stated:

مَا أَتَيْتُ الرُّكْنَ الِیَمَانِیَّ إِلَّا وَجَدْتُ جِبْرَائِیلَ قَدْ سَبَقَنِي إِلَيْهِ يَلْتَزِمُهُ.

Whenever I came to the Yamani Corner, I found that Gabriel had been clinging to it before me.¹

Imam Sadiq said about this most sacred area of the Kaaba:

الرُّكْنَ الِیَمَانِیُّ عَلَى بَابٍ مِنْ أَبْوَابِ الْجَنَّةِ مَفْتُوحٌ لِشِيعَةِ آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ، مَسْدُودٌ عَنْ غَيْرِهِمْ، وَمَا مِنْ مُؤْمِنٍ يَدْعُو بِدَعَاءٍ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا صَعِدَ دُعَاؤُهُ حَتَّى يَلْصَقَ بِالْعَرْشِ، مَا بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَ اللَّهِ حِجَابٌ.

The Yamani Corner is one of the gates to heaven that is (always) open for the followers of Muhammad's Purified Progeny and is closed to any other than them. The supplication of every *mu'min*² that is made there will ascend until it clings to the Throne and there is no veil between it and the Lord.³

Hajar al-Aswad

The Hajar al-Aswad is a black stone where *tawaf*⁴ begins and where it ends. In the story of Adam, it is narrated that the Black Stone was brought to earth by means of Prophet Adam.⁵

¹ Ibid., p. 338.

² مؤمن [*mu'min*] in Islamic terminology means one who believes in God and in what has been brought by all of His prophets.

³ Kulayni, *al-Kafi*, vol. 4, p. 409.

⁴ See note 4, p. 20.

⁵ Ibn Babawayh Qummi (also known as Shaykh Saduq), *'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida*, vol. 1, p. 53.

Regarding the origin of this stone, it is narrated from Imam Baqir¹ that:

نَزَلَتْ ثَلَاثَةٌ أَحْجَارٍ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ:
الْحَجَرُ الْأَسْوَدُ اسْتَوْدَعَهُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ، وَمَقَامُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ، وَحَجَرُ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ.

Three pieces of stone descended to the earth from heaven: the Hajar al-Aswad which [Allah] entrusted to Abraham, the (stone of the) Maqam of Abraham,² and the stone of the Children of Israel.³

The Hajar al-Aswad has an outer dimension, which is that of black stone, and an inner meaning, which is a manifestation of the power of Almighty God. The inner manifestation of the stone can be considered as the pure essence of the Imam of each age. The actual reality of this stone is a sign of the Imam of our Time.⁴ In a tradition, Prophet Muhammad interprets the Hajar al-Aswad as 'the right hand of Allah':

فَإِنَّهُ يَمِينُ اللَّهِ فِي أَرْضِهِ يُصَافِحُ بِهَا خَلْقَهُ.

It is the right hand of Allah upon the earth by which He shakes hands with His creatures.⁵

¹ الإمام الباقر [al-Imām al-Bāqir]. Muhammad ibn Ali al-Baqir (d. 733), according to the Imamiyyah (*Imāmiyyah* [إمامية]), was the fifth Imam to succeed Prophet Muhammad.

² مقام [*maqām*] means the place where one stands and the 'Maqam of Abraham' is a stone where he stood to build the Kaaba and to call people to perform Hajj. (Azraqi, *Akhbar Makkah*, vol. 1, p. 671).

³ Samarqandi, *Tafsir Ayyashi*, vol. 1, p. 59.

⁴ See note 2, p. 29.

⁵ Ibn Babawayh Qummi, *Ilal al-Sharayi*, vol. 2, p. 424.

This hand-shaking is the symbol of servant's allegiance in obedience to Him. Traditions narrate that the Black Stone is the place for making a covenant with the Beloved. Touching it, kissing it, and pointing to it is recommended. Imam Baqir has stated, 'The Hajar al-Aswad is a pledge [of Allah] and touching it is like giving allegiance [to God].'¹ When the Imam extended his hand to touch the Hajar al-Aswad, he would say:

اللَّهُمَّ أَمَانَتِي أَدَّيْتُهَا، وَمِيثَاقِي تَعَاهَدْتُهُ؛ لِيَشْهَدَ لِي عِنْدَكَ بِالْبَلَاغِ.

O Allah! I have fulfilled my trust and have renewed my covenant so it can bear witness that I surely have fulfilled my responsibility.²

Ibn Arabi states that during a visionary experience of an unveiling, he saw that all his true beliefs (*tawhid*) filled the heart of the Stone in its depths and were sealed to then be a testimony of his true belief on the Day of Judgment.³

When touching the Stone, the pilgrim whispers to Allah, 'Now that my hand has reached Your boundless power, help me to grasp no other hand but Yours.' Touching the Stone is a remind-

¹ Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 96, p. 48.

«الْحَجَرُ كَالْبَيْتِاقِ، وَاسْتِيْلَامُهُ كَالْبَيْعَةِ».

² Ibid.

³ Ibn Arabi, *Al-Futuhat al-Makkiyah*, vol. 2, p. 471.

«... وأودعتها شهادة التوحيد عند تقبيل الحجر، فخرجت الشهادة عند تلفظي بها، وأنا أنظر إليها بعيني في صورة سلك، وانفتح في الحجر الأسود مثل الطاق... ورأيت الشهادة قد صارت مثل الكعبة واستقرت في قعر الحجر، وانطبق الحجر عليها وانسد ذلك الطاق وأنا أنظر إليه، فقالت لي: هذه أمانة عندي أرفعها لك إلى يوم القيامة أشهد لك بها عند الله...»

er of the covenant, which, in the 'Realm of *Alast*,'¹ we made with Almighty Allah, and so today we renew it.

Mulla Muhsin Fayd Kashani² states, "When touching the Stone, you must be convinced that you are pledging allegiance to Allah in obedience to Him. Therefore, you must be attentive so as to remain loyal to this pledge, and if someone violates the allegiance, he deserves the wrath of Allah."³

Tawaf begins from the Black Stone, from a place redolent of the fragrance of *walayah*.⁴ If *tawaf* is a symbol for the true life and struggle in servitude, it means that, for everyone, the true life begins at the side of the Imam of our Time and in the shade of *walayah*. During *tawaf*, it may be said that the pilgrim circles the Kaaba between two right hands, since the Hajar al-Aswad, which is placed to the left of the pilgrim, is, in the words of the

¹ The 'Realm of *Alast*' refers to the realm in which humanity made a covenant of obedience to Allah. *أَلَسْتُ* [*alast?*] is from the word *أَلَسْتُ* [*alastu*] which literally means "Am I not?" as mentioned in the Quran, A'raf 7:172.

﴿وَأَذِ أَخَذَ رَبُّكَ مِن بَنِي آدَمَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَأَشْهَدَهُمْ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ
قَالُوا بَلَىٰ﴾

And when your Lord brought forth from the loins of the children of Adam their descendants, and made them bear witness against their own souls [saying]: 'Am I not your Lord?' They said: 'Yes!'

The 'Realm of *Alast*' is also called the 'Realm of the *Dharr*.' The word *ذَرَّةٌ* [*dharr*] is the plural of *ذَرَّةٌ* [*dharrah*], which literally means 'particle.'

² Mulla Muhsin Fayd Kashani (d. 1680) was a philosopher and theosopher.

³ Fayd Kashani, *Al-Mahajjah al-Bayda'*, vol. 2, p. 202.

﴿وَأَمَّا الْإِسْلَامَ فَاعْتَقِدْ عِنْدَهُ أَنَّكَ مَبِيعٌ لِّلَّهِ عَلَىٰ طَاعَتِهِ، فَصَمَّ عَزِيمَتِكَ عَلَى الْوَفَاءِ بِيَعْتِكَ،
فَمَنْ غَدَرَ فِي الْمَبَايَعَةِ اسْتَحَقَّ الْمَقْت.»

⁴ See note 2, p. 70.

narration, the right hand of Almighty Allah upon the earth, and the other right hand is the pilgrim's own. This symbolizes the divine ability and power given to him.



Tawaf

﴿...وَلِيَطَّوَّفُوا بِالْبَيْتِ الْعَتِيقِ﴾

... and they must perform *tawaf*¹ around the Ancient House.²

Tawaf around the Kaaba begins from Hajar al-Aswad, from that black stone, which is one of the world's purest stones and is a manifestation of the station of *walayah*.³ While outwardly one circumambulates an object, the inner reality is that the heart turns around the Beloved. Imam Sadiq has stated,

وَطَفَّ بِقَلْبِكَ مَعَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ حَوْلَ الْعَرْشِ كَطَوَافِكَ مَعَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ
بِنَفْسِكَ حَوْلَ الْبَيْتِ.

Just as you go around the Kaaba physically with the people, so you must go around the Throne of God with your heart among the angels.⁴

¹ طواف [*tawāf*] means 'circumambulation' and it is one of the obligatory rites of Hajj. Pilgrims must go around the Kaaba seven times, in a counterclockwise direction.

² Quran, Hajj 22:29.

³ See note 2, p. 70.

⁴ *Misbah al-Shari'ah*, p. 48.

During *tawaf*, it is not you who is moving; rather, a wave from the ocean of divine grace is taking you with it. In *tawaf*, your smallness before the greatness of the Absolute Truth becomes insignificant. In *tawaf*, you are a drop united with an eternal ocean. *tawaf* is timeless and eternal; you can also become timeless and eternal if you banish your selfish desires. *Tawaf* is the death of the selfish desires and the beginning of a new life. *Tawaf* is an ascension from the material world to the Throne of God.

The one who returns from Hajj is like someone born again. In actuality, in *tawaf*, the spiritual nature becomes apparent, and you become 'abd Allah'¹ (the servant of Allah), and distant from being 'abd al-hawa'² (the servant of carnal desire).

The beginning of *tawaf* is from Hajar al-Aswad, which is the right hand of God, and the ending is the same. It is recommended to begin *tawaf* with the *tasbihat arba'ah*³ and to arrive at the end with these invocations as well:

سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ.

*Subhāna-llāh, wal-ḥamdulillāh,
wa lā ilāha illa-llāh, wa-llāhu akbar.*

Glory be to Allah and praise be to Allah and there is no god except Allah and Allah is Greater [than can be described].⁴

¹ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ ['*abd Allāh*].

² عَبْدُ الْهَوَى ['*abd al-hawā*].

³ التَّسْبِيحَاتُ الْأَرْبَعَةُ [*al-tasbīhāt al-arba'ah*] literally means 'the four-part hymns of the glorification of God.'

⁴ Kulayni, *al-Kafi*, vol. 4, p. 403.

These invocations are firmly connected as if the first and the last are the same. You begin *tawaf* by uttering 'subhana-llah'¹ next to the Black Stone. With the uttering of 'al-hamdu li-llah,' you pass by the next corner. At the third corner, you say 'la ilaha illa-llah.'² At the final corner, you proclaim 'Allahu Akbar.'³ With these *adhkar*,⁴ the spirit of *tawaf* changes into another form.

By saying 'subhana-llah' the pilgrim is declaring that Allah is free of any need for their *tawaf*. Allah, the Magnanimous, is far above denying the servant His generosity. Allah, the Forgiving, is far above not overlooking mistakes and imperfections. Allah, the Generous, is far above depriving the pilgrim of His blessings after he has completed the *tawaf*. Allah, the Almighty, is far above refusing honor to a servant seeking it.

The *dhikr* of 'al-hamdu li-llah'⁵ is the voice of the fire of the love that reaches the heavens, and it is a cry of anguish that can be heard from the heart. With this *dhikr*, each one brings with himself the anguish that remains from the fire of separation from the Master, so that, by the grace of Allah, it may become cool for him. In *tawaf*, the veils of the material world are cast

¹ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ [subhāna-llāh] means 'Glory be to Allah.'

² See note 1, p. 68.

³ اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ [Allāhu Akbar] means absolutely no one can know what or who He is; He is even greater than being glorified because we may know Him through His Names and Attributes, but His essence is absolute non-manifestation, and thus absolutely hidden and unknowable.

⁴ أَذْكَارُ [adhkār] is the plural of ذِكْرٌ [dhikr], which means a sacred phrase or utterance that has a spiritual effect upon the soul.

⁵ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ [al-hamdu li-llāh] means 'Praise be to Allah.'

aside, the sins of the past are eliminated and the pilgrim faces the road of an eternal future.

The *dhikr* of '*la ilaha illa-llah*' is hidden and it is the greatest of invocations. When uttering '*la ilaha illa-llah*' even the lips and mouth do not move. Only you and Allāh know that it is being uttered. With the remembrance of *la ilaha illa-llah*, you seek refuge in the One who is obeyed and worshipped;¹ everything other than He is ephemeral and perishable. With this invocation, you declare that in God alone you seek refuge and in no one else.

With the *dhikr* of *la ilaha illa-llah*, the idols of egotism are broken and only the light of mercy remains apparent. In saying '*la ilaha illa-llah*,' the eye is turned to the One who is worshipped, who alone is aware of the needs of His servants. The *dhikr* of *la ilaha illa-llah* conveys pure *tawhid*² and is the secure fortress of Allah. When you repeat the *dhikr* of '*Allahu Akbar*' at the fourth corner, you know that Allah is too great to be encapsulated by any description. He is Self-Sufficient and Self-Subsisting and, thus, is not in need of the worship of His servants, yet the One who is worshipped is too great to send back empty the hands that have been raised toward Him or not to see the servant's need.³

¹ 'The one who is obeyed and worshipped' is the translation of مَعْبُود [ma'būd] and it is linked to the word عَبْد [abd] meaning 'obedient servant.'

² See note 2, p. 46.

³ Islamic theology holds that God is free of every need. Consequently, He has no need of His servants' worship. His greatness, however, means that He is aware of the servant's need, which the latter expresses through supplication, and His generosity means that He will not let their supplications go unanswered.

Tawaf has seven circuits just as the Quran has seven inner layers of meaning. In each circuit, a door of divine knowledge is opened a little further. It is as if, with these seven circuits, seven blameworthy characteristics are removed and replaced with seven praiseworthy characteristics. The seven blameworthy characteristics are conceit, arrogance, envy, covetousness, greed, anger, and lust. The seven praiseworthy characteristics are knowledge, wisdom, chastity, courage, justice, generosity, and humility.

It could be said that in the first circuit, the veils of the material world are cast aside, and in the second circuit, they vanish from the Realm of the Intellect. In the third circuit, the gates of the visible world are opened. In the fourth circuit, 'I breathed into him of My Spirit'¹ materializes for the pilgrim and a refrain from the Angelic Realm² gives comfort to the soul of the servant. In the fifth circuit, the pilgrim passes through the Realm of Secrets,³ and during the sixth and seventh circuits, he traverses the Hidden and Most Hidden Realms.

¹ Quran, Hijr 15:29.

﴿...وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِي...﴾

This is the moment when God gives consciousness to the physical form of Adam, made out of 'black mud' ﴿عَمَّا مَسْنُونٍ﴾ (Quran, Hijr 15:28), and brings him to life.

² Islamic cosmology consists of different levels of existence, although the mapping of these levels may vary. According to some schemas, the Angelic Realm (عالم الملكوت [*alam al-malakūt*]) comes beneath the Realm of Power (عالم الجبروت [*alam al-jabarūt*]) and the Realm of Divinity (عالم اللاهوت [*alam al-lāhūt*]).

