

Let Us Be Muslims Part V

Hajj & Jihad

Sayyid Abul A'la Maududi

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Origin and Significance of Hajj

Brothers in Islam! Hajj, or the Pilgrimage, is the last among those acts of worship which Islam enjoins upon you, Like the Prayer, Fasting and Alms giving, it moulds your life and prepares you so that you may live in surrender to Allah;

The world Hajj means to make a resolve to visit a holy place: visiting the Ka'ba in Makka is, therefore, called Hajj. How did it begin? The origin of Hajj is rooted in the Prophet Ibrahim's life, peace be on him. That story is very instructive, and illustrative, too, of the true meaning and significance of Hajj. That story you must know to fully understand the benefits Hajj can bring to you. Life and Mission of the Prophet Ibrahim
Which Muslim, Christian or Jew does not know the name of Ibrahim (peace be on him)! Two-thirds of mankind revere him as their leader. The Prophets Musa, Isa and Muhammad, peace be on them, are all his descendants. It is the lamp of guidance lit by him that has long illuminated the whole world.

Ibrahim's Times

Ibrahim was born in what is now Iraq, over four thousand years ago. At that time the people had forgotten the One God. No one recognized Him as the Master, no one lived in surrender and obedience to him. The people among whom Ibrahim was born, while the most advanced in the world in art and science, industry and agriculture, were also the most steeped in ignorance and error. One simple thing they, despite their technological advance, could not understand: anything which has itself been created cannot be worthy of worship. Idolatry was the norm. Superstitions like astrology, idol-worship, divination, witchcraft and use of talisman amulets were widespread. A priest class controlled the temples, supervised worship rites and rituals, conducted marriage and funeral ceremonies, and claimed to be oracles, able to disclose the unknown, foretell the future, and determine Divine wishes. And the people, in general, believed that they indeed had such powers, that they had access to their behalf or invoke their wrath to fall upon them. For them the priests were the lords of their fate.

The kings were in collusion with the priests, the two sides working together to keep the people under their servitude. They gave full backing to the priests, and the priests made the people believe that the king of the day, as well as being the owner of his country and complete master of his subjects, was also a god among other gods. His word was the supreme law; his power over their lives and properties was absolute. Indeed, worship rites were performed for and before the king so that the belief in his godhood came to be entrenched in the minds of his subjects.

In times like this, the Prophet Ibrahim was born into a family of privileged priests. His forefathers were high priests and it was quite natural that he should follow in their footsteps. He received the same education and training; the same gifts and offerings were awaiting him. Many adherents were eagerly waiting for the moment when they could bow their heads before him with folded hands. The ancestral seat of priestly power could be his for the taking.

In this dismal darkness, where not a single soul existed who knew or believed in the Truth, it would not ordinarily have been possible for a man like Ibrahim to find its light, nor break away from the life of comfort and power mapped out for him by his family.

Commitment to the Truth

But the Prophet Ibrahim was no ordinary man; he was made of different stuff. On reaching maturity he began to reflect thus: How can the sun, moon or stars, which are rotating as if by order like slaves, and these stone idols, which are made by man himself; and these kings, who are human beings like our selves, be gods? What is there in these powerless objects, which cannot move of their own volition, which have no power to help themselves and have no control over their own lives and deaths, that man should worship them, seek fulfillment of his wants from them, fear their powers and submit in obedience to them? Among all the objects on earth and in the heavens, there is not a single one which itself is not subject to some higher power and which does not fade away into oblivion at some time or other. When none of them is my creator, when neither my life nor death is in the hands of any of them, when none of them possesses the key to my means of sustenance or the fulfilment of my needs, why should I accept them as lords, surrender to them, and obey them? Only that Being can be my Lord who created all things, on whom depends everything and in whose hands are the lives and deaths of all people. These thoughts led the Prophet Ibrahim to the decision that he would never worship the deities which his people worshipped, as he openly declared before them:

O my people, I am quite of all those you take as gods beside God. I have turned my face unto Him who brought into being the heavens and the earth, having turned away from all false gods; and I am not of those who take gods beside God
(al-An'am 6: 79--80)

Tribulations and Calamities

No sooner had he made this declaration than tribulations and calamities of the greatest magnitude descended on him. His father threatened him with expulsion from the family home. His community warned him that no one among them would give him refuge. And the government officials insisted on his case being brought before the King. But Ibrahim, lonely and forsaken by his relatives and friends, stood firm as a rock in the cause of Truth. He told his father respectfully: The knowledge I have has not been vouchsafed to you. As such, instead of my following you, you should follow me [Maryam 19: 41-5]. In answer to the threats of his community he broke their idols with his own hands to prove how powerless they were [al-Anbiya' 21: 57—70]. In the court of the King, he boldly declared: You are not my Lord. My Lord is He in whose hands are your life and death as well as mine, and within the bounds of whose law even the movements of the sun are circumscribed [al-Baqarah 2: 258]

The royal court decided the Ibrahim should be burnt alive and he willingly came forward to suffer this horrible punishment for the sake of his unshakable faith in the One God. After Allah with His supreme power saved him from this fate, he abandoned his home, his relations, his community and his country. He set out with his wife, Sarah, and a nephew, Lut, to wander from one land to another.

To this man the undisputed religious leadership of his people had been available. Yet he gave up wealth and power and preferred the life of a homeless and destitute wanderer rather than have to mislead people into continuing worship of false gods. He chose to live for the purpose of summoning people to their true God, even though he would be driven from place to place.

Migration

After leaving his home, the Prophet Ibrahim wandered in Egypt, Palestine and Arabia. God, alone, knows what sufferings he went through on his journeyings. He had no money or possessions nor did he have time to earn his livelihood. His sole vocation, day and night, was to bring people to the worship of the One God. If a man of such ideas could not be tolerated by his own father and his own community, how was he going to be any more successful elsewhere? Where would he be welcomed? Everywhere the same temple priests and kings claiming godhood held sway; everywhere the same confused and ignorant common men lived, who were completely hoodwinked by them.

How could, then, Ibrahim live peacefully in such an environment? For, not only was he himself not ready to accept the godhood of anybody except God, but he was also committed to proclaiming to the people that none except Allah was their Master and Lord and that, therefore, they should ignore the authority of their leaders and demi-gods and submit only to that One Being. Thus condemned to a nomadic existence, wandering through Palestine, Egypt and the vast deserts of Arabia, he passed his whole adult life.

Raising a New Generation

During the last period of his life, when he was eighty-six and had despaired of offspring, Allah gave him a child, Ismail. But even then, this loyal servant of Allah did not think that, having himself wrecked his own home life, he

should at least prepare his children to earn their living. No. His only concern was that the mission on which he had spent his whole life should be carried after his death. It was for this purpose that he had prayed to Allah to grant him children [al-Baqarah 2: 128]: And when Allah granted his request, his only thought was to educate and train them to continue his mission.

