

Echoes of the Heart - Hajj



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The hajj is that largest annual Convention of Faith where millions of Muslims gather in the holy land, merging as streams of devotees from every corner of the earth to become part of the sea of Believers swirling in spiritually dancing waves around the Ka'bah in tawaaf. Each individual pilgrim, a drop in that ocean; a drop that always yearns to be part of that ocean. An ocean that knows no race, no language, no color, no gender, nor time. All praise is due to Allah for making this unique, international gathering of hajj an inexhaustible source for spiritual rejuvenation and as a perennial re-affirmation of faith.

Beyond the Ritual

The performance of prescribed rites, at specified times, at particular places in a recommended manner is aimed at reflecting a wholesome demonstration of Muslim fraternity. It acquaints the pilgrim with the historic, spiritual and physical environment of Adam and Hawa, of Ibrahim, Isma'il and Hajirah and of the final messenger of Allah (peace be upon all of them). By re-enacting some of the fundamental aspects of the best of our history (Hajirah's running in search for water, Prophet Ibrahim's (AS) preparedness to sacrifice his willing and obedient son or his pelting of the shaytaan), all these identifies us with the best of our past and the lessons we need to learn from our great legacy.

O Hujjaaj (Those who have already done their Hajj or will be doing their Hajj), May I ask ?

O HUJJAAJ!

You have visited the "house of Allah" in Makkah, that city which is dearest to Allah, that city where the greatest of all creation was born, where he lived, where he received revelation, where he preached his message, where he was mocked and ostracized; that city which he was forced to leave and on the occasion of leaving he said; "I swear by Allah, O Makkah, you are the best of cities and most loved city on earth by Allah; if I was not made to leave you I would never have left." That very city which he returned to 8 years later with an army of 120 000 and yet forgave his persecutors.

O HUJJAAJ!

When you walked through the streets of Makkah, did you recall the torments and hardship our Prophet (saw) had to go through to deliver Allah's message? Did you look at the hills and wonder where he shepherded the sheep of

the rich Makkans as a teenager? Did you look towards Jabal an-Noor and consider how the Prophet sought solitude in those hills until he received revelation from Allah?

O HUJJAAJ!

When you removed your designer clothes and put on your ihraam, did you also cast off your arrogance, racism and chauvinism? When you made tawaaf did you truly feel part of that ocean of faithful going in waves around the ka'bah? Did you consider the majesty of the One Allah and realize that you too are part of the infinity of zeroes that is totally dependant on Him? When you prayed at the station of Ibrahim (maqami Ibrahim) did you wonder about his status, impact and influence on world history? When you ran between the hills of Safaa and Marwah, did you realize that you were re-enacting the running of a slave woman (Hajirah) whose selfless search for water for her son was considered worthy enough by Allah to be incorporated as part of the hajj? When you drank of zam-zam did you reflect on how this once water served to quench the thirst of baby Isma'il who was later to become the forefather of our Prophet (pbuh)?

O HUJJAAJ!

When you stood on Arafah, did you contemplate your insignificance amidst the multitude? Did you realize that you were truly part of a global community of faith that has promised to perpetuate the mission of prophets (AS)? Did you accept the fact that race, colour, gender or nationality means nothing if you are truly a Muslim? Did you remember to ask Allah for forgiveness and did you promise to be forgiving? Did you realize that you were symbolically close to death in the two pieces of white cloth? Did you understand that Arafah is a reflection of qiyaamah?

O HUJJAAJ!

When you gathered your stones at Muzdalifah, did you prepare to equip yourself for the challenges and tribulations of the world? When you pelted the "shaytaan" in Mina was that a permanent declaration of war against all forms of internal and external evils? When you sacrificed on the day of Eid did you slaughter your ego and selfishness as well? When you buried the bones of the sacrifice did you bury with it the bad habits, attitudes and behavior of your old self? (Was it not our beloved Prophet(saw) who said;" Whosoever performs hajj without impropriety and vulgarity returns as a new born baby.")

O HUJJAAJ!

When you visited the Prophet in Madinah, did you convey our salutations to that most beloved of Allah? Did you inform him of the state of his ummah, of the starvation of Muslims in Somalia and Afghanistan, of the poverty in Bangladesh, of the oppression in Palestine at the hands of the Zionists, of the suppression of Muslims in Iraq by the Ba'thists, the massacres in Kosova, Chechnya and Kashmir? With what face did you stand at his grave?

Did you then reflect on the plight of the kids dying,...dying of lack of medication in Baghdad, of massive bombs in

Kabul, of hunger in Mogadishu, of deprivation in Pristina, still from of the pain of separation from their murdered parents in Mostar and of a lack of hope in concentration camps of the West Bank. With what conscience did you visit the Prophet (saw) ?

O HUJJAAJ!

Ensure that your hajj has made you more conscious of your Creator, more conscious of yourself, of your ummah, of your duties and your eventual accountability to Allah for your existence here on earth.

O Allah! Shower Your inexhaustible grace and infinite mercy on all those who have traveled to your holy open court, illuminate their hearts with insight, bestow upon them Your guidance; grant them the strength of the highest moral conscience, arm them with sincerity and a dedicated determination to improve the lot of the universal community of Believers.

Glory be to Allah for making the Ka'bah the rendezvous of the ummah, for making hajj the key expression of solidarity among Believers and as a manifestation of the bond of fraternity and mutual affinity.

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