³ Before traversing through the higher levels of existence, the pilgrim first reaches the deepest levels of the soul, called the Realm of Secrets (عالم السر [*alam al-sirr*]), the Hidden Realm (العالم الخفي [*al-alam al-khafi*]) and the Most Hidden Realm (العالم الأخرى [*al-alam al-akhfā*]).

Through the circuits of *tawaf*, the pilgrim travels beyond the material layer of his existence, which is the Material Realm.¹ In the same way, he traverses the Realm of the Heart,² which is a sign of the Angelic Realm. He even journeys through the Realm of the Spirit, which is connected to the Realm of Power, and reaches the Realm of Divinity. During *tawaf*, not only are you oblivious of your corporeal needs but you also pass over your spiritual desires. You are not even worried about your rising on the Day of Judgment; rather, you have come with the intention of visiting the Soul of Souls.

Outwardly, the pilgrim does *tawaf* upon the earth; however, in actuality, his heart is moving around his Beloved in the heavens. For this reason, in each circuit, he traverses one of the heavens and, with the angels, his heart makes *tawaf* around the sacred Throne of the Beloved. Although these circuits seem outwardly similar to each other, the inner dimension of each one is as different as one world is from another. Ibn Arabi has said, "*Tawaf* for you is as the firmament which is the seven heavens,³ because *tawaf* is performed in a circular shape, the same as the firmament, and when you perform the

¹ عالم الناسوت [*‘ālam al-nāsūt*] is the Material Realm, which, in the cosmic hierarchy, comes beneath the *‘alam malakut* (the Angelic Realm).

² عالم القلب [*‘alam al-qalb*] is the Realm of the Heart. The heart is the seat of the intellect (عقل [*‘aql*]), the faculty through which the signs of Allah can be perceived.

³ السماوات السبع [*al-samāwāt al-sab‘*] means the seven heavens, and it is mentioned in several verses of the Quran.

﴿اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ...﴾

Allah is the one who created seven heavens... (Quran, Talaq 65:12)

seven circuits of *tawaf*, it is as if you have brought forth seven heavens."¹

In Heaven, there is a house which is called al-Bayt al-Ma'mur.² According to a tradition of Ali ibn Abi-Talib, the Kaaba is the reflection of al-Bayt al-Ma'mur upon the earth. Al-Bayt al-Ma'mur is a house around which the angels circle as people do around the Kaaba. Each angel receives the opportunity to perform *tawaf* of al-Bayt al-Ma'mur only once in the duration of its existence.³ Here, the similarity between the *tawaf* of the angels and the *tawaf* of the people is a reminder of the following tradition below:

مَنْ تَشَبَهَ بِقَوْمٍ فَهُوَ مِنْهُمْ.

Whoever imitates a people is one of them.⁴

During *tawaf*, the pilgrim must try not to make a mistake in the first four circuits, since this invalidates the *tawaf*. It is invalidated because the pilgrim has not yet reached the fourth heaven, the heaven which is the place of *walayah*.⁵ However,

¹ Ibn Arabi, *Al-Futuhāt al-Makkiyah*, vol. 2, p. 476.

«فإنَّ الطَّوْفَ قام لك مقام الأفلak التي هي السماوات السبع؛ لأنَّه شكْلٌ مستديرٌ فلكيٌّ وكذالك الفلك، فلما أنشأت سبعة أدوار في الطَّوْفِ أنشأت سبعة أفلاك.»

² *al-bayt al-ma'mūr* [البيت المعمور] is the name of a house in Heaven, and it means 'the frequented house.' It is mentioned in the Quran (Tur 52:4) in which Allah swears by it.

³ Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, *Al-Tafsir al-Kabir aw Mafatih al-Ghayb* (also known as *Tafsir al-Razi*), vol. 4, p. 46.

⁴ Fadil Naraqī (also known as Mulla Mahdi Naraqī), *Jami' al-Sa'adat*, vol. 3, p. 393.

⁵ See note 2, p. 70.

after the fourth circuit, the station of *walayah* redresses the unintentional errors of the pilgrim.

Tawaf Prayer

Ibn Arabi states that "all scholars agree that according to the tradition of *tawaf*, one must perform a two *rak'at*¹ ritual prayer² after the completion of *tawaf*. [...] You should know that *tawaf*³ itself is a type of ritual prayer in which talking is permitted, and it is a ritual prayer like the funeral prayer⁴ even though *ruku'* and *sujud* are not performed."⁵

Perhaps the similarities between *tawaf* and the funeral prayer are because during *tawaf* the human being is separated from his egotism, just as the soul departs from the body of the deceased. The two *rak'at* prayer of *tawaf* is subsistence after annihilation. This prayer is a sign of gratitude for the secrets that were unveiled during *tawaf* and an indication of unifying with the Beloved and the end of the pilgrim's separation.

The ritual prayer of *tawaf* must be performed behind the Ma-

¹ رَكْعَةٌ [*rak'ah*] is one unit of prayer that comprises reciting chapters of the Quran, bowing (رُكُوع [*rukū'*]) and prostrating (سُجُود [*sujūd*]).

² See note 3, p. 22.

³ See note 1, p. 77.

⁴ The funeral prayer (صَلَاةُ الْمَيِّتِ [*ṣalāt al-mayyit*] or صَلَاةُ الْجَنَازَةِ [*ṣalāt al-janāzah*]) is performed over the body of a dead Muslim before burial and includes five *takbirs* (تَكْبِيرٍ [*takbīr*]).

⁵ Ibn Arabi, *Al-Furuhat al-Makkiyah*, vol. 2, p. 475.

«أجمع العلماء على أنه من سنن الطواف ركعتان بعد انقضاء الطواف... فاعلم أن الطواف قد روي أنه صلاةٌ أُنِيعَ فيها الكلام، وإن لم يكن فيه ركوعٌ ولا سجودٌ، كما سميت صلاة الجنائز صلاةً شرعاً وما فيها ركوعٌ ولا سجودٌ.»

qam of Abraham (the Station of Abraham).¹ The lofty status of the Station of Abraham is indicated in two verses of the Quran:

﴿وَإِذْ جَعَلْنَا الْبَيْتَ مَثَابَةً لِّلنَّاسِ وَأَمْنًا وَاتَّخِذُوا مِن مَّقَامِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ
مُصَلًّى...﴾

And for people We made the House a place for gathering and a safe haven. And take the Station of Abraham as a place of prayer! ...²

The Station of Abraham is also mentioned in *Surah Aal-'Imran*:

﴿إِنَّ أَوَّلَ بَيْتٍ وُضِعَ لِّلنَّاسِ لَلَّذِي بِنَكَّةٍ مُّبَارَكًا وَهُدًى لِّلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٥٩﴾
فِيهِ آيَاتٌ بَيِّنَاتٌ مَّقَامُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ...﴾

Indeed the first house to be established for humanity is the one at Bakkah, blessed, and a guidance for all the worlds. In it are clear signs such as the Station of Abraham ...³

Outwardly, the *tawaf* prayer is performed behind the Station of Abraham, but inwardly it is conducted behind the Perfect Man, (i.e., the Imam of our Time).⁴ Praying behind the Station of Abraham symbolizes adherence to the Divine Guardian⁵ of the Age.

By this prayer, worshipers ask God to bless them with the qualities of Abraham. Prophet Abraham was a *muhajir*⁶ who left his

¹ See note 2, p. 72.

² Quran, Baqarah 2:125.

³ Quran, Aal-'Imran 3:96-97.

⁴ See notes 2 and 3, p. 29.

⁵ 'Guardian' here means *wali* [wali] who has been granted *walayah* by Allah. (See note 2, p. 70.)

⁶ *muhajir* [muhajir] is often translated as 'emigrant,' but it also implies leaving

own city for the region of Canaan.¹ On his journey, he supplicated to God Himself:

﴿... رَبَّنَا عَلَيْكَ تَوَكَّلْنَا وَإِلَيْكَ أَنْتَبْنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿٤﴾ رَبَّنَا لَا تَجْعَلْنَا
فِتْنَةً لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَاعْفِرْ لَنَا رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ﴾

... Our Lord! In You do we put our trust, and to You do we turn, and toward You is the destination. Our Lord! Do not make us a means by which the disbelievers are tried [through their tormenting us], and forgive us. Our Lord! Indeed You are the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.²

On this journey, pilgrims desire to be *muhajirs* like Abraham, not only from their homes but also from their egos and worldly attachments. The Quran has mentioned many of Abraham's attributes; each one itself can be taken to emulate him and to aspire to him as an archetype. The Quran declares that Abraham is a *hanif*:³

﴿مَا كَانَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ يَهُودِيًّا وَلَا نَصْرَانِيًّا وَلَكِنْ كَانَ حَنِيفًا مُسْلِمًا
وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ﴾

Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian. Rather he was a *hanif*, a Muslim, and he was not one of the polytheists.⁴

behind a worldly way of life for a life of detachment and spiritual ascension. A *muhajir* leaves the comforts of his land for unknown frontiers.

¹ كُنَّان [kan'ān]. Canaan was a region located on the edge of the eastern Mediterranean Sea, which included today's Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Palestine. It was also known as Phoenicia. Prophet Moses led his people out of Egypt to the 'Promised Land' of Canaan.

² Quran, Mumtahinah 60:4-5.

³ حَنِيف [hanif].

⁴ Quran, Aal-'Imran 3:67.

Hanif refers to a person that knows God and is firm in their religion. Praying behind the Station of Abraham means praying in the realm of *tawhid*¹ and knowledge of God.

Abraham is *halim*. The Quran states:

﴿إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لَحَلِيمٌ...﴾

Abraham was indeed most forbearing...²

In Arabic, *halim*³ is an adjective that denotes a constant state of being patient, restrained and forgiving. A person that is *halim* is exceptionally cooperative with others. In a spiritual sense, a real *haji*⁴ is one who has forbearance when troubled by other people.

Abraham is *awwah*,⁵ meaning that he was of those who made much supplication:

﴿إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ... أَوْاهٌ...﴾

Abraham was indeed most [...] imploring...⁶

He was a man whose tongue never moved except with the mention and remembrance of God. If he spoke, it was only for God. Someone whose heart and tongue are capable of supplicating becomes accustomed to making loving requests. The requests

¹ See note 2, p. 46.

² Quran, Hud 11:75.

³ حَلِيمٌ [*halīm*].

⁴ حَاجِي [*hājī*] and حَاج [*hāj*] refer to a pilgrim who is performing Hajj as well as to one who has performed it before.

⁵ أَوْاهٌ [*awwāh*].

⁶ Quran, Hud 11:75.

of Prophet Abraham were so sincere and selfless that they made him forever one of the intimates of the Beloved. The requests of this saintly man in the words of the Quran are captivating:

﴿رَبِّ اجْعَلْنِي مُقِيمَ الصَّلَاةِ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي رَبَّنَا وَتَقَبَّلْ دُعَاءِ﴾

My Lord! Make me one who establishes the prayer, and my progeny [too]. Our Lord! Accept my supplication.¹

﴿رَبِّ هَبْ لِي حُكْمًا وَأَلْحِقْنِي بِالصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٨٣﴾ وَاجْعَلْ لِي لِسَانَ صِدْقٍ فِي الْآخِرِينَ﴾

My Lord! Grant me [unerring] judgment, and unite me with the righteous. And give me a reputation of honor among later generations.²

Abraham is *munib*, which refers to a person who constantly returns to God in repentance and obedience:

﴿إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ... مُنِيبٌ﴾

Abraham was indeed [...] oft-returning [to Allah].³

He knew no one else to return to other than God. All that he saw, knew, or did was godly and, therefore, unlike worldly attachments, his requests were protected from demise and decline. God is always present and observing, and at every moment Abraham turned to such a God.

Abraham had surrendered himself to his Lord to the extent that

¹ Quran, Ibrahim 14:40.

² Quran, Shu'ara 26:83-84.

³ Quran, Hud 11:75.

he brought his own son to the place of sacrifice. He was an idol breaker. He is an archetypal breaker of idols; not only external idols, but also every inner idol, and he was freed and severed from the trap of worldly attachments.

It is sufficient for us to contemplate for a moment before performing the *tawaf* prayer. What do we seek from God within our seclusion? Are we *hanif, halim, awwah, munib, mu'min, khalil* and *muslim*? After *tawaf*, are we freed from the veils which separate us from our Lord, so that our prayers may be established and accepted by Him?

The *tawaf* prayer is performed alone; thus moving from the multiplicity of *tawaf* to the individuality of prayer. This prayer is a stage of perfection of *tawaf*, or perhaps a product, something born of *tawaf*, because the one that has passed through the seven heavens¹ and witnessed the Omnipotence and the Majesty of Almighty Allah will automatically bow their head in awe of the Magnificence of the Lord, bend their back in reverence, and place their head in prostration upon the earth. Mystics say that the *tawaf* prayer has two *rak'ats*, one for the animalistic, material aspect of the human being and the other for the intellectual, immaterial aspect.²

The prayer of *tawaf* performed after seven circuits is for gratitude for subsistence after annihilation, but the body still has a

¹ See note 3, p. 82.

² Ibn Arabi, *Al-Futuh al-Makkiyah*, vol. 2, p. 476.

«فالركعة الواحدة لحيوانيتك والثانية للنفس الناطقة.»

share reserved for it in this prayer; since the body is necessary in order to serve, it must be healthy for this. If a mistake comes into the *tawaf* prayer, then this creates a defect in the rituals of Hajj. Many pilgrims become worried about this prayer since at the time of performing it, Satan fiercely endeavors to seduce the worshiper by afflicting his heart with various concerns and worries. Sometimes he entangles them in whisperings in their intention, and at other times he whispers in their recitation. At such a time, in order to escape from the footsteps of Satan, seek refuge in Allah by saying:

أَسْتَعِيذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ.

Asta'idhu bi-llāhi min ash-shayṭān ar-rajīm.

I seek refuge in Allah from the accursed Satan.¹

The spirit of every Hajj is prayer. The whole endeavor of the pilgrim from the beginning of the journey is to distance himself from egotism and selfishness; to withdraw his existence from the attachments of the physical, earthly realm; to reach the Beloved, and to say:

إِلَهِي وَرَبِّي مَنْ لِي غَيْرُكَ.

My God! My Lord! Whom do I have except You?²

At the *miqat*,³ the pilgrim has sought to be separated from his

¹ Kulayni, *al-Kaḥfi*, vol. 2, p. 533.

² Sayyid Ibn Tawus, *Al-Iqbal bil-A'mal al-Hasanah*, vol. 3, p. 333 (part of *Du'a Kumayl*).

³ See note 1, p. 20.

egotism and is invited to pray, since prayer is a private refuge between the servant and the Lord, and the servant is eager for this seclusion.

Drinking the Water of Zamzam

It is recommended that pilgrims drink some water from Zamzam and pour some upon their chests and abdomens after the *tawaf* prayer and prior to entering *sa'y*. These acts do not remain within the limits of the material world.

The water of Zamzam has both an outer and an inner aspect. Outwardly, it is that which is mentioned in the narration that says that when a guest comes to you, you should welcome him by offering him at least a sip of water.¹ Almighty Allah will not deprive His own guest of physical sustenance in this feast. The water of Zamzam is a cool and refreshing drink that enlivens the spirit and gives joy to the heart, but its inner aspect is apparent by what is said after drinking it:

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْهُ عِلْمًا نَافِعًا وَرِزْقًا وَاسِعًا وَشِفَاءً مِنْ كُلِّ دَاءٍ وَسُقْمٍ.