The life of this perfect man was the life of a true and genuine muslim. In early adulthood, when he had found God, God asked him: 'aslim', that is, enter Islam, surrender yourself totally to Me, be solely Mine. In reply, he gave the pledge: 'aslamtu li-rabbi'l-amin', that is, I have entered Islam, I belong to the Lord of the worlds, I have entrusted myself wholly to Him, I am ever-ready to obey (al-Baqarah 2: 13).

To this pledge Ibrahim remained true throughout his life. He gave up, for the sake of the Lord of the worlds, his ancestral religion together with its beliefs and rituals and renounced all the material benefits he could have derived from it. He braved the danger of fire, suffered homelessness, wandered from country to country, but spent every moment of his life in obedience to the Lord and in propagating His Din.

The Greatest of Trials

But even after all these tribulations, there was still one trial left to determine whether Ibrahim's love for his Lord was supreme above all else. Before the birth of his second son, he was asked to sacrifice what was then his only child to God [al-Saffat 37: 99---111]. When Allah had shown that Ibrahim was prepared to slaughter his son for His sake with his own hands, He said: 'You have fully vindicated your claim to be a totally true Muslim. Now you deserve to be made the leader of the whole world. This act of investiture has been described in the Qur'an thus: And when his Lord tested Ibrahim with [His] commands, and he fulfilled them all, He said, Behold, I make you a leader of mankind. Said he [Ibrahim]: And of my offspring [will they too be leaders]? He said: My covenant shall not reach the evil-doers (al-Baqarah 2: 124).

The Universal Islamic Movement

In this manner Ibrahim became a pioneer of the universal Islamic movement and set about establishing permanent missions in different regions. In this task he was aided by his nephew, Lut, his eldest son, Ismail who, on learning that the Lord of the worlds wanted the sacrifice of his life, had him self willingly placed his neck under the knife, and his younger son, Ishaq.

Lut in Sodom

Ibrahim settled his nephew, Lut, in Sodom, which was infamous for its moral depravity. Ibrahim's objective was to reform the people and also to influence the far-flung area around; traders traveling between Iran , Iraq and Egypt used to pass through the region, and it was, therefore, an ideal place from which to spread God's message.

Ishaq in Palestine

The younger son, Ishaq, was settled in Palestine . This region, situated between Syria and Egypt , and being on the coast, was also a good centre for spreading Ibrahim's message. From this region the Islamic movement reached Egypt through Ishaq's son, Ya'qub(whose name was also Israel), and through his grandson, Yusuf, peace be on all of them. The elder son, Ismail, was assigned his headquarters at Makka in the Hijaz and Ibrahim himself stayed with him for a long time to propagate the teaching of Islam throughout Arabia.

Construction of the Ka'ba

It was in Makka that Ibrahim and his son built the Holy Ka'ba, the centre of the Islamic movement, on a site chosen by Allah Himself. This building was not intended for worship only, as mosques are; its purpose was to act as the centre for spreading the universal movement of Islam, a world-wide gathering point for believers in the One God to assemble to worship Allah in congregation and go back to their respective countries carrying with them the message of Islam. This was the assembly which was named Hajj. Exactly how this centre was constructed, with what hopes and prayers both father and son raised its walls, and how Hajj was initiated are described thus in the Qur'an:

The first House ever set up for mankind was indeed that at Bakkah, a blessed place, and a guidance unto all beings; wherein are clear signs---the place whereon Ibrahim stood; and whosoever enters it finds peace (Al 'Imran 3: 96---7).

Have they not seen that We have made the sanctuary immune [from violence], while men are being carried away by force all around them (al-'Ankabut 29: 67).

Peace always reigned in and around the Ka'ba, when all around it were rampant plunder, murder, devastation, conflict, and warfare—such was its sanctity that even the Bedouins who respected no law, if they detected in its

precincts the murderer of even their father, did not dare to touch him.

Prayers of Ibrahim

Look at Ibrahim's prayers to find out what the real purpose and significance of Hajj is:

And when We made the House a place of visitation for mankind, and a sanctuary: take, then, the place whereon Ibrahim stood for place of prayer. And We commanded Ibrahim and Ismail, 'Purify My House for those who will walk around it, and those who will abide there in worship, and those who will bow down and prostrate themselves'. And when Ibrahim prayed: My Lord! Make this a land secure and provide its people fruits, such of them as believe in God and the Last Day.....

And when Ibrahim was raising the foundations of the House, and Ismail, [they prayed]: Our Lord! Accept Thou this from us. Thou, Thou alone, art the All-hearing, the All-knowing. Our Lord! And make us surrender ourselves unto Thee, and out of our offspring make people surrender themselves unto Thee; and show us our rites of worship, and turn toward us; surely Thou alone turnest, and art the Mercy-giving. Our Lord! Do Thou send to them a Messenger, from among them, who shall convey unto them Thy revelations, and teach them the Book and the Wisdom, and purify and develop them. Thou alone art the All-mighty, the All-wise! (al-Baqarah 2: 125 --- 9).

And when Ibrahim prayed, My Lord! Make this land secure, and keep me and my sons away from worshipping idols. My Lord! They have led astray many people. Hence whoso follows me truly belongs to me; and whoso disobeys me—surely Thou art All-forgiving, Mercy-giving. Our Lord! I have settled some of my offspring in a valley where are no arable lands, near Thy sanctified House, our Lord, so that they may perform the Prayer, and Thou make people's hearts to incline towards them, and provide them fruits so that they may be thankful (Ibrahim 14: 35-7).

And when we assigned unto Ibrahim the place of the House, [We said]: You shall not take any god beside Me, and purify My House for those who will walk around it and those who will stand, and those who will bow down and prostrate themselves. And proclaim unto mankind the Pilgrimage; and they will come unto you on foot and on every lean mount, they will come from every deep ravine, so that may witness things that are of benefit to them, and mention God's name during the days appointed over such heads of cattle He has provided them. Eat, then, thereof, and feed therewith the unfortunate poor (al-Hajj 22: 26-8) Brothers in Islam! This is the story of the beginning of that Hajj which is the fifth pillar of Islam. You now understand that Makka was the headquarters for the mission of the first Prophet appointed to propagate the message of Islam. The Ka'ba was the focal point from where this preaching was spread across the world, and the worship rites of Hajj were introduced so that all those who chose to live in surrender to God alone should belong to one centre where they could assemble every year, and go around it again and again. Their lives of faith were to belike the wheel tied to and revolving around its axle.

2. Restoration of True Hajj

Brothers in Islam! Hajja, or the Pilgrimage, was instituted by the Prophet Ibrahim to serve as the focal meeting place for all believers in the One God. Thus he made Makka the centre of the world-wide Islamic movement and installed his elder son, the Prophet Ismail, there to continue his mission.