Allāhumma ij' alhu 'ilman nāfi'ā wa rizqan wāsi'ā wa shafā'an min kulli dā'i-wwa suqm.

O Allah! Make it into [unceasing] beneficial knowledge,²

¹ A narration from Imam Sadiq:

«إِذَا دَخَلَ عَلَيْكَ أَخُوكَ فَاعْرِضْ عَلَيْهِ الطَّعَامَ، فَإِنْ لَمْ يَأْكُلْ فَاعْرِضْ عَلَيْهِ الْمَاءَ.»

Barqi, *Al-Mahasin*, vol. 2, p. 417.

² The Arabic term for knowledge, عِلْمًا [*'ilman*] here is used as an indefinite noun, and indefinite nouns in Arabic are a sign of infiniteness or immeasurability.

ample sustenance, and a cure for every disease and sickness.¹

When drinking the water of Zamzam, the pilgrim asks for beneficial knowledge, since, during *tawaf* and the *tawaf* prayer, the vessel of his existence has attained such capacity that it has received sacred knowledge and insight, and now he also asks to have endless, infinite knowledge.

Mystics interpret water as knowledge.² Perhaps the reason for drinking the water of Zamzam has no other meaning than this. The water of Zamzam is such that by drinking it, the gates of knowledge and gnosis are opened to the heart. Prophet Muhammad said:

مَاءُ زَمْزَمَ دَوَاءٌ مِمَّا شَرِبَ لَهُ.

The water of Zamzam heals the malady for which it is drunk.³

In the words of the Prophet, it is as if the water of Zamzam is aware of our intentions; if it is drunk to quench the thirst, it quenches the thirst and if it is drunk with the intention of gaining divine knowledge and cognition, attaining that is possible. Whenever God wishes to honor a servant, He places divine knowledge and cognition within his power and opens before him the gates of gnosis. The first verses to be revealed to the

¹ Hurr Aamili, *Wasa'il al-Shi'ah*, vol. 13, p. 473.

² Ibn Arabi, *Tafsir Ibn Arabi*, vol. 2, p. 119, under verse 23 of *Surah Qasas* (28):

«(وَلَمَّا وَرَدَ مَاءَ مَدْيَنَ) أَي: مورد علم المكاشفة ومنهل علم السر المكالمة».

³ Kulayni, *al-Kafi*, vol. 6, p. 387.

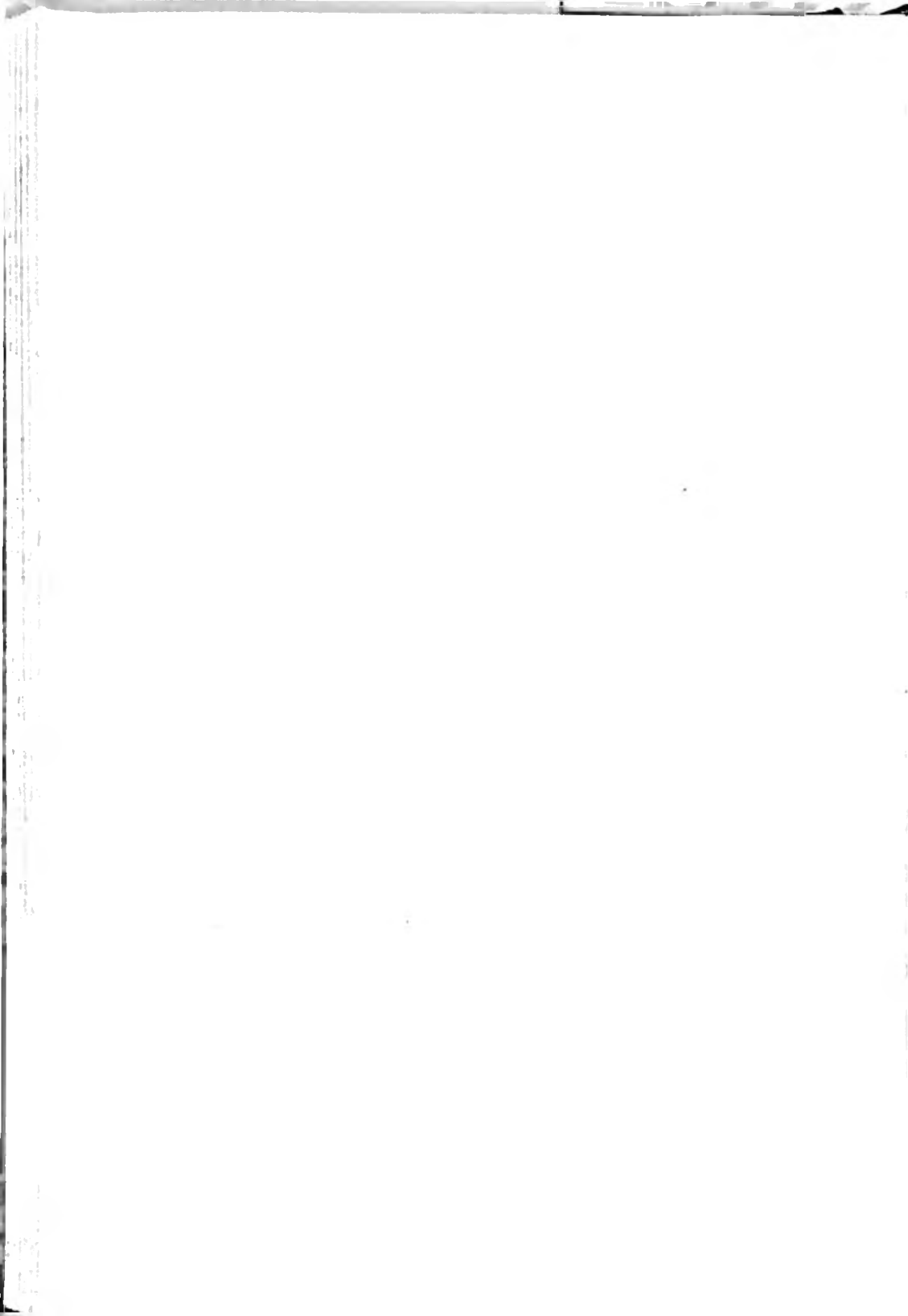
Prophet from Almighty Allah commanded him to attain divine knowledge:

﴿اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ﴾

Recite in the Name of your Lord Who created [everything].¹

The revelation of the Quran has a direct relationship to gaining knowledge. Perhaps the pilgrim is invited to drink the water of Zamzam after *tawaf* and the *tawaf* prayer because after *tawaf* the pilgrim is bestowed with a renewed way of thinking, and everyone can ask for the initiation of this renewal in attaining knowledge. So, in the previously mentioned *Du'a*, we ask Allah to make it the cause of a beneficial knowledge, the blessings of expansive cognition and a cure for any kind of illness that returns us to our ignorant state.

¹ Quran, Alaq 96:1.



Sa'y between Safa and Marwah

﴿إِنَّ الصَّفَا وَالْمَرْوَةَ مِن شَعَائِرِ اللَّهِ...﴾

Indeed Safa and Marwah are among Allah's distinguishing signs...¹

After *tawaf*² and the *tawaf* prayer, and drinking the water of Zamzam, one must embark upon *sa'y*,³ the hastening between the hills of Safa and Marwah.

Each of the rites of Hajj is a preliminary to another. The *miqat*⁴ is a preliminary to *tawaf*, and *tawaf* is a preliminary to the *tawaf* prayer, and all of these are preliminaries for *sa'y*. *Sa'y* is an endeavor to live a better life. Performing *tawaf* and the *tawaf* prayer is the arrival at *fana*, and *sa'y* is *baqa* after *fana*.⁵

¹ Quran, Baqarah 2:158.

² See note 1, p. 77.

³ سَعَى [*sa'y*] literally means endeavor.

⁴ See note 1, p. 20.

⁵ فناء [*fanā*] is a state of annihilation in the Attributes of God, which in Islamic spiritual culture indicates the end of the journey of the soul. That which is annihilated is the illusory 'self' of the seeker, the *nafs* (نفس), and the seeker

Imam Sadiq has stated:

وَصَفَّ رُوحَكَ وَسِرَّكَ لِلِقَاءِ اللَّهِ - تَعَالَى - يَوْمَ تَلْقَاهُ بِوُفُوكَ عَلَى
الصَّفَا، وَكُنْ ذَا مُرْوَةٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ بِفِنَاءِ أَوْصَافِكَ عِنْدَ الْمَرْوَةِ.

When you stand at Safa, purify your soul and your inmost self (سِرٌّ [sirr]) for meeting Allah, the Sublime, on the day that you meet Him, and take on the attributes of self-sacrifice and generosity from Allah by annihilating your attributes at Marwah.¹

He has also said:

وَهَرُولَ هَرْوَلَةً؛ فَرًّا مِنْ هَوَاكَ، وَتَبَرِّيًّا مِنْ جَمِيعِ حَوْلِكَ وَقُوَّتِكَ.

Make a *harwalah*,² as you flee from your desires, and dissociate yourself from all of your power and ability.³

Safa⁴ is a symbol of purification of the soul, and Marwah is a code for *muruwah*.⁵ Safa is the beginning of the path and Mar-

comes to realize that the only real self is that of God. Other mystics have said that the final stage of the soul is not *fana*, but *baqa* [baqā], meaning 'subsistence,' or 'remaining' with this realization, but in a sober, enduring state. Thus, the dual stages of *fana* and *baqa* are most often discussed together.

¹ *Misbah al-Shari'ah*, p. 49.

² *harwalah* [harwalah] means walking quickly.

³ *Misbah al-Shari'ah*, p. 48.

⁴ صفا [safā] literally means a large, smooth stone and when it is used with 'ال' [al-], it changes to the name of Mount Safa. It is from the root 'ص ف ر', and in the Arabic etymology, the infinitive form صَفَّرَ [safw] or صَفَا [safā], which means purifying, is derived from that root.

⁵ مُرْوَةٌ [muruwah] is a term that refers to an ethical code of conduct; acting with kindness, generosity, decency and self-sacrifice.

wah is the ending. Safa is the inner world, and Marwah is the external world. At Safa, you must become one of the people of spiritual purity to be chosen by God, and at Marwah, you must become one of the people of *muruwah* to be able to become kind and generous with people. *Sa'y* is the movement from the inner world to the external world. First, the soul and spiritual aspect must be given nourishment, and then the body can be a vehicle for the soul. First comes Safa and then Marwah. First comes the share of the soul and then the share of the body. Even so, in both places, it is the connection with the Beloved that is sought.

The Quran states:

﴿سَنُرِيهِمْ آيَاتِنَا فِي الْآفَاقِ وَفِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ...﴾

We shall show them Our signs upon the horizons and within themselves till it becomes clear to them that He is the Truth...¹

Sa'y, like *tawaf*, is performed seven times. This number is a symbol of infinitude. Outwardly, the pilgrim crosses the distance between Safa and Marwah seven times for *sa'y*, yet, inwardly, he must pass the rest of his life between this fear and hope.

The totality of Hajj is halting at the stage of Resurrection. At one of its stages, the servant vacillates between the two pans of the scales of good deeds and evil deeds. Mulla Muhsin Fayd writes: "*Sa'y* between Safa and Marwah in the Masjid al-Haram

¹ Quran, Fussilat 41:53.

is like the constant coming and going in the court of a king of a servant who wishes to declare his sincerity so that he may be graced with the king's mercy and compassion. The servant is like someone that enters the presence of a king and then leaves him without knowing what ruling the king will give for him. Will he be accepted by the king, or will he be expelled and rejected? In this way, the servant continuously attends the court of the king and hopes that if during the first time he did not receive forgiveness, then the second time he will receive mercy. While engaged in *sa'y* between Safa and Marwah, the servant must remember the rising and falling of the scales of his deeds at the event of the Resurrection, and know that Safa is the scale of his good deeds and Marwah is the scale of his evil deeds. The servant must remember that at that event his gaze is fixed upon the excellence and deficiency of the two scales, and he stands in awe, hesitating between divine punishment and divine forgiveness."¹

The servant hurries back and forth in *sa'y*, from Safa to Marwah and from Marwah to Safa like the movement between the two pans of the scale of good and evil deeds. At one time, he

¹ Fayd Kashani, *Al-Mahajjah al-Bayda'*, vol. 2, p. 203.

«وأما السعي بين الصفا والمروة في فناء البيت، فيضاهي تردّد العبد بقناء دار الملك جانيًا وزاهبًا مرّة بعد أخرى؛ إظهارًا للخلوص في الخدمة، ورجاءًا للملاحظة بعين الرحمة، كالذي دخل على الملك وخرج، وهو لا يدري ما الذي يقضي به الملك في حقّه من قبول أو ردّ، فلا يزال يتردّد على فناء الدار مرّة بعد أخرى؛ يرجو أن يرحم في الثانية إن لم يرحم في الأولى، وليتذكّر عند تردّده بين الصفا والمروة تردّده بين كفتي الميزان في عرصات القيامة، وليمثل الصفا بكفّة الحسنات والمروة بكفّة السيئات، وليتذكّر تردّده بين الكفتين؛ ناظرًا إلى الرجحان والنقصان مردّدًا بين العذاب والغفران.»

traverses the distance between the two hills with fear, and the next time he returns with hope. While going, the servant despairs of the beneficence of God and is worried that his presence will not be accepted, but on returning, he is overcome with the hope that it will.

What a magnificent scene it is at Safa and Marwah and what a rapturous atmosphere! *Sa'y* begins at Safa so that one's gaze is withdrawn from one's own virtues, good deeds, and charity. The agent of good deeds is God, and the servant is only a channel of the Divine Will.

Safa is the full scale, and Marwah is the empty one. The pilgrim begins from the full scale of his good deeds. He believes that countless virtues and good deeds are in his record of life. However, when he looks more closely, he perceives that they appear great in his eyes, but they are nothing before the Magnificence of the Lord because no one can achieve true servitude to Almighty Allah. As the Prophet has declared:

مَا عَبَدْنَاكَ حَقَّ عِبَادَتِكَ.

We have not worshiped You in the way that You deserve to be worshipped.¹

The pilgrim finally sees the empty scale of his deeds, realizing that there is nothing in it to present before the Lord. Such a perspective is not only related to *sa'y*. In fact, *sa'y* is a symbol of everyday life. *Sa'y* is movement through the vicissitudes of life. It is

¹ Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 68, p. 23.

progression from the physical body to the upper reaches of the spirit. Every person must endeavor throughout life for his happiness and a good end, while relying upon God in all physical and spiritual affairs:

«... وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ»

... and all the believers should trust in Allah.¹

At Safa and Marwah, the pilgrim believes that his human self goes on *sa'y*, although at the time of *tawaf* the self had become nothing, as it reached the station of *fana*. It is not the pilgrim's self that is going back and forth in *sa'y*, but rather the essential truth of his existence that goes to and fro in the sanctuary of the Truth. In this movement, the pilgrim perceives that:

لَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ الْعَلِيِّ الْعَظِيمِ.

There is no power and no strength except in Allah, the Exalted, the Mighty.²

It is God Who takes the pilgrim and brings him back. Ibn Arabi says, "The performer of *sa'y* between Safa and Marwah is moving from Allah to Allah, with Allah by Allah, in Allah for the will of Allah, so in every state he is with Allah for Allah."³

In reality, it is not the pilgrim that performs *sa'y*; rather, it is

¹ Quran, Aal-'Imran 3:160.

² Ibn Babawayh Qummi, *Man la Yahduruhu al-Faqih*, vol. 3, p. 200.

³ Ibn Arabi, *Al-Futuhāt al-Makkiyah*, vol. 2, p. 483.

«فالساعي بين الصفا والمروة من الله إلى الله، مع الله بالله، في الله عن أمر الله، فهو في كل حال مع الله لله».

his spiritual existence that traverses the distance between these two hills.

In the *adhkar*¹ connected to *sa'y*, it is recommended to invoke *Allahu Akbar* (God is greatest)² seven times during *sa'y* in order to declare that Almighty Allah is greater than can be described or conceived. He is too great to be in need of the *sa'y* and *tawaf* of His servants, yet He is too great to ignore requests and He is too great to deny His aid to the one who asks for it.

At Safa, the pilgrim asks Almighty Allah for purity and to be favored with being chosen by Him, and at Marwah, he asks to be blessed with *muruwah* toward others. Just as Safa is a symbol of purification, so it is also a symbol of being specially selected and favored³ by Almighty Allah. The Holy Quran states,

﴿وَإِذْ قَالَتِ الْمَلَائِكَةُ يَا مَرْيَمُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَاكِ وَطَهَّرَكِ...﴾

And when the angels said, 'O Mary, indeed Allah has chosen you and purified you...'⁴

When the servant intends to go to the House of the Beloved, he becomes chosen and selected, because God has invited him to take his place among the chosen ones. The pilgrim asks God to give permission to him to move toward honesty and generos-

¹ See note 4, p. 79.

² See note 3, p. 79.

³ صفا [*ṣafā*], according to another etymological analysis, could be related to the infinitive form of اِصْطَفَاءَ [*iṣṭifā'*] which means 'choosing' or 'selecting,' as it is derived from the same root و ص ف ر.

⁴ Quran, Aal-'Imran 3:42.

ity, and to return to Marwah to remain among the chosen. The one that is chosen and who becomes one of the selected by the Beloved will not remain impassive and motionless in the matter of servitude, because Almighty Allah's chosen one does not evade servitude even for a moment. He is eternally traveling between the Safa and Marwah of servitude, and his progress toward perfection never ends. He knows that the *sa'y* is a symbol of his life after Hajj. He has come to the *sa'y* to destroy, with the permission of God, what is left of his ego and selfishness and to bring back all the excellent qualities from here to his everyday life.

Arafat

In order to enter Arafat, one must make an intention to perform Hajj *tamattu'*¹ as it was made in *umrah tamattu'*;² however, there is a great difference between the two intentions. For *umrah tamattu'* you must become a *muhrim*³ outside of Makkah, but for Hajj *tamattu'* you must do so in Makkah.

In *umrah tamattu'*, the pilgrim has not yet experienced the taste of union and in Hajj *tamattu'*, he comes to smell the scent of union with the Friend, as if, in *umrah*, everything is passing and in Hajj it is eternal and lasting. In *umrah*, the pilgrim has not yet experienced the escape from his physical existence, but in

¹ حَجَّ التَّمَتُّعِ [*hajj al-tamattu'*] is the second part of Hajj which consists of a sequence of rites, beginning with becoming a *muhrim* in Makkah. Making the intention of Hajj *tamattu'* and becoming a *muhrim* can take place at any time during the Hajj season (the lunar months of Shawwal, Dhul-Qa'dah and Dhul-Hijjah), but its rites should be initiated on the ninth of Dhul-Hijjah by staying in Arafat.

² عُمْرَةَ التَّمَتُّعِ [*umrah al-tamattu'*] is the first part of the sequence of the rites of Hajj, up to completing the *sa'y* of Safa and Marwah, and performing the *taqsir*. The rites of *umrah tamattu'* should be performed during the Hajj season.

³ See notes 2 and 3, p. 39.

Hajj he becomes a *muhrim*, free of every attachment. *Umrah* is practice for the testing ground of Hajj. The pilgrim performing *umrah* considers himself to have an independent existence, yet in the *ihram* of Hajj *tamattu'* his egoistic self is annihilated, and that which becomes a *muhrim* is the godly self.

There is a difference between *ihram* in *umrah tamattu'* and *ihram* in Hajj *tamattu'*. In the first *ihram*, the ego of the servant presents itself in order to become a *muhrim*, but in the *ihram* for Hajj *tamattu'*, the spiritual self enters *ihram*, since the egoistic self was annihilated during *tawaf*,¹ *sa'y*² and *taqsir*.

Everyone in this *ihram* outwardly becomes a *muhrim*, but inwardly becomes a *mahram*,³ and a new covenant for union is held between the servant and the Beloved. In this *ihram*, the servant becomes so intimate that the Beloved prepares a gathering for him in Arafat in order to make Himself known and to make the servant a companion of His great representative on the earth.

As Hajj is not complete without staying at Arafat,⁴ neither can it be perfected without meeting the Imam of the Age.⁵ Imam Baqir says,

تَمَامُ الْحَجِّ لِقَاءُ الْإِمَامِ.

The ultimate aim of Hajj is to meet the Imam.⁶

¹ See note 1, p. 77.

² See note 3, p. 95.

³ See note 1, p. 44.

⁴ الْحَجُّ عَرَفَةَ, meaning 'Hajj is Arafah.' (See page 31.)

⁵ See note 2, p. 29.

⁶ Kulayni, *al-Kafi*, vol. 4, p. 549.

On the ninth day of Dhul-Hijjah, the land of Arafat is fragrant with the presence of Hujjat¹ ibn al-Hasan. On this day, the land of Arafat is blessed with the holy footsteps of the Guardian² of the Age. If one's eyes are pure, one will perceive the brilliance of the Imam's presence in Arafat. Many pilgrims have found him-who-was-to-be-found and saw him-who-was-to-be-seen in Arafat. Imam Sadiq states,

يَفْقِدُ النَّاسُ إِمَامَهُمْ فَيَشْهَدُ الْمَوْسِمَ فَيَرَاهُمْ وَلَا يَرَوْنَهُ.

People will miss their Imam, so he will be present in the sea-
son [of Hajj], seeing them, but they will not recognize him.³

Arafat is an introduction ceremony that is held in a desert. The vastness of the desert is a symbol of the endless knowledge that everyone seeks. It is an introduction held in seclusion; a seclusion that lies at the heart of multiplicity. Everyone is present, but no one is occupied with anyone else. Everyone is absorbed in their own seclusion. They contemplate, worship, shed tears, pray, and whisper softly to their Master.

It is obligatory to remain in this land from the noontime

¹ حُجَّة [hujjah] literally means 'proof,' and حُجَّةُ اللَّهِ [hujjat-u-llāh] as one of the titles of Imam Mahdi indicates that he is the proof of God upon the earth as a means of guidance for humanity. It is mentioned in the Quran, An'am 6:149,

﴿... قُلْ فَلِلَّهِ الْحُجَّةُ الْبَالِغَةُ﴾

Also see the *hadith* of Imam Kazim (Kulayni, *al-Kafi*, vol. 1, p. 16).

«إِنَّ لِلَّهِ عَلَى النَّاسِ حُجَّتَيْنِ: حُجَّةٌ ظَاهِرَةٌ، وَحُجَّةٌ بَاطِنَةٌ، فَأَمَّا الظَّاهِرَةُ فَالرُّسُلُ وَالْأَنْبِيَاءُ وَالْأَيْمَةُ...»

² See note 5, p. 85.

³ Kulayni, *al-Kafi*, vol. 1, pp. 337–338.

*adhan*¹ until sunset. The direct rays of the sun are a symbol of the presence of the Imam of the Age. Traditions say that the holy presence of the Imam of the Age is like that of the sun behind the clouds.² The clouds are the veils between God's servants and the Imam of the Age. At noon at Arafat, everything is illuminated in the desert. The holy presence of God's Proof is like the sun at Arafat at high noon, when it is shining and radiating with light. Those who are able to cast aside the veils will surely see, with the eye of the heart, the rays of light of the Imam of the Age and feel his radiant warmth.

The great secret of Hajj is the gathering at Arafat. This gathering is mysterious. Everyone individually seeks to find or to know his Imam in order to sit at his great banquet table. In this desert, no one with understanding despairs of meeting the Imam, because he knows that even if his own eyes are deprived of seeing him, the eyes of the Imam are looking toward him, and if he is sincere and ardent in seeking his Imam, then certainly there will come a day when the Imam will send a messenger to get him. Devoted waiting is the responsibility of everyone who waits; it is a waiting that is active and purposeful.

¹ أذان [*adhān*].

² Ibn Babawayh Qummi, *Al-Amali*, p. 186.

«قَالَ سُلَيْمَانُ: فَقُلْتُ لِلصَّادِقِ: فَكَيْفَ يَنْتَفِعُ النَّاسُ بِالْحُجَّةِ الْغَائِبِ الْمَسْتُورِ؟ قَالَ: كَمَا يَنْتَفِعُونَ بِالشَّمْسِ إِذَا سَتَرَهَا السَّحَابُ.»

“Sulayman asked Imam Sadiq, ‘How can people benefit from the Hujjah [Imam Mahdi] while he is not apparent?’ Imam replied to him, ‘They benefit from him as they benefit from the sun when it is hidden by clouds.’”

Arafat is an introductory meeting, but this introduction does not mean that the essence of the pilgrim is veiled from the Imam of the Age, because the Imam is a manifestation of God's name *Alim*, the Omniscient, and with the permission of God, nothing is hidden or secret from the Imam's blessed existence. The Imam of the Age knows every pilgrim well and is aware of everyone's state. The introduction in Arafat is where the pilgrim becomes acquainted with the Imam, not where the Imam becomes acquainted with the pilgrim. The pilgrim goes to this desert to find the one whom he has lost and to become acquainted with him. Arafat is a trace and a sign of the ever-present traveler about whose appearance everyone speaks. If all hearts were able to perceive the presence of the Imam, no one would leave this land without finding him.

On the position of an Imam, Ali ibn Musa al-Rida¹ has said:

الإمام كَالشَّمْسِ الظَّالِعَةِ لِلْعَالَمِ وَهِيَ بِالْأَفُقِ يَحِثُّ لَا تَنَالُهَا الْأَيْدِي
وَالْأَبْصَارُ. الإِمَامُ الْبَدْرُ الْمُنِيرُ وَالسَّرَاجُ الزَّاهِرُ وَالنُّورُ السَّاطِعُ
وَالتَّجْمُ الْهَادِي فِي غِيَابِ الدَّجَى وَالْبَيْدُ الْقِفَارِ وَالْحُجَّجِ الْبِحَارِ. الإِمَامُ
المَاءُ الْعَذْبُ عَلَى الظَّمَا وَالدَّالُّ عَلَى الْهُدَى وَالْمُنَجِّي مِنَ الرَّدَى وَالْإِمَامُ
التَّارُ عَلَى الْيَفَاعِ الْحَارِّ لِمَنْ اضْطَلَّ بِهِ وَالدَّلِيلُ فِي الْمَهَالِكِ. مَنْ فَارَقَهُ
فَهَالِكٌ. الإِمَامُ السَّحَابُ الْمَاطِرُ وَالْعَيْنُ الْهَاطِلُ وَالشَّمْسُ الْمُضِيئَةُ
وَالْأَرْضُ النَّبِيضَةُ وَالْعَيْنُ الْغَزِيرَةُ وَالْعَدِيرُ وَالرُّوضَةُ. الإِمَامُ الْأَمِينُ
الرَّقِيقُ وَالْوَالِدُ الرَّقِيقُ وَالْأَخُ الشَّفِيقُ.

¹ [al-Imām al-Riḍā]. Ali ibn Musa al-Rida (d. 818), according to the Imamiyyah (*Imāmiyyah* [إِمَامِيَّة]), was the eighth Imam to succeed Prophet Muhammad.

The Imam is like the sun whose light embraces the world, and its place on the horizon is such that no hand can reach it nor eyes see it. The Imam is a radiant moon, a shining lamp, an emanating light, and a guiding star in the heart of darkness, in barren lands, and in the fathomless depths of the oceans. The Imam is fresh water for the thirsty, the one who directs to guidance and a (blessed) savior from destruction. The Imam is a beacon on a hill (a guide for those that are lost) and heat for those that seek to warm themselves by him; he is a guide in the midst of dangers. The one who leaves him will perish. The Imam is a rain-bearing cloud; a pouring rain (that is filled with blessings); a brilliant, shining sun; a vast land; an effervescent spring; a pool and a garden. The Imam is a faithful companion; a benevolent father; and a kind brother.¹

In the desert of Arafat, it is just such an Imam that becomes apparent, shining his light for the pilgrims. What eye will be blessed with looking upon the Imam, who is the Observing Eyes of God upon the earth? What eye will find the blessed opportunity to see the Seeing Eyes of God? How happy would those eyes be that are illuminated by his light, and what compensation do those eyes find that are unaware of the blessing of his presence!

In Arafat, the proof is completed so that no one disbelieves that it was possible to know the Imam. In this desert, the pres-

¹ Ibn Babawayh Qummi, *Uyun Akhbar al-Rida*, vol. 1, pp. 218–219.

ence of the Imam is manifested more strongly than in any other place. In this land, spiritual wayfarers find themselves within the radiance of their Imam's presence. They shed tears because they wish so strongly to see him, and they speak again of their pain of separation from him. In their hearts, they hear their Master's whispering of the supplication of Arafat, and they perceive its soothing sound. Some pilgrims are even invited to the tent of their Imam and stand for prayer under his lead.

There are three groups of pilgrims at Arafat. For the first group, this endless desert is a symbol of proximity and attachment to God, and for the second it tells of infatuation and love, while the third group has come to experience love for the first time. How painful it is for one to be at Arafat but not to be among one of these groups.

At Arafat, we must be travelers of the heart to see where we are in this land. What has called us to this ascension? Among which group do we take our place? Are we still earthly or have we become celestial? Have we come to Arafat to fulfill a religious duty or to walk with love in this desert? At Arafat, are we trapped in the outward heat of the sun, which harms the body, or are we hopeful for the radiance of the presence of the Imam of the Age which nourishes the soul?

This is Arafat. The earth, time, humans, and angels all seek the Awaited Imam.¹ They wish to know him and to meet him.

If there is no invitation from the host, it is of no benefit to the

¹ الإمام المنتظر [al-Imām al-Muntazar]; see note 2, p. 29.

guest to be present at Arafat. The guest has accepted the invitation of his host to be present at the feast, certain that his host will not allow him to despair.

Arafat may be a center for gnosis and understanding from two aspects. Firstly, at Arafat, the pilgrim acknowledges his complete powerlessness and empty-handedness before the Master. From his heart he cries out that he is nothing in the presence of the generous and powerful Creator. For the pilgrim, this land is the symbol of the desert of the Resurrection. Just as at the Resurrection his empty-handedness is a plea, so today at Arafat, with this feeling of empty-handedness he is in the presence of Almighty Allah. The second aspect is that those present at Arafat perceive the manifestations of the Beloved with such clarity that no reason for despair remains. Those in this endless desert are witness to the fact that their Lord has accepted them with all their flaws and weaknesses.