Idol worship Among Ibrahim's Descendants

Only Gods knows exactly how long Ismail's children stayed on the right path. But within a few centuries of the death of Ibrahim and Ismail people had abandoned their teachings and had gradually gone astray like all other people around them. Hundreds of idols were installed in the sacred Ka'ba, which had been built as a centre for the worship of the One God. Ironically enough, idols were made of Ibrahim and Ismail too, whose whole lives had been spent eradicating idol-worship. The descendants of Ibrahim, who had repudiated all idols, began to worship idols like Lat, Manat, Hubal, Nasr, Yaghuth, 'Uzza, Asaf, Nailah and many more. They also worshipped the sun, moon, Venus, and Saturn. They also worshipped jinns, ghosts, angels and the spirits of their dead ancestors. Superstition rose to such a level that if they did not have the family idol with them while away from home, they worshipped any stone they came across on their way. Or, if no stone was available, even a round ball made of clay with a sprinkle of Goat's milk over it served as their god. Reverting to the same kind of priesthood which Ibrahim had fought so fiercely against in Iraq, they turned the ka'ba into a sort of temple and installed themselves as priests there. Adopting all the tricks of priests, they began accepting gifts and offerings from pilgrims flocking from the four corners of Arabia. In this way all the work done by Ibrahim and Ismail was destroyed and the purpose for which they had introduced the system of Hajj was superseded by different types of objectives.

How Corrupted Hajj Became

A Yearly Carnival

The degree of which Hajj was corrupted in that period of Ignorance can be gauged from the fact that it degenerated into an annual carnival. For many tribes from near and far, Hajj became an important social event. Poets and clowns used it to brag and boast about the bravery, renown, dignity, strength and generosity of their tribes. They even resorted to hurling insults at one another. The chiefs of the tribes vied which each other in flaunting their generosity. They slaughtered camel after camel with the sole purpose of extolling their name, generosity and hospitality. Singing, revelry, drinking, and adultery were part and parcel of the festivities. The thought of God scarcely occurred to anybody.

Perverse Rites

Circumambulation[tawaf] of the Ka'ba did continue, it is true; but in what form? Men and women walked together around God's House stark naked, saying, 'We go before God just as our mothers gave birth to us'. Worship also continued to be performed in the mosque of Ibrahim, but again, in what form? By clapping hands, by whistling and by blowing horns. The name of God was proclaimed, but with what words? They said: Here am I, my Lord, I am present. No one is Thy partner except the one who is Thine. Thou art its master, of whatever it possesses.

They did make sacrifices in the name of God. But the blood of the sacrificial animals was split on the walls of the Ka'ba and their flesh thrown at its door in the belief that Allah needs that flesh thrown at its door in the belief that Allah needs that flesh and blood.

Sacrilege of Sacred Months

Ibrahim had declared four months of Hajj are sacred and had directed that no warfare should be waged in these months. These people partially observed this sanctity; but if they wanted to fight during the sacred months, they simply declared Ibrahim's ruling null and void for a particular period and added extra 'holy months' the following year.

Self-imposed Restrictions

Even those who were sincere towards religion were led into strange, excessive ways by their ignorance. Some people used to set out for Hajj without any provisions for the journey and lived by begging food. They considered this an act of piety, claiming that they had full trust in God and, while proceeding towards the House of God, had no need of worldly goods. Doing business or working during the Hajj journey were generally considered unlawful. Many people gave up food and water during Hajj, and regarded this abstention as worship. Others stopped speaking while on Hajj, which they called al-Hajju'l-Musmit, the dumb Pilgrimage. There were countless other customs of this type which I do not want to waste your time describing.

Restoration of Hajj

Fulfilment of Ibrahim's Prayer

This situation lasted for about two thousand years. No prophet was born in Arabia during this long period nor did any prophet's genuine teachings reach the people of Arabia. Finally, however, the time arrived for granting Ibrahim's prayer which he had made while raising the walls of the Ka'ba:

Our Lord! Do Thou send to them a Messenger, from among them, who shall convey unto them Thy revelations, and teach them the Book and the Wisdom, and purify and develop them (al-Baqarah 2: 129). The perfect man who descended from Ibrahim was Muhammad Ibn Abdullah, blessings and peace be on him.

Just as Ibrahim was born into a family of priests, so was Muhammad, blessings and peace be on him, into a family which had been for centuries priests of the ka'ba. Just as Ibrahim struck a blow with his own hands against the priesthood of his family, so did Muhammad, blessings and peace be on him, finally eradicating it for good. Again, just as Ibrahim strove to end the worship of false gods and bring people under submission to the one God, so did the Prophet Muhammad, blessings peace be on him, revive the same pure Din which

had been introduced by Ibrahim. After 21 years, when he had completed this work, once again, at God's command, he declared the Ka'ba the centre of all those in the world who surrendered to God alone and issued the same summons to the people to come to it for Hajj as had Ibrahim.

A duty owed to God by all men is the Pilgrimage to the House, if one is able to make his way there. And as for disbeliever, God is All sufficient, needing nothing from all the worlds (Al Imran 3: 97).

Revival of Ibrahim's Ways

Along with the renewal of Hajj in its proper form came an end to the customs of the time of Ignorance which had persisted for two thousand years.

End of Idolatry

All the idols in the Ka'ba were smashed. The worship of any and every object other than God was completely eliminated. All fairs and sports were closed down and it was laid down that worship would be carried out only in the manner ordained by God. And remember Him as He has guided you, for formerly you had gone astray (al-Baqarah 2: 198).

Prohibition of Indecent Acts

All indecent acts were strictly banned. Whoso undertakes the Pilgrimage in those [months] should abstain from lewd speech, from iniquity, and from quarrelling during the Pilgrimage (al-Baqarah 2: 197).

Bragging and Showing Off

Contention among poets, boasting of forefathers' achievements, contests in satire and sycophancy were all stopped.

And when you have completed your rites, then remember God as you remember your fathers, or yet more intensely (al-Baqarah 2: 200).

End of Ostentatious Generosity

All competitions in so-called generosity which were meant solely for ostentation and fame were banned, and in their place was revived the customs of Ibrahim's days of slaughtering animals exclusively in the name of Allah, so that the sacrifice made by the well-to-do people provide poor pilgrims with meat.

Eat and drink, but be not wasteful. Surely He loves not the wasteful (al-A'raf 7: 31).

So mention God's name over them [the animals] when they are lined up; then, when their sides fall [dead], eat of them and feed the beggar and the suppliant (al-Hajj 22: 36).

Spattering of Blood and Flesh Banned

The practice of spattering the blood of the sacrificial animals on the walls of the Ka'ba and throwing their flesh at its door was stopped. Never does their flesh reach God, and neither their blood, but godliness from you reaches Him (al-Hajj 22: 37).

Prohibition of Perverse Rites

Circumambulation in the state of nudity was strictly prohibited:

Say: 'Who is there to forbid the adornment which God has brought forth for His servants' (al-A'raf 7: 28).

Say: 'Never does God enjoin indecent acts' (al-A'raf 7: 28).

Children of Adam! Take to your adornment for every act of worship (al-A'raf 7: 31).

Changing the Months of Hajj Forbidden

Interchanging the months of Hajj so as to make fighting permissible was prohibited: Postponing [of a sanctified month] is but an increase in disbelief where by Kafirs are led astray. They allow it one year and forbid it another year, to agree with the number of the months which God has sanctified and thus they allow what God has

forbidden (al-Tawbah 9: 37).