Imam Baqir has stated:

مَا مِنْ بَرٍّ وَلَا فَاجِرٍ يَقِفُ بِجِبَالِ عَرَافَاتٍ فَيَدْعُو اللَّهَ إِلَّا اسْتَجَابَ اللَّهُ لَهُ، أَمَا الْبَرُّ فَنَفِي حَوَائِجِ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ، وَأَمَا الْفَاجِرُ فَنَفِي أَمْرِ الدُّنْيَا.

Neither a good person nor a dissolute one stands and supplicates to God on the Mount of Arafat without God answering his prayers. But the good person will be answered regarding his needs in this life and the next, while the dissolute person will be answered only about worldly things.¹

¹ Himyari, *Qurb al-Isnad*, p. 376.

Arafat is an excellent place for supplicating and for the acceptance of supplications. Imam Sadiq has stated:

أَعْظَمُ النَّاسِ جُرْمًا مِنْ أَهْلِ عَرَافَاتِ الَّذِي يَنْصَرِفُ مِنْ عَرَافَاتٍ
وَهُوَ يَظُنُّ أَنَّهُ لَمْ يُغْفَرْ لَهُ، يَعْنِي الَّذِي يَقْنَطُ مِنْ رَحْمَةِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ.

The worst sin committed by the people of Arafat is the sin of the one who has returned from Arafat still thinking that he has not been forgiven; meaning, the one who despairs of the mercy of God.¹

No one returns from this land in despair. Traditions state that despair is the greatest possible sin in Arafat. In the divine atmosphere of Arafat, only the sin of despair spoils the record of those present. The pilgrim must set foot in this land with the utmost hope and have certainty that he is the object of the special consideration of his Lord. The Quran states:

﴿... إِنَّهُ لَا يَيْئَسُ مِنْ رَوْحِ اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْقَوْمُ الْكَافِرُونَ﴾

... Indeed no one despairs of Allah's Compassion except the disbelieving people.²

Arafat is the land for confessing transgressions. In that land, everyone realizes their faults, as if the radiance and clarity of Arafat penetrate the depths of the soul, and the human being, more than ever, becomes aware of his deficiencies. Everyone has come to this desert to seek refuge in God from their faults and deficiencies,

¹ Ibn Babawayh Qummi (also known as Shaykh Saduq), *Man la Yahduruhu al-Faqih*, vol. 2, p. 211.

² Quran, Yusuf 12:87.

and to acknowledge that their failings in the practice of servitude come from the darkness within their souls. The Quran relates the condition of Adam and Eve as follows:

﴿... رَبَّنَا ظَلَمْنَا أَنْفُسَنَا وَإِنْ لَمْ تَغْفِرْ لَنَا وَتَرْحَمْنَا لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ﴾

... Our Lord, we have wronged our souls! If You do not forgive us and have mercy upon us, we will surely be among the losers.¹

Such an understanding reigns over the pilgrim in the radiant atmosphere of Arafat. In that desert, still and silent, sometimes weeping and wailing, the pilgrim confesses in the presence of the Truth:

﴿... لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ﴾

Lā ilāha illā anta, subhāna-ka, innī kuntu min-azzālimīn

... There is no god except You, Glory be to You! Verily I have been one of the wrongdoers!²

Arafat is an intensive lesson on knowing the Imam of the Age that starts from noon and ends at sunset. It is obligatory for every pilgrim to be present in this lesson. It is a lesson that accepts students at noon and sends them to the Mash'ar al-Haram after sunset with a treasure chest of divine knowledge. During this period, time is more precious than gold. If even a moment is wasted, the loss cannot be recompensed.

¹ Quran, A'raf 7:23.

² Quran, Anbiya 21:87.

In the land of Arafat, God grants supplications because of the blessed presence of His representative, and pilgrims are graced with the opportunity to offer beneficial supplications in his radiant light. The Imam of the pilgrims is the hand of the Lord extending into the world. God blesses his intermediacy, and the servant seeks it.

It is as if, at Arafat, the soul has fallen into the fire of love. More than at any other time, this fire blazes and burns away all egotism and turns it to ashes. The bitter taste of separation is even stronger at Arafat. 'Presence' takes on a new meaning there, and when the presence of the living Imam is felt in Arafat, you must declare that your separation from Allah is the only pain you have in your life. Everyone pins their hopes on Arafat in order to assuage the pain of separation from the Master.

From midday to sunset, we burn in the furnace of love that is this land, in order to be melted in this furnace. Perhaps leaving Arafat shall be a rebirth, a new beginning; a beginning without the selfishness of the past; a rebirth without the former sins.



The Mash'ar al-Haram

﴿... فَإِذَا أَقْضَيْتُمْ مِنْ عَرَاقَاتٍ فَادْكُرُوا اللَّهَ عِنْدَ الْمَشْعَرِ الْحَرَامِ...﴾

... Then when you have departed from Arafat, remember Allah at the Mash'ar al-Haram ...¹

After the sun sets upon Arafat, it is as if the pilgrim knows the way, and with the lantern of intuitive knowledge, he sets off toward the land of the Mash'ar al-Haram, in order to sit at another banquet of knowledge, which God has prepared during the night. The Mash'ar al-Haram is said to be a place of insight; a place to receive inner realizations that are subtle, fine and precise, but also strong and consistent. With what knowledge must one leave Arafat? To what extent has the pilgrim drawn on the radiance of the Master in that land, by means of which he can apprehend these fine and subtle truths in the darkness of the night of the Mash'ar?

Mash'ar² as an Arabic word is from the same root as *sha'r*³ and

¹ Quran, Baqarah 2:198.

² مَشْعَر [Mash'ar].

³ شَعْر [sha'r].

shu'ur.¹ *Sha'r* as an infinitive form of a verb in Arabic means 'to perceive,' and perhaps the Mash'ar, meaning 'sign,' has been given this name since all knowledge and understanding that is perceived there is fine and precise. You must be careful at the Mash'ar that you do not enter the place of perception while remaining among 'those who do not perceive.'²

Ibn Arabi says that the Mash'ar is described as *al-Haram* (الحرام) [*al-ḥarām*] meaning 'the forbidden' because it is part of the *Haram*³ of Makkah, and therefore whatever is forbidden in the holy site of Makkah is also forbidden there. In the Haram is given the command to remember God; likewise in the Mash'ar one must not neglect to remember Him.⁴

All those forgiven in Arafat gather in a desert named the Mash'ar al-Haram or Muzdalifah.⁵ Muzdalifah is derived from the Arabic root '*zulf*' meaning 'closeness,' since the hearts of the believers have become so intertwined at Arafat that there is no distance or division between them and they come to gather at Muzdalifah. At Arafat, wayfarers gather together by the grace of the noble

¹ *شُعُور* [*shu'ūr*] literally means 'perception.'

² Quran, Baqarah 2:12.

﴿... لَا يَشْعُرُونَ﴾

³ *حَرَم* [*haram*] literally means sanctuary. In the terminology of *fiqh*, it is the specific area that surrounds the holy site of Makkah and its periphery continues for a few kilometers out from the city.

⁴ Ibn Arabi, *Al-Futuhāt al-Makkiyah*, vol. 2, p. 496.

«ووصفه بالحرم؛ لأنه في الحرم، فيحرم فيه ما يحرم في الحرم كله، فإنه من جملته، فأمر بذكر الله فيه.»

⁵ *مُزْدَلِفَة* [*Muzdalifah*] is another name for the Mash'ar al-Haram.

Baqiyatullah.¹ A feeling of peace and tranquility born of this blessing brings their hearts close together. Once more, in the darkness of the night, far from the eyes of outsiders, these wayfarers gather together at the Mash'ar for a lesson in knowledge.

About the importance of Muzdalifah, Ibn Arabi says that 'Muzdalifah' means 'proximity,' and one's actions here bring proximity to God. If someone in the sphere of proximity does not receive the grace of nearness to God, inwardly it is as if they haven't performed Hajj. That is because Hajj is the complete sum of all the rites of the pilgrimage. It thus follows that these actions in relation to Hajj are like essential attributes for the object they describe (i.e., Hajj). Therefore, if a single attribute is omitted, the very identity of the object itself is nullified.²

Being at the Mash'ar al-Haram is a lesson taken at night and a re-visitation of the lesson of love. The darkness of the night causes the wayfarers to put the teachings of Arafat into practice, as if what the pilgrims have learned from noon to sunset in Arafat is put to the test at the Mash'ar. The pilgrim learns in that land that life is a time for seeking meaning and becomes valuable only when it ends on the path of love for the Master and the meeting with Him.

¹ See note 3, p. 29.

² Ibn Arabi, *Al-Futuh al-Makkiyah*, vol. 2, p. 495.

«المزدلفة اسم قرب، والعمل فيها قربة، فمن فاته صفة القرب في محل القرب فما حجاج. فإن الحج نشأة كاملة من هذه الأفعال كلها، فهي له كالصفات النفسية للموصوف، إذا زال واحد منها بطل كون ذلك الموصوف.»

The pilgrim leaves Arafat eager for the seclusion of the Mash'ar, where secretly and softly he may whisper to his Master,

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ الْمَشْعَرِ الْحَرَامِ فَكَ رَقَبَتِي مِنَ النَّارِ، وَأَوْسِعْ عَلَيَّ مِنْ
رِزْقِكَ الْحَلَالِ، وَأَذْرَأْ عَنِّي شَرَّ فَسَقَةِ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسِ، اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ
خَيْرُ مَطْلُوبٍ إِلَيْهِ وَخَيْرُ مَدْعُوٍّ وَخَيْرُ مَسْئُولٍ، وَلِكُلِّ وَافِدٍ جَائِزَةٌ،
فَجْعَلْ جَائِزَتِي فِي مَوْطِئِي هَذَا أَنْ تُفِيَلِّي عَثْرَتِي وَتَقْبَلَ مَعْذِرَتِي،
وَأَنْ تَجَاوَزَ عَنِّي حَطِيئَتِي، ثُمَّ اجْعَلِ التَّقْوَى مِنَ الدُّنْيَا زَادِي.

O Allah, Lord of the Mash'ar al-Haram! Free me from Hell and increase for me lawful¹ sustenance. Keep the evil of the wicked jinn and humans away from me. O Allah! You are the best one to be sought, the best to be called upon and the best to be asked. For every newcomer, there is a reward. Make my reward in this place of mine Your cancellation of my errors, Your acceptance of my excuse and overlooking of my mistakes, and make my piety be my provision (to take with me) from this world.²

The pilgrim has sought refuge in the silence, peace, and darkness of the Mash'ar to confess in the presence of the angels of the Throne that even though he should have given his life on the path to union, and he has not done so, still he asks God in this place of retreat to place him among God's sincere servants. If someone wishes to stop him from this meeting, he will say that in the darkness of the Mash'ar he has renewed his ancient

¹ حلال [*halāl*] describes an object or an action which is considered permissible in Islam.

² Kulayni, *al-Kafi*, vol. 4, p. 469.

covenant with his Master. Once more, the pilgrim has said 'Yes' to 'Am I not your Lord?'¹ Thus, all the veils and attachments that have placed a distance between the servant and the Master and have caused Him to remain hidden from the servant have changed into pebbles. These pebbles shall be thrown at Satan that represents the ego of the pilgrim, so that he becomes freed from being enslaved to it. In that darkness, the pilgrim announces his sincere love for the Benefactor in His Presence.

Everyone gathers pebbles in the glimmering darkness of the Mash'ar, so as not to be at Mina without weapons. These pebbles are weapons against 'the soul that commands to evil.'² Arafat and the Mash'ar are two guesthouses of the Beloved. One is open during the daytime, and the other accepts guests at night. One is in the brilliant radiance of the sun, and the other is in darkness under the light of the moon, but for both, the destination is the same. In each, one must beseech the Master and serve Him. At both banquets, the guest must fly from the material world toward the skies of intellect and love.

At Arafat, the light of the day brings knowledge of the self, and the darkness of the night bestows bravery and courage. The day reveals egotism and vices, and the weapons of the Mash'ar de-

¹ Quran, A'raf 7:172. (See note 1, p. 74.)

﴿...أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ قَالُوا بَلَىٰ﴾

... 'Am I not your Lord?' They said: 'Yes!'

² It refers to the term النفس الأمارّة [*al-nafs al-ammārah*]. This can be translated as 'the evil-commanding soul,' which tempts one to commit bad deeds to the extent that one becomes accustomed to committing evil. This term is mentioned in the Quran, Yusuf 12:53.

stroy them and smash them to pieces. Day is a time for appreciating opportunities and talents, and night is a time for joining these talents with inner sincerity and purity.

The Quran states:

﴿إِنَّ نَاشِئَةَ اللَّيْلِ هِيَ أَشَدُّ وَطْئًا وَأَقْوَمُ قِيلًا﴾

Indeed, the night prayer is the most potent act of rising (for purification of the soul), and (the time for the) most accurate words (for worshipping God).¹

The night prayer, supplication and lamenting one's sins are the best testimonies to the purity and sincerity of the heart and to the claim of truthfulness and belief.

Standing at the Mash'ar makes the pilgrim stronger against the soul that commands to evil. Sayyid Haydar Amuli says that it does this by removing the senses from the pilgrim's control and placing them in obedience to his Creator and Lord, so that his hearing, his sight, his tongue, his hands and his feet, as the famous *hadith* says, are entirely at one with the will of God.² For as long as the senses are under the control of the servant they will be obedient to the soul that commands to evil, but when

¹ Quran, Muzzammil 73:6.

² This is based on the following tradition:

«... فَإِذَا أَحْبَبْتُهُ كُنْتُ سَمْعَهُ الَّذِي يَسْمَعُ بِهِ، وَبَصَرَهُ الَّذِي يُبْصِرُ بِهِ، وَلِسَانَهُ الَّذِي يَنْطِقُ بِهِ،

وَيَدَهُ الَّتِي يَبْطِشُ بِهَا، وَرِجْلَهُ الَّتِي يَمْشِي بِهَا...»

"... so when I love him I become his ear by which he hears, his eye by which he sees, his tongue by which he speaks, his hand by which he grasps and his leg by which he walks..." (Barqi, *Al-Mahasin*, vol. 1, p. 291).

they fall under the control of the Lord, the commands and prohibitions inherent within them will be in obedience to the soul in tranquil certitude¹ and in conformity with the intellect.²

You that have become adorned with the cognizance of Arafat, must spend the night at the Mash'ar with special awareness and insight. The noetic effects that you have gained during the day must become manifest in your nightly vigil. The Mash'ar is a story of the nightly vigil of the lover before the Beloved. The lover comes at night to say that even if the entire world goes to sleep, he cannot even blink from his longing to meet with the Beloved. At Arafat, the lover has learned that for meeting with the Beloved, night and day are the same.

Although Arafat and the Mash'ar are only ten kilometers apart, there is a significant difference between the two. Now the pilgrim gains the gift of becoming a *mahram*³ in the Mash'ar because it is within the Haram⁴ and he has entered within its boundaries.

The Mash'ar is a time of connection with the Master, because the darkness of the night casts a cloak of forgiveness over the pilgrim's sins and faults, and covers his unhealthy state.

¹ It refers to the term النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ [*al-nafs al-muṭma'innah*]. This can be understood as the tranquil or peaceful soul. This condition of tranquility arises due to the certainty of remembrance and belief in God. It is mentioned in the Quran, Fajr 89:27.

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ﴾

² Amuli (also known as Haydar Amuli), *Tafsir al-Muhit al-A'zam wa al-Bahr al-Khidam*, vol. 4, pp. 266–267.

³ See note 1, p. 44.

⁴ The Mash'ar is part of the Haram of Makkah.

The Quran says:

﴿وَجَعَلْنَا اللَّيْلَ لِبَاسًا﴾

And We made the night as a covering.¹

The effect of this divine covering is that the eyes turn away from all of creation. Similarly, the Quran introduces the night as a divine sign, saying:

﴿وَأَيَّةٌ لَهُمُ اللَّيْلُ نَسْلَخُ مِنْهُ النَّهَارَ فَإِذَا هُمْ مُظْلِمُونَ﴾

And a sign for them is the night. We strip it of the day, so they are [left] in darkness.²

God has made night the principal element and has drawn the day away from it. With regard to this verse, it is said that the day is hidden within the night. Night is an image of the Occultation. If people understand the night of Occultation, they will wait for the day of the Reappearance of the Imam.

As has been mentioned, the Mash'ar is derived from the word *shu'ur*. It is also derived from *ish'ar* (إشعار [ish'ār]). *Shu'ur* is the gnosis which is given by the Beloved to the guest at the Mash'ar, and *ish'ar* means a sign or a token. At the Mash'ar there are signs and tokens that tell of the Awaited Imam,³ the Mahdi of Fatimah.⁴

¹ Quran, Naba' 78:10.

² Quran, Ya-Sin 36:37.

³ See note 2, p. 29.

⁴ فاطمة [Fāṭimah]. Fatimah al-Zahrah (d. 632) was the daughter of Prophet Muhammad, the wife of Imam Ali, and the mother of Imam Hasan and Imam Husayn.

Perhaps during the night at the Mash'ar, they recite the supplication of Nudbah¹ and understand its meanings with the eye of the heart. They call upon their Master, saying:

أَيْنَ أَغْلَامُ الدِّينِ وَقَوَاعِدُ الْعِلْمِ؟ أَيْنَ بَقِيَّةُ اللَّهِ؟!

Where are the standard bearers of the religion and the foundations of knowledge? Where is the Legacy of Allah?!²

In these nightly whisperings, they lament: 'O Master! We go from street to street and region to region in search of a sign of you.'

لَيْتَ شِعْرِي أَيْنَ اسْتَقَرَّتْ بِكَ التَّوَى؟!
عَزِيزُ عَلَيَّ أَنْ أَرَى الْخَلْقَ وَلَا تُرَى، وَلَا أَسْمَعُ لَكَ حَسِيْسًا وَلَا تَجْوَى!

If only I knew the way that you are taking! How hard it is for me to see the people while you are not seen, and while I cannot hear even a faint sound of you nor any secret whisper from you!³

Staying at the Mash'ar requires two intentions: the intention to attain gnosis and the intention to orient ourselves by means of the signs, which will be explained shortly. The first intention is to become capable of attaining gnosis and perception so that even the slightest aspect of the reality of existence does not remain hidden from us. The second intention is for the signs and tokens of the Awaited One to be eternally within our lives so that, with them, we will never become lost in the market of the world. Ev-

¹ See note 4, p. 29.

² Sayyid Ibn Tawus, *Misbah al-Za'ir*, p. 449.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 451.

everyone at the Mash'ar must ask their Imam to make their worldly attachments appear as valueless pebbles in their eyes so that the pebbles of these worldly attachments can be removed one by one.

The pilgrim himself proceeds to gather pebbles at the Mash'ar.¹ Perhaps everyone is more aware of their own wrongdoings and should arm themselves to destroy the *nafs ammarah*. It is also recommended that the pebbles be clean and untouched by other people, which means that everyone must utilize their own strategy against the enemy since Satan goes after each person with special tricks and presents temptations in the form of each person's worldly attachments.

These pebbles also symbolize our longings and desires which have been shattered and crushed and should be thrown away. If one pebble remains from among our desires, it is due to our attachments and inclinations toward the world. All the pebbles of the soul must be cast at Satan. If someone keeps these pebbles of attachments, in the words of the Quran, he is among those who 'do not use their intellect' (*la ya'qilun*)² to perceive the signs of God, since he does not realize their worthlessness and ephemeral nature.

¹ It is recommended to gather pebbles at the Mash'ar for performing the rite of *ramy jamarat* at Mina. (See note 2, p. 125.)

² ﴿لَا يَعْقِلُونَ﴾ [*la ya'qilun*] is a Quranic phrase from *Surah* Anfal 8:22.

﴿إِنَّ شَرَّ الدَّوَابِّ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الصُّمُّ الْبُصْمُ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ﴾

Indeed, the worst of creatures in the sight of Allah are the deaf and dumb who do not use their intellect.

Mina

There are different meanings for Mina¹ including 'testing,' 'measuring,' and 'spilling blood.' After the understanding attained at Arafat and the perception at the Mash'ar, the test at Mina is conclusive.

Ramy Jamarat

*Ramy jamarat*² is one of the obligatory acts of Hajj. This act entails throwing a specific number of stones at three places called

¹ مِنَى [minā].

² رَمَى [ramy] means throwing. جَمَار [jimār], or جَمَرَات [jamarāt], is plural of جَمْرَة [jamrah], meaning a small stone.

رَمَى الْجَمَار [ramy al-jimār], or رَمَى الْجَمَرَات [ramy al-jamarāt], refers to throwing seven small stones at the three specific places in Mina on the eleventh and twelfth days, as well as the thirteenth if one has spent the night before there. جَمْرَة [jamrah] may also have the same definition as جَمَاعَة [jamā'ah] meaning 'a group.' جَمَرَات [jamarāt] is the plural of جَمْرَة [jamrah], and جَمَاعَات [jamā'āt] is the plural of جَمَاعَة [jamā'ah]. Ibn Arabi interprets the repeated stoning of *ramy jamarat* according to this definition, saying that the word *jamarāt* is the same as *jamā'āt* meaning 'groups,' so that each *jamrah*, as the singular of *jamarāt*, therefore means 'a group.' From this perspective, there should be more than one stone in order to reflect the meaning of *jamā'ah* (Ibn Arabi, *Al-Futuhat al-Makkiyah*, vol. 2, p. 497).

Jamrah Ula, Jamrah Wusta, and Jamrah Aqabah.¹

Ali ibn Ja'far asked his noble brother, Imam Kazim,² 'Why has *ramy jamarat* been ordained?' The Imam responded:

لَأَنَّ إِبْلِيسَ اللَّعِينِ كَانَ يَتَرَاءَى لِأَبِرَاهِيمَ فِي مَوْضِعِ الْجِمَارِ؛ فَرَجَّمَهُ
إِبْرَاهِيمُ، فَجَرَّتِ السُّنَّةُ بِذَلِكَ.

It is because the accursed Satan appeared to Abraham at the place of *jimar*,³ and Abraham stoned him, so this practice became common and has remained so.⁴

Prophet Abraham was commanded by God to shed the blood of his son at Mina and Satan was determined to tempt Abraham in three places, but Abraham pelted him with stones.

At Arafat, the pilgrim seeks to know the Beloved. At the Mash'ar, the Beloved accepts the pilgrim into His sanctuary, and the pilgrim becomes a *mahram*⁵ so that in this sanctuary he may be armed with weapons with which to confront his greatest enemy. And now at Mina, Almighty Allah commands him to stone the *jamarat* in order to keep away any remaining satanic temptations. *Ramy jamarat* is a practical lesson; a lesson in which he

¹ بَجْرَةَ الْعَقَبَةِ [al-jamrah al-wusṭā], and بَجْرَةَ الْعَقَبَةِ [jamrat al-'aqabah]. They literally mean 'the first *jamrah*,' 'the middle *jamrah*,' and 'the *jamrah* of *aqabah*.'

² الإمام الكاظم [al-Imām al-Kāzīm]. Musa ibn Ja'far al-Kazim (d. 799) according to the Imamiyyah (Imāmiyyah [إمامية]), was the seventh Imam to succeed Prophet Muhammad.

³ جِمَار [jimār] or جِمَارَات [jamarāt] are the names of the three specific places in Mina at which stones are thrown.

⁴ Hurr Aamili, *Was'ail al-Shi'ah*, vol. 14, p. 263.

⁵ See note 1, p. 44.

learns that, in order to live well, he must battle against his selfish desires. In a tradition attributed to the Prophet, it is stated:

أَعْدَىٰ عَدُوِّكَ نَفْسُكَ الَّتِي بَيْنَ جَنْبَيْكَ.

The most hostile of enemies is your self; the one that is within you.¹

During *ramy jamarat*, outwardly the symbols of Satan are being stoned, but inwardly, everyone is stoning their own evil-commanding soul. In Islam, it is not permitted to initiate a war against others and violate their rights; however, if the enemy attacks, Muslims have the right to defend themselves. Here, this Islamic law could be applied to the enemy within ourselves as well. The evil-commanding soul attacks first and is occupied with trying to distance the heart from God, and by ethical vices such as envy, pride, conceit and ostentation, it begins to attack the higher qualities of the soul. So we should attack this enemy within ourselves, and throwing each pebble is a symbol of this concept.

The pilgrim learns in *ramy jamarat* that he must not strike the enemy gently or gradually, but rather he must battle firmly, forcefully, and continuously. In the *ramy jamarat*, Satan is stoned repeatedly many times, because Satan, like the *khunnas*,² comes and goes continuously. He disappears and then returns. Some-

¹ Hilli Asadi, *Uddat al-Da'i wa Najah al-Sa'i*, p. 314.

² *خُنُس* [*khunnas*] are stars that appear during sunset but are obscured after a short time. Then, at the end of the night, they become visible again. They are mentioned in the Quran, Takwir 81:15.

﴿فَلَا أَتَيْمُ بِالنُّجُومِ﴾

So I swear by the stars that return.

times he schemes and tempts secretly and sometimes openly.

The continuous coming and going of Satan is why *ramy* is repeated three times. In other words, the reason that this act is repeated is because the enemy that is the evil-commanding soul must be attacked collectively, in unison and repeatedly, in order for it to be destroyed. This is why *ramy* does not end in one day but must be repeated continuously for three days since the satanic aspect of the soul cannot be destroyed in one attack. The throwing of seven stones is a symbol of the eternal nature of this attack. The human being must continuously and perpetually fight against the evil-commanding soul in order to destroy its hideous progeny so that they are killed as soon as they are born.

It can be said that each *jamrah* of the three¹ is a symbol of one of the aspects of the soul that must be destroyed separately, one by one. First, the evil-commanding soul (*nafs ammarah*)² is destroyed; that aspect of the soul that commands us to indulge in error and vice. Next, the deceptive soul³ is brought down. It is the aspect of the soul that makes everything seem beautiful and creates illusion. In the third stoning, the self-blaming soul⁴

¹ Jamrah Ula, Jamrah Wusta, and Jamrah Aqabah. (See note 1, p. 126.)

² See note 2, p. 119.

³ It refers to the term النَّفْسُ الْمُسَوِّلَةُ [*al-nafs al-musawwilah*]. The deceptive soul entices one to believe that bad deeds are good. It is mentioned in the Quran, Yusuf 12:18.

﴿... قَالَ بَلَى سَوَّلَتْ لَكُمْ أَنْفُسُكُمْ أَمْرًا...﴾

⁴ It refers to the term النَّفْسُ اللَّوَّامَةُ [*al-nafs al-lawwamah*], which is the self-blaming or the self-accusing soul that reproaches the self for committing bad deeds. It is mentioned in the Quran, Qiyamah 75:2.

﴿وَلَا أُقِيمُ بِالنَّفْسِ اللَّوَّامَةِ﴾

is dealt with. This is the aspect of the soul that condemns us; however, sometimes it forgets its duty, remaining extinguished and silent. In this case, it must be destroyed by stoning, except that the presence of this aspect as the vigilant conscience of the human being is good. Each of these aspects of the soul must be stoned separately if they are not occupied with the intention of servitude, so that, after they are stoned, the pilgrim realizes the soul in tranquil certitude.¹

The Sacrifice

﴿وَقَدَيْنَاهُ بِذَبْحٍ عَظِيمٍ﴾

Then We ransomed him with a great sacrifice.²

Performing a sacrifice is another obligatory rite of Hajj that is performed on the tenth day. On this day, a camel, cow, or sheep must be slaughtered. Eid al-Adha³ is a reminder of a strange and moving story: the story of a father and son who were consumed with the Majesty and Beauty of the Beloved. They had closed their eyes to everything other than Allah. Prophet Ishmael was resigned to his father's request when his father said:

﴿... يَا بُنَيَّ إِنِّي أَرَىٰ فِي الْمَنَامِ أَنِّي أَذْبَحُكَ ...﴾

... My son! I see in a dream that I am sacrificing you ...⁴

¹ See note 1, p. 121.

² Quran, Saffat 37:107.

³ عيد الأضحي [*Id al-Adhā*] is known as Eid Qurban (عيد قربان [*Id Qurbān*]) in Persian. It is on the tenth day of Dhul-Hijjah and is one of the most important festivals in Islamic culture.

⁴ Quran, Saffat 37:102.

Ishmael answered:

﴿... يَا أَبَتِ افْعَلْ مَا تُؤْمَرُ سَتَجِدُنِي إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مِنَ الصَّابِرِينَ﴾

... O my father! Do whatever you have been commanded. You will find me, God willing, from among the patient ones.¹

In his mystical exegesis of the Quran, Ibn Arabi says that it was revealed to Abraham to sacrifice Ishmael for him to attain annihilation in divine Oneness and submission to Him by detaching himself from the qualities of perfection (of which Ishmael is the symbol).²

The sacrifice is the slaughter of egos that have not yet been annihilated in *tawaf*,³ the *tawaf* prayer, Arafat, and the Mash'ar. If these egos remain, they will grow and prevent the ascent toward perfection. This ego, this self, is sacrificed at Mina.

Ibn Arabi says that by sacrificing an animal the pilgrim intends to free its spirit from its body of dense matter to join the higher domains, and he does so in order to give thanks to God.⁴

Now that the human soul is able to unite with the higher world, the soul of an animal must be liberated in gratitude. Now that

¹ Ibid.

² Ibn Arabi, *Tafsir Ibn Arabi*, vol. 2, p. 182.

«أرعى إليه أن يذبحه بالفناء في التوحيد والتسليم لربه الحق، بالتجريد من الصفات الكمالية».

³ See note 1, p. 77.

⁴ Ibn Arabi, *Al-Futuhat al-Makkiyah*, vol. 2, p. 500.

«تم ذبح قربانه يتوي بذلك تسريح روح هذا الحيوان من سجن هذا الهيكل الطبيعي المظلم إلى العالم الأعلى، فسرّحنا أرواح هذه الحيوانات في هذا اليوم شكرًا لله».

the pilgrim has become liberated from the prison of the mundane world, an animal must be sacrificed to give thanks for this freedom.

We read in a tradition attributed to Imam Sajjad,

فَعِنْدَمَا ذَبَحْتَ هَدْيَكَ تَوَيْتَ أَنَّكَ ذَبَحْتَ حَنْجَرَةَ الظَّمْعِ بِمَا
تَمَسَّكَتْ بِهِ مِنْ حَقِيقَةِ الْوَرَعِ!¹

And when you slaughtered your offering, did you make the intention of slaughtering the throat of greed once you had attained the actuality of piety?!