Hajj Provisions Made Obligatory

People were prohibited from starting out on Hajj without taking adequate provisions. Clarification was made that not taking provisions of a journey in this world did not mean, as was popularly believed, that one was thereby taking provisions for the Hereafter: And take provision for yourselves, but the best provision is God-consciousness (al-Baqarah 2: 197).

Permission to Work During Hajj

The popular belief that it was an act of piety not to work for money or earning a livelihood during Hajj was refuted: It is no sin for you that you seek bounty from your Lord [by trading](al-Baqarah 2: 198).

End of Other Customs

The customs of performing Hajj, while remaining silent, hungry and thirsty were also ended. After abolishing all perverse customs of the pre-Islamic days, Hajj was made a model of piety, fear of God, purity, simplicity and austerity. The pilgrims were ordered to purify themselves spiritually, to give up worldly things, to avoid all sexual desires, even refrain from intercourse with their wives, and to totally refrain from using bad and abusive language.

Fixing Boundaries

Boundaries were defined on all roads leading to the Ka'ba to indicate the points beyond which no pilgrims were allowed to proceed without putting on two seamless garments, the Ihram, or the robes of poverty, so that the rich and the poor would become equal, distinctions of nationality would arrive at the court of Allah in a state of oneness as humble suppliants.

Ensuring Peace and Security

It was prohibited to kill any animal while wearing Ihram, let alone a human being. The object was to ensure that peace and security prevailed, aggressiveness was controlled, and spiritually gripped the hearts and minds of the pilgrims. The four months of Hajj were made sacred so that no fighting took place during this period, peace reigned on all the roads leading to the Ka'ba and no pilgrims were molested en route.

When the pilgrims reached the Ka'ba, there were no funfairs, no carnivals. Instead, there was remembrance of God at every step. There were Prayers, sacrifices and circumambulation (tawaf) of the Ka'ba. The only cry that one could hear was that which arose from the heart of the pilgrim: Here am I before Thee, O God, doubly at Thy service. Before Thee I am, there is no partner unto Thee, doubly at Thy service here am I. All praise and blessings are Thine, and power. There is no partner unto Thee.

Such selfless and sincere Hajj the Prophet, blessings and peace be on him, has described thus: Whosoever performs Hajj solely for the sake of God and, in the course of it, abstains from sensuality and disobedience, he returns from there as immaculate as a child just born (Bukhari, Muslim).

Importance of Hajj

See, now, how important this Hajj is. Allah says: A duty owed to God by all men is the Pilgrimage to the House, if he is able to make his way there. And as for the disbeliever, God is All-sufficient, needing nothing from all the worlds (Al Imran 3: 97). Here, failure to perform Hajj if you have the means to do so, is described as Kufr. Its explanation is found in two Hadith of the Prophet, blessings and peace be on him: Whosoever possesses provisions and conveyance for a journey to the House of God, but, in spite of this, does not perform Hajj, then his dying is like the dying of a Jew or a Christian (Tirmidhi). Whosoever is not prevented from proceeding for Hajj by any clear, dire need that he must fulfil, or by a tyrant ruler, or by a disease which confines him, and yet he fails to perform Hajj and dies in this condition, he may as well choose to die either a Jew or a Christian (Darimi).

Elucidating this Hadith, 'Umar said: I wish to impose jizyah (poll tax meant specifically for non-Muslims who were exempt from conscription) on those who do not perform Hajj in spite of possessing the required means. They are not Muslims, they are not Muslims!

From the commandment of Allah and its elucidation by the Prophet, blessings and peace be on him, and his Caliph, You can clearly see that Hajj is not something which may or may not be performed according to personal whim. It is obligatory at least once in a life time on all Muslims, wherever they live in the world, who can afford to make the journey and who are physically able to. Responsibilities to one's family or business are no grounds for exemption.

Those who, despite the necessary means, put off Hajj year after year on some pretext or other should take care of the state of their Iman. As for those who never bother to think about performing the Hajj at all, but who nonetheless manage to travel all over the world, perhaps even passing within a few hours' journeying time of Makka on their way to Europe—such people are certainly not Muslims. They lie if they call themselves Muslims, and people who consider them Muslims are ignorant of the Qur'an. At least their hearts are devoid of any feeling in His commandments.

3. Renewal of Self

Brothers in Islam! What are the blessings of Hajj? One may describe them in great detail. But, in the Qur'an, where Allah instructs Ibrahim to invite people to come for Hajj, it is said:

So that they may witness things that are of benefit to them (al-Hajj 22: 28). Hence, the real blessings of Hajj can only be experienced by those who actually perform it. Imam Abu Hanifah, it is narrated, was unsure which act of worship was more excellent among the various ones laid down by Islam. But once he had performed Hajj, he had no hesitation in declaring that Hajj was the most excellent of all.

Still, I shall now try to give you, briefly, some idea of its blessings.

The Journey

We usually think of journeys as of two kinds: those made for business and those made for pleasure. In both cases, it is to fulfil your worldly desires and benefit yourselves that you leave your homes, separate from families, spend money---all is done for your own sake. No question arises of sacrifice for any higher, sublime purpose.

But the journey that is the Hajj is quite different in nature. This is not meant for any personal end. It is undertaken solely for Allah, and the fulfillment of the duty prescribed by Allah. Nobody can be prepared to undertake this journey until and unless he has love of Allah in his heart as well as fear of Him, and is convinced that Allah wants him to do what he is doing. That you are willing to bear the privations arising from separation from your family, to incur great expenses on a journey that will bring no material rewards and to suffer any loss of business or hob, all are signs of certain inner qualities: that you love and fear Allah more than anything, that you have a strong sense of duty to Him, that you are willing to respond to His summons and ready to sacrifice your material comforts in His cause.

Virtue and Piety

You will find that your love of God heightens as you start preparing for your pilgrimage journey, with the sole intention of pleasing Allah. With your heart longing to reach your goal, you become purer in thought and deed. You repent for past sins, seek forgiveness from people whom you might have wronged, and try to render your due to others where necessary so as not to go to God's court burdened with injustices that you may have done to your fellow beings. In general, the inclination for doing good intensifies and abhorrence for doing evil increases.

After leaving home, the closer you get to the House of God, the more intense becomes your desire to do good.

You become careful so that you harm nobody, while you try to render whatever service or help you can to others. You avoid abuse, indecency, dishonesty, squabbles and bickerings, because you are proceeding on the path of God. Thus your entire journey constitutes an act of worship. How can, then, you do wrong? This journey, in contrast to every other, is a continuing course through which a Muslim attain a progressive purification of the self. On this journey, then, you are pilgrims to God.

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Ihram and its Conditions

When the pilgrim reaches a certain point in his journey on the way to Makka, he must put on Ihram, the mendicant-like clothes consisting of two unsewn sheets of cloth and a pair of sandals. What does putting on

Ihram symbolize: whatever your position in the world, before God you must come as a beggar and destitute, as in outward appearance so in the depths of your heart. Take off your colourful clothes; put on simple ones. Do not wear socks. Keep your heads bare. Do not use any perfume, nor comb your hair. Do not use any kind of adornment. Stop sexual relations with your wives, refrain even from any gestures which may arouse eagerness for, and be a reminder of, these relations. Do not hunt, and do not help anyone you see hunting. Adopting such outward postures will influence your inner lives also. You will develop an ascetic attitude. Pride and vanity will disappear. Humility and peace of mind will grow. The impurities that have sullied your souls due to indulgence in worldly pleasures will be removed and a feeling of godliness will dominate both your internal and external selves.

Talbiyyah: the Cry of Response

Soon after putting on Ihram the pilgrim utters certain words that he must repeat in a loud voice after every Prayer, when climbing a height and descending from it, when meeting other pilgrims and when getting up in the mornings. These words are:

Labbayk, Allahumma labbayk, labbayk, la sharika laka labbayk, inna 'l-hamda wa 'n-ni'mata laka wa 'l-mulka la sharika lak

Here am I before Thee, O God, doubly at Thy service. Before Thee I am, there is no partner unto Thee, doubly at Thy service here am I All praise and blessings are Thine, and power. There is no partner unto Thee.

This, in fact, is an answer to that general proclamation which Ibrahim, as commanded by Allah, made more than four thousand years ago: O slaves of Allah! Come to the House of Allah. Come from every corner of the earth, either on foot or by transport. Thus, with every cry labbayk the pilgrim answers God's summons; every time he answers His summons which has been inviting to true and genuine worship of the One god since the time of Ibrahim and Ismail. The distance in time of four and a half thousand years vanishes and it appears as if Ibrahim is here calling on behalf of Allah and the pilgrim is answering his call. At the every step, as the pilgrim, thus responding to Ibrahim, proceeds further and further, the yearning and longing get more and more intense. At every ascent and descent the voice of Allah's proclaimer rings in his ears and he goes on and on welcoming it with labbayk. Every group of pilgrims appears to him like a message-bearer of his Lord; and, like a lover, on getting the message from his beloved, he cries out: 'I am present, I am present'. Every morning is a message from his Friend to which he has but one answer: 'I am at Thy service'.

This recurrent cry of labbayk in conjunction with the ascetic dress of Ihram, the special nature of the journey and the feeling of getting nearer and nearer to the Ka'ba combine to produce in the pilgrim the feeling of being enveloped in Divine love; nothing of any importance any longer resides in his heart except the remembrance of his Friend.

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Tawaf: Walking Round the House

Thus overwhelmed with the love of God, the pilgrim reaches Makka, and immediately proceeds towards the sacred precincts to which he has been summoned. He kisses the 'threshold' of his Friend's house. Then he goes round and round it, the focus of his faith. The hub of his life, every round he starts and ends by kissing His 'doorstep', symbolizing a renewal of his pledge of allegiance and loyalty and obedience to his Lord and Master. After completing the seven rounds, he goes to the place where lies the stone on which Ibrahim stood and called men to the House of God, called the Muqam Ibrahim. He then offers two rak'ahs of prayer to thank God.

Sa'i: Hurrying Between Safa' and Marwah

From Muqam Ibrahim he proceeds to climb the hillock of Safa', from where he looks down at the Ka'ba and cries out:

La ilaha ill 'allah wa la na' budu illa iyyahu mukhlisina lahu'd-dina wa law kariha 'l-kafirun

There is no god but Allah. We worship none but Him, making exclusive for Him our submission, even though Kafirs may dislike it. Then he hurriedly walks between Safa' and the other hillock, Marwah. This act, which is called Sa'i, symbolizes that the pilgrim will be ceaselessly endeavouring to serve his Master and seek His pleasure. In the course of this Sa'i, he may say: Allahumma ista'milni bi sunnati nabiyyika wa tawaffani 'ala millatihi wa a'idhni min mudillati'l-fitan

Grant me to live, O God, the way as was Thy Prophet's way, and to die on his path. Protect me from trials which lead astray.

Or he may say:

Rabbi ghfir warham wa tajawaz 'amma ta'lam, innaka anta 'l-a'azzu 'l-akram.

O Lord! Forgive me and have mercy on me and overlook all that Thou knowest I have done wrong. Thou art the Mightiest and the Noblest.

Wuqf (Stay) at Mina', 'Arafat and Muzdalifah

On completion of the Sa'i, the pilgrims become like soldiers in the cause of Allah. Now they have to live a camp-like life for five or six days. For one day they will camp at Mina',* and the next day at 'Arafat# where they will hear their commander's directives, too. Returning from 'Arafat, they encamp for the night at Muzdalifah.#

Rami Jimar: Stoning the Pillars

At daybreak, the pilgrims march back toward Mina and throw stones at the pillars which mark the place where the army of Abraha, the Christian king of Yemen, known as the Ashabu 'l-fil (the people of elephants), had reached in their effort to demolish the Ka'ba. While throwing each stone, the soldiers in the cause of Allah say:

Allahu akbar, raghman li'sh-shaytani wa hizbihi

Allahumma tasdiqan bi kitabika wa ittiba'an li

Sunnti nabiiyyk

God is the Greatest, I throw these stones against Satan and his party, testifying to the truth of Thy Book, O God, and following the way of Thy Prophet.

By throwing these stones the pilgrim reaffirms his pledge: 'O God! Like this, I will fight whosoever rises to destroy Your Din and subdue Your word, and thus I shall strive to make Your word supreme.

After throwing stones, animals are sacrificed. This sacrifice demonstrates the intention and resolve of the pilgrim to give his life in the way of God, whenever required.

After sacrifice, the pilgrims return to the Ka'ba just as a soldier, having performed his duty returns triumphantly to his headquarters. After performing another round of tawaf and offering two rak'ahs of Prayer, Ihram, the dress of consecration, is removed. Whatever was especially prohibited (Haram) during the period of consecration now again becomes permissible (Halal) and the pilgrims' lives resume their normal pattern.

They now come back to Mina' and continue to camp there for another two or three days. The following day they again throw stones at the three pillars. These are called jamarat and serve to remind them of the defeat and destruction of that elephant army which we have just referred to. It was in the year of the birth of the Prophet, blessings and peace be on him that invaded Makka at the time of Hajj to demolish the House of Allah, but which, the command of Allah, was destroyed by stones dropped by birds. (*it is often said that this act of flinging stones is done in commemoration of the incident which happened to Ibrahim when he was about to sacrifice Ismail: satan tried to tempt him, and he flung stones at him. It is also said that when a lamb was given to Ibrahim to sacrifice in place of Ismail, the lamb ran away and Ibrahim threw stones at it. But in no authentic Hadith has these incidents been narrated from the prophet, blessings and peace be on him, as the background of rami jimar.*)

After finally throwing stones at these pillars on the third day, the pilgrims return to Makka and perform seven circumambulations of the centre of their Din. This is called *tawaf wada* (*tawaf* for taking leave) and completing it means the completion of Hajj.