Greed and avarice are the root and foundation of all material attachments, and are slaughtered at the place of sacrifice. The Quran states:

﴿... فَتَوْبُوا إِلَىٰ بَارِئِكُمْ فَاقْتُلُوا أَنفُسَكُمْ...﴾

...so repent unto your Creator and kill your selves...²

Mina is a place to return once again to Almighty Allah, and the sacrifice is a declaration of this return. Some scholars consider the sacrifice as a kind of charity. In response to this act, Almighty Allah eliminates this greed, avarice and other ethical vices of the pilgrim, and closes his eyes to worldly attachments.

The Quran states:

﴿إِنَّ الْمَصَدِّقِينَ وَالْمَصَدَّقَاتِ وَأَقْرَضُوا اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا يُّضَاعَفُ
لَهُمْ وَلَهُمْ أَجْرٌ كَرِيمٌ﴾

Indeed the charitable men and charitable women, those

¹ Nuri Tabarsi, *Mustadrak al-Wasa'il wa Mustanbat al-Masa'il*, vol. 10, p. 171.

² Quran, Baqarah 2:54.

who lend Allah a good loan — it shall be multiplied for them, and theirs shall be a noble reward.¹

With this sacrifice, truly all the veils of the material world are lifted from the pilgrim, and he attains spiritual insight. For this reason, sacrifice is known as the ultimate form of surrender before the Master.

¹ Quran, Hadid 57:18.

Taqsir and Halq

﴿...لَتَدْخُلَنَّ الْمَسْجِدَ الْحَرَامَ إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ آمِنِينَ مُحَلِّقِينَ رُءُوسَكُمْ
وَمُقَصِّرِينَ لَا تَخَافُونَ...﴾

... If Allah wills, you shall surely enter the Masjid al-Haram in security, with your heads shaved or hair cropped, without any fear ...¹

From a mystical perspective, *taqsir*² is a symbol of separation from the material world. The nails and hair are symbols of worldly excess. After performing some of the rites, the pilgrim performs *taqsir* so as to cast away even the smallest remnants of his attachments. These attachments may include a fondness for the most trivial of things, or they may be remnants of bad character, such as greed, acquisitiveness and miserliness.

¹ Quran, Fath 48:27.

² تَقْصِير [taqsir] literally means 'shortening,' and in the rites of Hajj, it refers to cutting some hair from the head, beard or mustache, or to cutting fingernails or toenails. This act is one of the obligatory rites of *umrah tamattu'* to be performed at the end of *sa'y* at Marwah.

Like the other rites of Hajj, *taqsir* requires the intention of being in proximity to God. When performing *taqsir*, outwardly, an act of obedience is carried out, but at the same time a profound meditation emerges in those short moments. During *taqsir*, the pilgrim asks God to remove the barriers to growth and perfection so that, when he returns from Hajj, he may go back to his original and primordial nature.

After *taqsir*, the state of *ihram*¹ for *umrah tamattu'* is finished, and the pilgrim is now allowed all that was forbidden during *ihram*. Until the commencement of the rites of Hajj *tamattu'*, the pilgrim has the opportunity and a suitable period of time to prepare himself for his meeting with God.

In Hajj *tamattu'*, the pilgrim performs *halq*² or *taqsir* once the sacrifice has been done. The carrying out of this divine command has both an outer and an inner aspect. The outer aspect is that the hair and nails are removed from the pilgrim, but inwardly the pilgrim is removing his filthy attachments of greed, anger and hatred for spiritual purification³ in order to reach the stage of knowledge.

From another point of view, Ibn Arabi says that the general knowledge (شُعُور [shu'ūr])⁴ of an object is not the same as having

¹ See notes 2 and 3, p. 39.

² حَلَقٌ [*halq*] means to shave the hair on the head, and it is one of the rites of Hajj *tamattu'* for men, but women perform *taqsir* as they do in *umrah tamattu'*.

³ Ibn Arabi, *Tafsir Ibn Arabi*, vol. 2, p. 57, under verse 29 of *Surah* Hajj (22):

﴿ثُمَّ لِيَقْضُوا تَفْتَهُمْ وَلِيُؤْمُوا نُذُورَهُمْ وَلِيَنْظُرُوا بِالْبَيْتِ الْعَتِيقِ﴾

⁴ شُعُور [shu'ūr] in this usage means a brief realization of an object without knowing its details, and here it is translated as 'general knowledge.'

total knowledge¹ of it, so shaving the hair (شُغُور)² symbolizes the abolition of general knowledge (شُغُور) by the presence of total knowledge, since the hair (شَعْر [sha'r]) is a veil on the head³ which metaphorically is the locus of knowledge (عِلْم [ilm]).

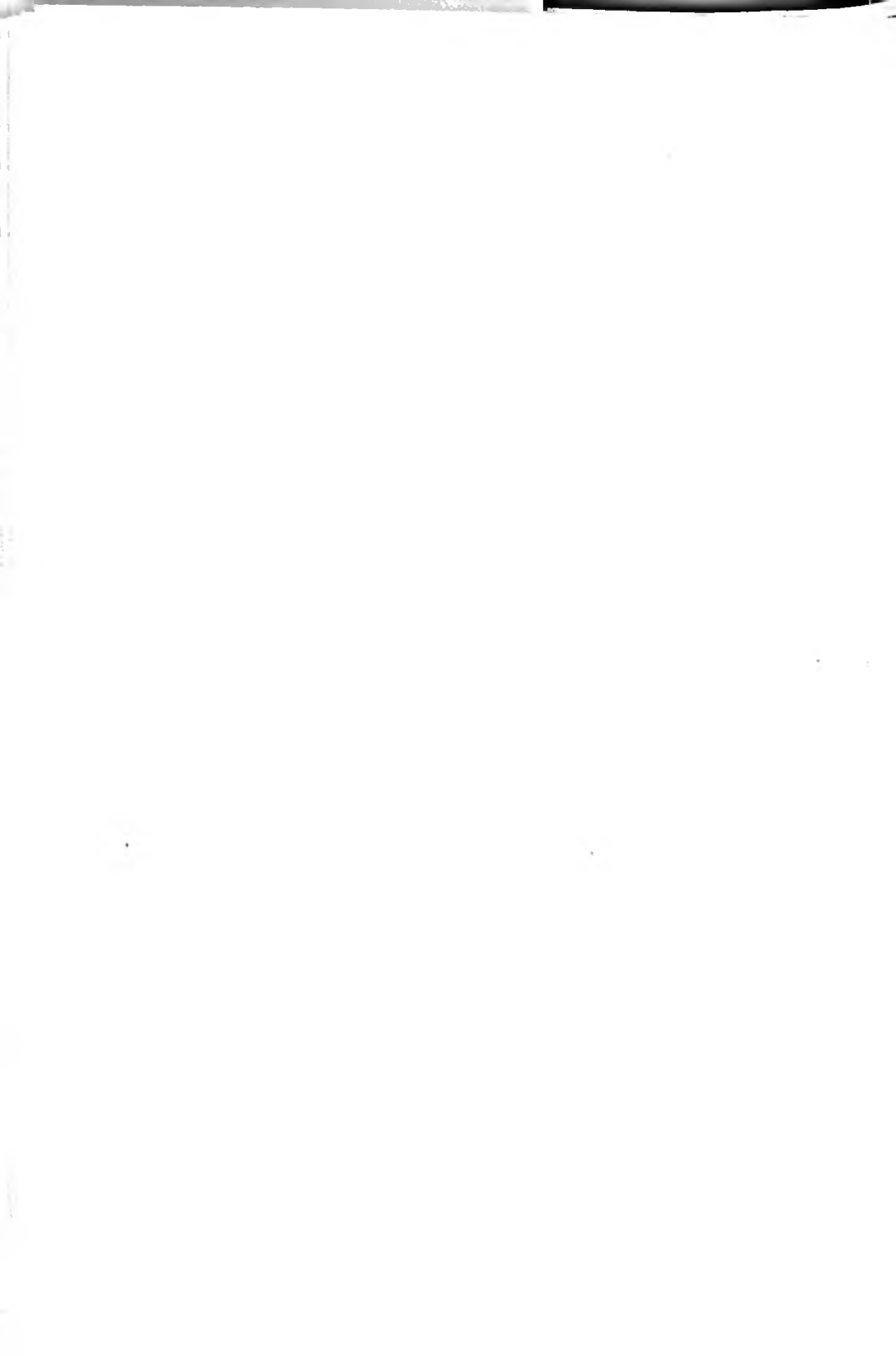
The inner aspect of *halq* is separation from all kinds of attachments and obstacles for the perfection of knowledge. In *taqsir*, the barriers to spiritual insight are taken away. Before carrying out *taqsir*, the pilgrim has slaughtered his vices, and now, at this stage, the obstacles to perfection must be cast aside. The head is the station of knowledge. When the hair is shaven off, this act is symbolic, a sign that the obstacles to knowledge have been removed.

¹ Here, 'total knowledge' as a translation of 'العلم على التمام من التفصيل' means a total realization of an object including its details. (Note: knowledge is equivalent to عِلْم [ilm])

² شُغُور [shu'ūr] is also the plural of شَعْر [sha'r], meaning hair.

³ Ibn Arabi, *Al-Futuhāt al-Makkiyah*, vol. 2, p. 500.

«فإنَّ الشَّعْرَ بالأمر ما هو عين حصول العلم به على التمام من التفصيل، وإنما يشعر العبد أن
ثم أمرًا ما فإذا حصله زال الشعور، وكان علمًا تامًا بتفصيل ما شعر به، كمن يشعر بالتفصيل
في المجمل قبل حصول العلم بتعيين تفصيله، فإلقاء الشعور هو إزالة الشعور بوجود العلم؛
لأنَّ الشعر ستر على الرأس.»



One Last Reflection

Hajj is an opportunity to remove the veils of illusion that conceal who we are. We give up luxury and comfort on the journey; we humble ourselves by obeying the prescribed rites; we become one with our fellow human beings, regardless of race or class.

Hajj is a means to annihilate the pride that may prevent us from returning to Him and entering His paradise among His servants as He has promised us in the Quran:

﴿يَا أَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ ﴿٢٧﴾ ارْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَةً ﴿٢٨﴾
فَادْخُلِي فِي عِبَادِي ﴿٢٩﴾ وَاَدْخُلِي جَنَّتِي﴾

O tranquil soul! Return to your Lord, well-pleased and well-pleasing, and enter among My obedient servants and enter My Paradise.¹

With a pure intention to attain nearness to God, and a heart receptive to the guidance of the Imam of the Time, the pilgrim can be taken on an inner journey, through the different levels of

¹ Quran, Fajr 89:27-30.

the soul, to reach the pinnacle of gnosis.

Not everyone has access to the inner teachings of Hajj, or is able to understand them. This book is a small gift to the reader in order to enable you to gain this access and to benefit more fully from this unforgettable, once-in-a-lifetime experience.

Hajj is the echo of *tawhid*¹ and is a means of defeating the *nafs ammarah*,² but we can not achieve this level unless we perform it with awareness of Allah's commands. Without this we will be an example of Imam Sadiq's words, which say:

ما أَكْثَرَ الضَّجِيجِ وَأَقَلَّ الْحُجَّيجِ!

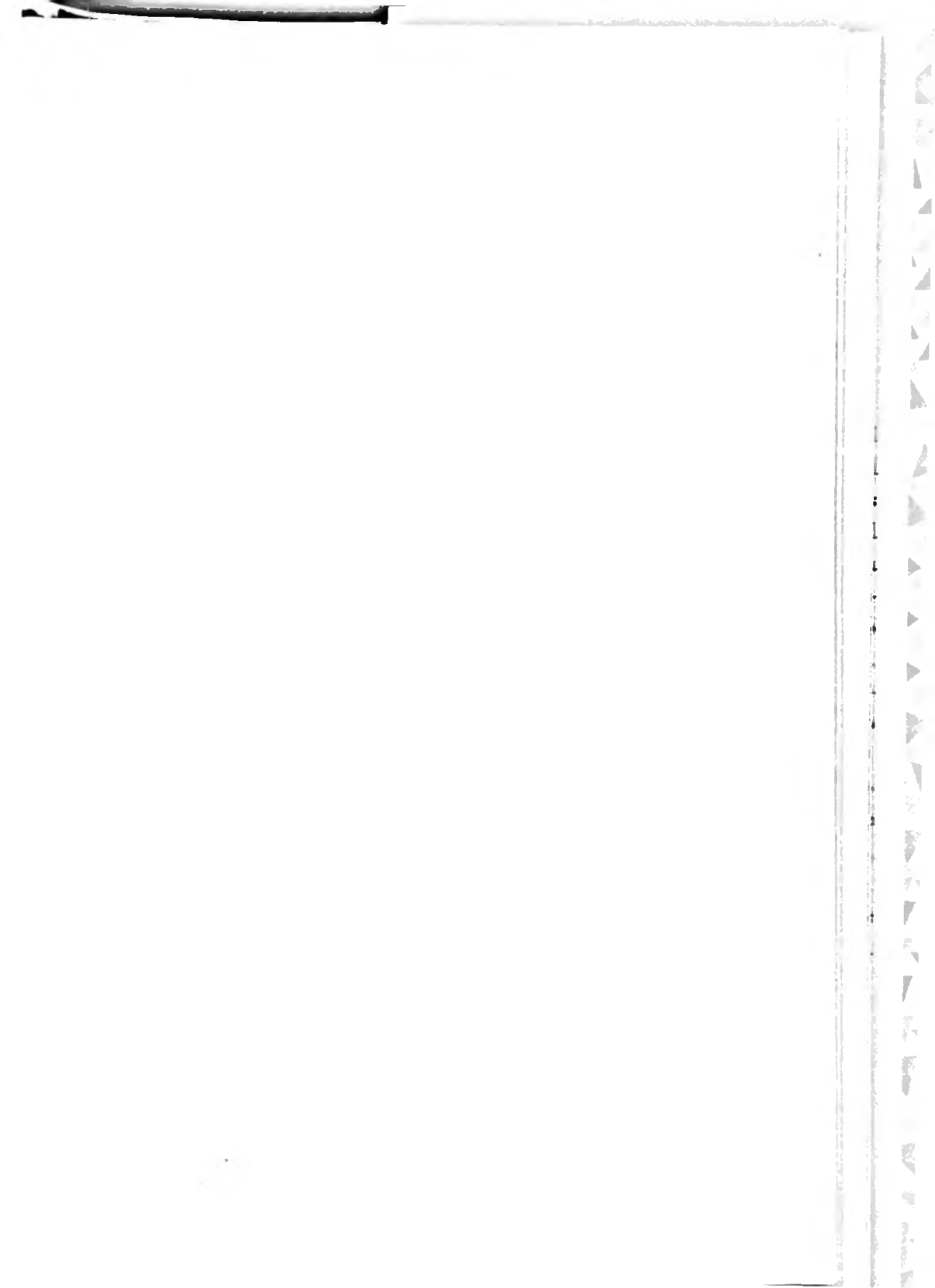
How many are the clamoring masses and how few the pilgrims!³

Therefore, entrust your life to Almighty Allah and ask for His assistance. Rely on His mercy and open your heart to His Light and with every step of this journey, try to lift the veils from the light of *tawhid*.