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The Impact of Hajj

It is now easy to see that for two to three months, (*this was the average duration of time required to perform Hajj in 1928, when this address was delivered. In this jet age it may take as few as seven days.*) from the time of deciding and preparing for Hajj to the time of returning home, a tremendous impact is made on the hearts and minds of pilgrims. The process entails sacrifice of time, sacrifice of money, sacrifice of comfort, and sacrifice of many physical desires and pleasures---and all this simply for the sake of Allah, with no worldly or selfish motive. Together with a life of sustained piety and virtuousness, the constant remembrance of God and the longing and love for Him in the pilgrim leave a mark on his heart which lasts for years. The pilgrim witnesses at every step the imprints left by those who sacrificed everything of theirs in submission and obedience to Allah. They fought against the whole world, suffered hardships and tortures, were condemned to banishment, but ultimately did make the word of God supreme and did subdue the false powers which wanted man to submit to entities other than God. The lesson in courage and determination, the impetus to strive in the way of God, which a devotee of God can draw from these clear signs and inspiring examples, can hardly be available from any other source. The attachment developed with the focal point of his Din by walking round (*tawaf*) the Ka'ba, and the

training received to live a Mujahid's life through the rites (manasik) of Hajj (such as running from place to place and repeated departures and halts) are great blessings indeed.

Combined with the Prayer, Fasting and Almsgiving, and looked at as a whole, you will see that Hajj constitutes a preparation for the great task which Islam wants Muslims to do. This is why it has been made compulsory for all who have the money and the physical fitness for the journey to the Ka'ba. This ensures that, in every age, there are Muslims who have passed through this training.

Hajj, a Collective Worship

The great blessings of spiritual and moral regeneration which Hajj imparts to each person are before you. But you cannot fully appreciate the blessings of Hajj unless you keep in view the fact that Muslims do not perform it individually; hundreds of thousands perform it communally during the time fixed for it. At one stroke Islam achieves not one or two but a thousand purposes.

The advantages of performing the Prayer singly are by no means small, but by making it conditional with congregation and by laying down the rule of Imamah (leadership in the Hajj) and by gathering huge congregations for the Friday and 'Id Prayers, its benefits have been increased many times. The observance of the Fasting individually is no doubt a major source of moral and spiritual training, but by prescribing that all Muslims must fast in the month of Ramadan those benefits have been greatly increased. The Almsgiving, too, has many advantages even if dispensed individually, but with the establishment of a centralized *Baytulmal* (exchequer of the Islamic state for its collection and disbursement its usefulness is increased beyond measure.

The same is true of Hajj. If everyone were to perform it singly, the effect on individual lives would still be great. But making it a collective act enhances its effectiveness to a point which gives it a new dimension altogether.

4. RENEWAL OF SOCIETY

Brothers in Islam! Muslims who should perform Hajj, because they have the means to do so, are not few in number. They are found in thousands in every city and hundreds of thousands in every country. Many of them set out every year to perform the Pilgrimage. Imagine how, in every part of the world where Muslims live, the life of Islam becomes alive as the season of Hajj approaches, and how this sense of lively purpose extends over many months of the year.

From the month of Ramadan till Dhu 'l-Qa'dah, many people from different parts of the world start off for Hajj, while afterwards, from the last part of Dhu 'l-Hijjah till the month of Rabi'u 'l-Thani, the homeward journey continues. For these six to seven months an incessant religious movement prevails among Muslims throughout the world. Those who go to perform Hajj and return home are no doubt enraptured with devotion to God. But even those who do not go receive some share of the experience by virtue of the emotional farewells and homecoming welcomes they accord to the pilgrims, and listening to their accounts of Hajj.

Growth in God-Consciousness

As soon as the intending pilgrim makes up his mind to perform Hajj, fear of God, piety, repentance, seeking forgiveness from God, and desire to do good begin to blossom within him. As he starts saying good bye to his relatives, friends and associates and settles all of his pending affairs, everyone can notice that he is no longer the same man as before: his heart is now pure and clean because of the newly kindled spark of love of God. It is easy to imagine the effect of the changed condition of the pilgrim on the people around him. And if every year all over the world hundreds of thousands of pilgrims prepare for Hajj in this manner, the aura cast by their enthusiasm and renewal must improve the moral state of vast numbers of people.

As the pilgrims' caravans pass through various places the hearts of more and more people are warmed by seeing them, meeting them and by hearing from them the cry of *labbayk, labbayk* (I am present before Thee). There must be many whose thoughts will be redirected towards Allah and His House, and the eagerness for Hajj will reawaken their slumbering souls.

And when the pilgrims, enthused with the spirit of Hajj, return from the centre of their Din to their cities and towns and villages in all parts of the world, they are met and welcomed by all those who have stayed at home. Their words and deeds telling the story of the Pilgrimage must rekindle the devotional feelings of those listening to them.

A season of Reawakening

As such it will not be wrong if we say that just as the month of Ramadan is a season of God-consciousness and

piety throughout the Islamic world, so also is the Hajj one of reawakening rebirth of hearts and societies. The wise one who has given us the Shari'ah has thus ensured that whatever adverse turn world conditions may take and however bad times may become, they will never succeed in erasing the universal Islamic movement so long as the Ka'ba is there.

For, it has been placed in the body of the Islamic world just like a heart like a heart in a man's body. As long as the heart beats, a man cannot die. In exactly same way this 'heart of the world' draws blood from its far-off veins and circulates the blood back into each and every artery. As long as this throbbing of the heart continues and as long as this process of drawing the blood and circulating it lasts, it will be impossible to end the life of this body of the Muslim Ummah, however run-down diseases may have made it.

Inspiring Spectacle of Unity

Close your eyes and visualize what it must be like to see people from countless communities and countries converging on one 'Centre' through a thousand and one routes---from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south. Their faces are different, their colours are different, their languages are different, but on a reaching a frontier near the 'Centre' all exchange the varied clothes they are wearing for a simple uniform of the same design. This single, common uniform of Ihram distinguishes them as the army of one single King. It becomes the insignia of obedience and service to one Being; all are strung in one cord of loyalty and are marching toward one 'Capital' to file past their 'King'.

When these uniformed soldiers move beyond the frontier, the same cry issues forth loudly from their mouths:

Labbayk, Allahumma labbayk, la sharika laka labbayk

Here am I before Thee, O God, doubly at Thy service, There is no partner unto Thee, here am I.

Their languages are different but the words they utter are the same; they have the same meaning.

As the centre approaches, the circle containing the pilgrims contracts. Caravans from different countries continue joining each other. All perform their Prayers together in one and the same manner. All are dressed in similar uniforms, all are led by one Imam(leader), all are moving simultaneously, all are now using the same language, all are rising, sitting, bowing down (*rukū*) and prostrating themselves (*sujud*) at one signal of Allahu akbar, and all are reciting and listening to one Arabic Qur'an. In this way the differences of nationality, country and race are obliterated and a universal community of God worshippers is constituted.

When these caravans pass on, loudly raising with one voice the call of *labbayk, labbayk* when at every ascent and descent the same words resound, when at the time of meeting of caravans these same voices are raised from both sides, and when at the time of every Prayer and at dawn these exclamations reverberate, a unique atmosphere is created whose exhilarating effect makes a man forget his self and become absorbed in the ecstasy of *labbayk*.

After reaching the Ka'ba comes the act of circumambulation, then the doing of Sa'i by all together between Safa and Marwah, then the encampment of all at Mina', then the departure of all towards 'Arafat and the listening to their leader's address, then a night's sojourn by all at Muzdalifah, then the return of all together towards Mina', then the throwing of stones in unison by all at *jamarat*, then the animal sacrifice performed by all, then the return of all together to the Ka'ba for further circumambulation, and then the offering of Salah by all together around the centre---all this carries within itself an effect which has absolutely no parallel.

Greatest Movement for Peace

This assembling at one centre of people drawn from all nationalities of the world, and that, too, with a remarkable unity of heart and purpose, identity of thought and harmony of feeling, pure sentiments and noble objectives and deeds, is the greatest gift of Islam to the children of Adam. The nations of the world have long been meeting each other, but in what circumstances? On battlefields, cutting each other's throats; or at peace conferences, carving up countries and nations for themselves; or in the League of Nations, indulging in deception and plotting against each other or conspiring against each other. The meeting of common men of all nations, with sincerity and love, with mental and spiritual affinity, with unity in thoughts, deeds and aims---and not only once but always at the same centre every year---is a blessing available to mankind nowhere else but in Islam. Has anyone else devised a better system than this for establishing peace in the world, for removing hostility among nations and for creating in the place of quarrels and bickering an atmosphere of love, friendship and brotherhood?

Nor do the blessing of Hajj in establishing peace stop here. During the four months fixed for Hajj and 'Umrah(the lesser pilgrimage performed outside the days of Hajj), every effort must be made to maintain peace on all roads leading to the Ka'ba.'This is the greatest movement of a permanent nature for the establishment of peace in the world. And if the reins of world politics were in the hands of Islam, it would be the Muslims' main concern to ensure that no disturbances took place in the world that would disrupt Hajj and Umrah'.

Centre of Peace and Equality

Islam has given to the world an inviolable territory, a city of peace till Doomsday. Within the prescribed boundaries around the Ka'ba, called the *Haram*, the hunting and shooting of animals is strictly prohibited, the cutting of grass is not allowed, thorns may not be pruned, nor fallen articles picked up. And, of course, no human being may be harmed.

Islam has given to the world a city where it is forbidden to bring arms, where it is tantamount to 'heresy' to hoard cereals and other articles of common need and sell them at a higher price, and where those doing wrong to others or oppressing them are thus threatened by Allah: We shall cause them to taste a painful punishment (al-Hajj 22:25). Islam has given a centre to the world which is defined as: A place where the resident and the visitor are equal (al-Hajj 22:25).

This means that the rights of all human beings are equal here. Whoever acknowledges the sovereignty of God and accepts the leadership of Muhammad, blessings and peace be on him, enters the brotherhood of Islam, no matter if he is American African, Chinese or Indian. If one has become a Muslim, his rights are identical to those of the Makkans themselves.

The position of the whole area of the *Haram* is similar to that of a mosque in that if anyone moves into any part of a mosque that portion belongs to him. Nobody can remove him or ask for rent from him. But, at the same time, he has no right to call it his property, even if he lives there for his whole life. Nor can he sell it or rent it to anybody. When this person leaves his place in the mosque, another person has the same right to occupy it as he had. This is exactly the position of the whole of the *Haram* at Makka. The Prophet, blessings and peace be on him, said: Whosoever first comes to this city and settles at a place, that place is his. Umar issued an order to the people of his time not to fix doors on the compound around their houses so that whoever wanted to could come and stay in the compound. Some jurists have gone so far as to say that nobody has the right to own houses in Makka or to leave them to their heirs when they die.

Brothers! This is the Hajj about which it was said: 'Undertake it and see how many blessings it has in store for you'. No words are adequate to express all of its advantages; you can only get a glimpse of them from the brief sketch that I have tried to give here.

Our Lack of Appreciation

Now, listen to the voice of my afflicted heart! We, the present-day born Muslims, are like a child born in a diamond mine. He may have diamonds all around, but if he plays with them as if they were stones, these diamonds become as valueless for him as stones. Our attitudes towards Islam are exactly similar, because the treasures which the world is searching for, and is suffering through being deprived of, have all been given to us by virtue of our having been born Muslims.

The *Kalimah tawhid* (the creed of Oneness of God), which shows men the right way to lead their lives, has been drummed into us from our earliest childhoods; those priceless prescriptions of Salah and Sawm, which elevate men from a mere animal existence to the human level, we have inherited, without effort, from our forefathers; that matchless practice of Zakah, which purifies the heart as well as the financial systems of the world, without which people of the world are at loggerheads with each other, is ours as our birthright.

Similarly Hajj has been part of our heritage for hundreds of years. This magnificent way is more effective and powerful than any other ever conceived to propagate our movement throughout the world and keep it alive for all eternity. This universal movement is more powerful than any other to draw out human beings in the name of God and make them into a brotherhood transcending race, colour and nationality. We are surrounded by treasures, but how do we treat them? We play with them in the same way as that ignorant child who, surrounded by diamonds, regards them as stones. My heart bleeds when I see us frittering away such tremendous wealth and power through ignorance foolishness.

My dear brothers! You must have heard this couplet of the poet:

If the ass of Jesus goes to Makka.

It remains an ass when it returns.

That is to say, an ass, even one living in the company of a Prophet like Jesus, cannot benefit from a visit to Makka; it would still be as unenlightened as before. Today we have at our disposal gifts like the prayer, Fasting and Pilgrimage. But these devotional acts are meant to train human beings, not to tame animals. Although the people carry out the external trapping of these precious gifts, their minds have no concept of their inner significance. They have no concern for their outcome. They imitate the actions of their forebears, but it is a stereotyped imitation, devoid of comprehension or spiritual content. How can good results be expected out of such exercises? Every year thousands of pilgrims go to the centre of Islam and come back after having had the privilege of performing Hajj without that experience having had the slightest effect on them. Nor do they make any impact on those they meet upon their return or live with. Worse, many of them continue to exhibit their bad habits and bad manners; thus the very name of Islam is tarnished by their behaviour. Not only in the eyes of strangers but also among Muslims. Eventually some young Muslims who have not themselves been on Hajj have

come to question its value.

Year after years for centuries, hundreds of thousands of the adherents of a powerful movement, Islam, gather at one place, travel along various routes, pass through villages, towns and cities and demonstrate their faith through their words and deeds. How can, one wonders, such an event fail to impress people with blessings it can bring.

Yet is only Hajj was performed as it was intended it should be, even the blind would see its benefits and the deaf would hear of its advantages! Every year it would change the lives of millions of Muslims, and attract thousands of non-Muslims to Islam!