¹ See note 2, p. 46.

² See note 2, p. 119.

³ Saffar, *Basa'ir al-Darajat*, p. 358.





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GLOSSARY

Allahu Akbar (الله أكبر [Allāhu akbar]) : God is greatest; absolutely no one can know what or who He is

al-hamdu li-llah (الحمد لله [al-ḥamdu li-llāh]) : praise be to Allah

Baqiyatullah (بقيّة الله [Baqīyyatu-llāh]) : anything God leaves over (according to the Imamiyyah (Imāmiyyah [إماميّة]), as one of the titles of Imam Mahdi, it means 'God's Legacy upon the Earth')

dhikr (ذِكْر [dhikr]) : a sacred phrase or utterance that has a spiritual effect upon the soul

Dhul-Halifah (ذو الحليفة [Dhul-Ḥalīfah]) : the *miqat* for everyone departing from the City of the Prophet (Medina) to Makkah (also called Masjid Shajarah)

Eid al-Adha (عيد الأضحي [ʿId al-Adhā]) : one of the most important festivals in Islamic culture on the tenth day of Dhul-Hijjah; Eid Qurban (عيد قربان [ʿId Qurbān]) in Persian

fana (فناء [fanā]) : a state of annihilation in the Attributes of God, which in Islamic spiritual culture indicates the end of the journey of the soul (that which is annihilated is the illusory 'self' of the seeker, the *nafs* (نفس), and the seeker comes to realize that the only real self is that of God)

fitrah (فطرة [fitrah]) : the essence of the human being out of which he is created, and is the most fundamental of the inherent qualities that he has from birth (it comprises two aspects: the innate inclinations and the intuitive intellect, e.g., the inclination toward God and the knowledge of His existence)

Juhfah (جُحْفَةَ [Juhfah]) : the *miqat* for the people of Syria, Egypt, and Morocco

haji (حاجي [hājī] / حاج [hājj]) : a pilgrim who is performing Hajj as well as one who has performed it before

Hajj (حَجَّ [hajj]) : a pilgrimage to the Kaaba (كَعْبَةَ [ka'bah]) for which specific rites are performed during the Hajj season (the lunar months of Shawwal, Dhul-Qa'dah and Dhul-Hijjah)

Hajj tamattu' (حَجَّ التَّمَتُّعِ [hajj al-tamattu']) : the second part of Hajj which consists of a sequence of rites, beginning with becoming a *muhrim* in Makkah (making the intention of Hajj *tamattu'* and becoming a *muhrim* can take place at any time during the Hajj season, but its rites should be started on the ninth of Dhul-Hijjah by staying in Arafat)

halal (حَالَال [halāl]) : describes an object or an action which is considered permissible in Islam

halq (حَلَقَ [halq]) : to shave the hair on the head (one of the rites of Hajj *tamattu'* for men; women perform *taqsir* as they do in *umrah tamattu'*)

Haram (حَرَمَ [haram])

i (literally) : sanctuary

ii (fiqh) : the specific area that surrounds the holy site of Makkah and its periphery continues for a few kilometers out from the city

harwalah (هَرَوَلَةً [harwalah]) : walking quickly

'ibadah (عِبَادَةٌ ['ibādah]) : any devotional act or rite for which the intention of seeking proximity to God is conditional upon it being accepted by Allah — e.g., ritual prayer (صَلَاةَ [ṣalāh]), fasting (صَوْمَ [ṣawm]), Hajj (حَجَّ [hajj]), full ablution (غُسْلَ [ghusl]), *wudu* (وُضُوءَ [wuḍū]), *khums* (خُمْسَ [khums]), *zakat* (زَكَاةَ [zakāh]), etc.

ihram (إِحْرَامَ [ihrām]) : a state that consists of making the intention of *ihram*, in which the pilgrim must observe specific prohibitions, reciting phrases known as *talbiyah* and putting on the garment of *ihram*

ikhlas (إِخْلَاصَ [ikhhlās]) : sincerity of intention and action (it is the essence of Islamic practice, and is the opposite of hypocrisy)

jamrah (جَمْرَةٌ [jamrah]) : a small stone

kaafir (كَافِرَ [kāfir]) : a person who disregards the truth of the divine invitation

khums (خُمْس [khums]) : one-fifth (to be paid to the Imam or his representative out of the spoils of war and other assets, such as uncovered treasure, precious metals from mines and profit from business)

kufr (كُفْر [kufr])

i (*literally*) : to cover

ii (*Islamic terminology*) : to cover or conceal the truth

labbayk (لَبَّيْكَ [labbayk]) : I am at your service

la ilaha illa-llah (لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ [lā ilāha illa-llāh]) : there is no god (إِلَهَ [ilāha]) except Allah (الله [Al-lāh])

mahram (مَحْرَم [mahram])

i (*in the legal sense*) : someone related by marriage or blood whom it is forbidden to marry and before whom one can discard or relax the formalities of dress and etiquette reserved for being in the presence of strangers

ii (*in the mystical sense*) : confidant, intimate, insider; one who is worthy of being an intimate of Divine secrets

maqam (مَقَام [maqām]) : the place where one stands (the 'Maqam of Abraham' is a stone where he stood to build the Kaaba and call people to perform Hajj)

ma-siwa-llah (مَا سِوَى اللَّهِ [mā siwā Allāh]) : everything other than God

Masjid al-Shajarah (مَسْجِدَ الشَّجَرَةِ [Masjid al-Shajarah]) : the *miqat* on the outskirts of Medina, about 430 kilometers (270 miles) from Makkah; the *miqat* for everyone departing from the City of Medina to Makkah (also called Dhul-Halifah)

miqat (مِيقَات [mīqāt]) : a station at which a pilgrim becomes a *muhrim*

muhrim (مُحْرِم [muḥrim]) : someone in the state of *ihram*

mu'min (مُؤْمِن [mu'min]) : one who believes in God and in what has been brought by all of His prophets

muruwah (مُرُوَّة [muruwah]) : an ethical code of conduct; acting with kindness, generosity, decency and self-sacrifice

mustahab (مُسْتَحَبَّ [muṣtaḥabb]) : an act that is recommended in Islamic law (one is rewarded by God for performing it, but not punished for deliberately not doing it)

niyyah (نِيَّةَ [niyyah]) : the intention and determination of doing or performing an act of obedience

Qarn al-Manazil (قَرْنُ السَّنَائِلِ [Qarn al-Manāzil]) : the *miqat* for the people of Ta'if and people who are not far from the Masjid al-Haram

ramy (رَمَى [ramy]) : throwing

ramy jamarat (رَمَى الْجَمَرَاتِ [ramy al-jamarāt]) : refers to throwing seven small stones at the three specific places in Mina on the eleventh and twelfth days, as well as the thirteenth if one has spent the night before there

rububiya (رُبُوبِيَّةَ [rubūbiyyah]) : sustainer and cherisher (derives from the word رَبَّ [rabb])

rukn (رُكْنِ [rukn]) : the strongest side of a mountain or a house; a pillar or column

sa'y (سَعَى [sa'y]) : the rite of hurrying back and forth seven times between the hills of Safa and Marwah

subhana-llah (سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ [subḥāna-llāh]) : Glory be to Allah

talbiyah (تَلْبِيَّةَ [talbiyah]) : to say, *Labbayka Allāhumma Labbayk. Labbayka lā sharīka laka labbayk. Innal-ḥamda, wa-nni'mata, laka wal-mulk, lā sharīka lak*

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

"Here I am. O Allah, here I am. Here I am. You have no partner. Here I am.

Verily, all praise, grace, and sovereignty are Yours alone. You have no partner."

taqsir (تَقْصِيرِ [taqsir])

i (*literally*) : shortening

ii (*the rites of Hajj*) : cutting some hair from the head, beard or mustache, or cutting the fingernails or toenails (this act is one of the obligatory rites of *umrah tamattu'* to be performed at the end of *sa'y* at Marwah)

tasbihat arba'ah (التَّسْبِيحَاتُ الْأَرْبَعَةُ [al-tasbīhāt al-arba'ah]) : the four-part hymns of the glorification of God

tawaf (طَوَافٌ [ṭawāf]) : circumambulation (one of the obligatory rites of Hajj, pilgrims must go around the Kaaba seven times in a counterclockwise direction)

tawassul (تَوَسَّلَ [tawassul]) : to seek nearness to God through the intermediacy of a righteous person or deed (in Islam either a righteous person or a good deed may be considered as an intermediary (وَسِيلَةٌ [wasīlah]))

tawhid (تَوَحِيدٌ [tawhīd]) : believing and testifying to the oneness of God

umrah tamattu' (عُمْرَةٌ التَّمَتُّعِ ['umrah al-tamattu']) : the first part of the sequence of the rites of Hajj, up to completing the *sa'y* of Safa and Marwah, and performing the *taqbir* (the rites of *umrah tamattu'* should be performed during the Hajj season)

wajib (وَاجِبٌ [wājib]) : an act that is obligatory in Islamic law; a religious duty commanded by Allah (one is rewarded by God for performing it and punished by Him for deliberately not performing it without an excuse)

wajib ayni (الوَاجِبُ الْعَيْنِيُّ [al-wājib al-'aynī]) : an obligation which is imposed on individual Muslims, e.g., the daily prayers (no one can perform this duty on behalf of someone else)

wajib kifa'i (الوَاجِبُ الْكِفَائِيُّ [al-wājib al-kifā'ī]) : an obligation imposed on a Muslim community as a whole (the rest of the community is exempted if some members perform it)

Wadi al-'Aqiq (وَادِي الْعَقِيقِ [Wādī al-'Aqīq]) : the *miqat* for the people of Iraq, Najd and those coming from the eastern parts

Yalamlam (يَلَمَّلَمٌ [Yalamlam]) : the *miqat* for the people of Yemen

zakat (زَكَاةٌ [zakāh]) : the obligatory payment of tax (the aim of which is to purify a person's wealth and it is distributed to the poor, the needy and those in debt)

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Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 23, p. 259

Ali and I are the two fathers of this community. 47

Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 55, p. 57

And the House is called *atiq* because it survived (lit. was freed from) the flooding. 65

Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 68, p. 23

We have not worshiped You in the way that You deserve to... 99

Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 89, p. 12

Three things are regarded highly by God, unlike anything else. The first is His book (the Quran), which is His light and wisdom... 22

Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 96, p. 48

O Allah! I have fulfilled my trust and have renewed my covenant so it can bear witness... 73

Ilal al-Sharayi', vol. 1, p. 274

If it were asked, 'why was it ordered (for us) to be in the state of *ihram*?' ... 39

Ilal al-Sharayi', vol. 2, p. 424

It is the right hand of Allah upon the earth by which He shakes hands with His creatures. 72

Jami'al-Sa'adat, vol. 3, p. 393

Whoever imitates a people is one of them. 83

Man la Yahduruhu al-Faqih, vol. 2, p. 211

The worst sin committed by the people of Arafat is the sin of the one who has returned from Arafat still thinking that he has not been forgiven... 111

Man la Yahduruhu al-Faqih, vol. 3, p. 200

There is no power and no strength except in Allah, the Exalted, the Mighty. 100

Misbah al-Shari'ah, p. 48

Just as you go around the Kaaba physically with the people, so you must go around the Throne of God with your heart among the angels. 77

Misbah al-Shari'ah, p. 48

Make a *harwalah*, as you flee from your desires, and dissociate yourself from all of your power and ability. 96

Misbah al-Shari'ah, p. 49

When you stand at Safa, purify your soul and your inmost self for meeting Allah, the Sublime, on the day that you meet Him... 96

Mustadrak al-Wasa'il, vol. 10, p. 171

And when you slaughtered your offering, did you make the intention of slaughtering the throat of greed... 131

Nahj al-Balaghah, sermon 1, p. 45

He has established it as the direction of prayer for humanity; they will come to it (in droves) as livestock come... 66-67

Nahj al-Balaghah, sermon 1, p. 45

He has made obligatory upon you the pilgrimage to His Sacred House for Hajj, which He has established as the direction of prayer... 16-18

Nahj al-Balaghah, sermon 110, p. 163

Indeed that which is best for one who seeks the assistance of God is [...] making pilgrimage to the House for Hajj or *umrah*... 19

Nahj al-Balaghah, sermon 192, pp. 293-294

He placed it in the most rugged spot in a rocky terrain with the fewest hills of clay in the world... 67-69

Qurb al-Isnad, p. 376

Neither a good person nor a dissolute one stands and supplicates to God on the Mount of Arafat... 110

Sahifah Sajjadiyah, p. 94

O Allah! [...] Preserve my life for as long as my life is a garment (*bidhlah*) of servitude to You. 42

Tafsir Ayyashi, vol. 1, p. 59

Three pieces of stone descended to the earth from heaven: the Hajar al-Aswad which [Allah] entrusted to Abraham... 72

Sunan Ibn Majah, vol. 4, p. 477

Hajj is *Arafah*. 31

'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida, vol. 1, pp. 218–219

The Imam is like the sun whose light embraces the world, and its place on the horizon is such that no hand can reach it... 107–108

Uddat al-Da'i wa Najah al-Sa'i, p. 314

The most hostile of enemies is your self; the one that is within you. 127

Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol. 6, p. 5

Verily, actions are only determined by intentions. 35

Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol. 13, p. 240

This is a free house, free of the people and it has never been owned by anyone. 65

Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol. 13, p. 342

It is our gate to heaven by which we enter (it). 70

Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol. 13, p. 342

The Yamani Corner is one of the gates of heaven that Allah has never closed from the time He opened it. 70

Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol. 13, p. 338

Whenever I came to the Yamani Corner, I found that Gabriel had been clinging to it before me. 71

Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol. 13, p. 473

O Allah! Make it into [unceasing] beneficial knowledge, ample sustenance, and a cure for every disease... 91–92

Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol. 14, p. 263

It is because the accursed Satan appeared to Abraham at the place of *jimar*, and Abraham stoned him... 126

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Arabic Romanization Table (ALA-LC)

'	ء	shay'	شَيْء	h	هـ/ح	fahm	فَهْم
th	ث	thulth	ثُلُث	h	هـ	minhu	مِنْهُ
j	ج	jamāl	جَمَال	y	ي	yad	يَد
ḥ	ح	ḥalāl	حَلَال	h	هـ/و	ṣalāh	صَلَاة
kh	خ	khalq	خَلْق	l	ل	'illat al-amr	عِلَّةُ الْأَمْرِ
dh	ذ	dhikr	ذِكْر	al-	ال	al-risālah	الرِّسَالَةُ
sh	ش	shams	شَمْس	a	أ	ḥasan	حَسَن
ṣ	ص	ṣulḥ	صُلْح	i	إ	shirk	شِرْك
ḍ	ض	marīḍ	مَرِيض	u	و	shukr	شُكْر
f	ط	fiṭr	فِطْر	ā	أ	riḍā	رِضَا
z	ظ	zuhr	ظَهْر	ī	إِ	raḥīm	رَحِيم
'	ع	'adl	عَدْل	ū	و	rasūl	رَسُول
gh	غ	ghayr	غَيْر	á	أ	ḍuḥá	صُحَى
q	ق	qum	قُمْ	aw	أَوْ	nawm	نَوْم
w	ر	wālī	وَالِي	ay	أَيَّ	bayt	بَيْت