Deriving Full Benefit From Hajj

To derive the full benefits from Hajj, what we need at the centre of Islam are such hand that could make it effective, such hearts that could pump pure blood into the body of the Ummah, such minds that could turn the pilgrims in to ambassadors of Islamic carrying its Message far and wide. At least Makka should have been a living example of Islam. Alas, this is not the case at present. For the time of the Abbasids till the Ottomans, the kings of every period, in order to serve their political ends, tried to weaken the Arabs. They brought them to the lowest levels of the decadence in knowledge, morals and culture. The result was the land from which emanated the light of Islam spreading its rays to all corners of the world, reached almost the same state of ignorance in which it was before the advent of Islam. There is little knowledge of Islam or Islamic life. People from far-off places flock to the sacred precincts of the *Haram* with the deepest devotion, only to find ignorance, filth, greed, indecency, love of this world, bad manners and disorganization. The result is that, for many, the experience of Hajj, instead of strengthening their faith, weakens it.

Priestly exploitation which was imposed in the Ka'ba after Ibrahim and Isma'il, and which was abolished by the Prophet, blessings and peace be on him, has again been revived. The administration and the *Mu'allimin* (who guide the pilgrims) have again adopted the ways of priests. The House of God has become their property and Hajj a source of business. They consider the pilgrims as their customers. Agents have been appointed in different countries on big salaries to canvas and bring in these customers. Every year a whole army of brokers leaves Makka to seek out and fetch them from all parts of the world. People are induced to perform Hajj by having Quranic verses and Hadith suited at them. The motive is not to remind them of the duty imposed by Allah but to make money.

It almost looks as if Allah and His Messenger initiated Hajj for the sole purpose of sustaining the *Mu'allimin* and brokers. Trading in religion, *Mu'allim*, *Mutawwif*, their attorneys, keepers of keys to the Ka'ba---all confront a pilgrim at every stage. They and the Government itself are all co-shares in the Hajj 'industry'. The performance of the rituals of Hajj is conducted on payment and even the door of the Ka'ba is only opened for a fee. How a strange that such is the condition of the followers of a religion which abolished all priesthood!

How can the true spirit of worship survive where the work of conducting it has become a source of wage-earning and trade, where sacred places are exploited for personal gain, where sacred places are exploited for personal gain, where Divine commandments are employed to lure people to empty their pockets, where a man is obliged to make payment for every rite he performs, and where Din has become a business commodity? (This address was given in 1938. Conditions have now greatly improved and the Saudi Arabian Government is trying to enforce further reforms. Two matters require special attention. Firstly, two sacred precincts of Makka and Madina must be protected from the onslaughts of Western civilization. Second, the methods and procedures employed by *Mu'allims* should be improved. May god enable the Saudi government to adopt correct measures in this regard!

In mentioning these facts I do not intend to cast blame on anyone. My purpose is simply to point out what factors have so seriously weakened such a potentially tremendous source of spiritual, moral and social power as Hajj. There should be no misunderstanding in anybody's mind that this state of affairs is due to any deficiency in Islam. The deficiency lies with those who do not follow Islam correctly. The situation is like that of an expert physician whose prescriptions fall into the hands of quacks and thus become useless and possibly positively harmful.

5.MEANING OF JIHAD

Brothers in Islam! The Prayer, Fasting, Almsgiving, and Pilgrimage are so important that they are described as the pillars of Islam. They are not, however, like the worship rites in others religions. This we must understand clearly. Nor are they meant to please Allah by their mere outward observance. These acts of worship have in fact been ordained to prepare us for a greater purpose and to train us for a greater duty. Now that we have seen in some detail the nature of this training and the mode of this preparation, let us come to the most crucial

question: What exactly is that great ultimate purpose?

The Ultimate Objective

Stated simply: the ultimate objective of Islam is to abolish the lordship of man over man and bring him under the rule of the One God. To stake everything you have—including your lives—to achieve this purpose is called Jihad. The Prayer, Fasting, Almsgiving and Pilgrimage, all prepare you for Jihad. But as you have long since forgotten this objective as well as the mission entrusted to you, and because all acts of worship have been reduced to their spiritual contents, this brief statement may be difficult to understand. Explanation is, therefore, necessary.

Root of All Evil

Corrupt rule is the root of all the evils you find in the world. Governments have access to power and resources; they frame laws; they control administration, they possess the instruments of coercion like the police and army. Evils exist and flourish in the life of society because governments themselves either spread them or condone them. Obviously the power required to make anything prevail lies with governments.

For example, why is adultery being openly indulged in, why is prostitution carried out publicly? Only because adultery is not a crime in the eyes of those who govern. They themselves indulge in it as well as allowing others to do so. If they wanted to stop it, it could not flourish.

Why is interest rampant? Why are the rich sucking the blood of the poor? Because governments themselves acquire wealth through interest and help others to do the same. Big money-lending houses and banks flourish only because of governmental support.

You also notice that moral depravity and permissiveness are increasing. Why? Simply because that is how governments have educated and trained people. If you want to produce a different kind of man, you simply do not possess the resources to provide a different kind of education. And even if you somehow do produce a few people, where will they find jobs? All means of livelihood and employment are controlled by corrupt governments. Fighting and killing are taking place across the world on an unprecedented scale. Knowledge so assiduously acquired by man is being employed to exterminate man himself. The hard-earned fruits of human civilization are being put to the fire. Precious lives are being destroyed with less thought than would be given to the fate of a potter's vessel of clay. Why is this so? Simply because the most wicked and mischievous among the children of Adam have come to command authority and leadership over the nations of the world. Since they hold the reins of power, the world must go the way they want to take it. (*This was the time when the second world war (1939-45) was about to start.*). Knowledge, wealth, labour, lives, all are directed towards the goals they have chosen. Oppression prevails throughout the world. The weak are denied justice. The poor find life a hard burden. Courts have become shoppes where justice can be bought in return for money. Exorbitant taxes are levied upon people, which are then wasted on high salaries for public officials, on giant buildings, on armaments and on other extravagances. Feudal lords, money-lenders and creditors, religious leaders, dealers in pornography, gambling bosses, drug pushers, manufacturers of alcohol, and pimps are ruining the life, wealth, honour and morality of God's creation and there is nobody to stop them.

Why is all this happening? Simply because governments are corrupt, the hands that hold power an evil. They themselves perpetuate oppression and side with oppressors. The perversion of thinking, the degeneration of morals, the misuse of human capacities and capabilities, the dishonest and exploitive business practices, oppression and injustice, and destruction of God's creation, all result from this: the keys of power are in the wrong hands. So long as power is wielded by wicked and evil hands, human society cannot be set on the right course.

The First Step

Human well-being and happiness, therefore, will only come about by attacking the evil afflicting society at its roots, that is, by getting rid of all powers based on rebellion against the laws of God.

If people are free to commit adultery, no amount of sermons will stop them. But if governments forbid adultery, people will find it easier to give up this evil practice. Similarly, it is not enough to preach sermons against drinking, gambling, usury, bribery, pornography and morally corrupting education if the overall environment of the surrounding society encourages or at least condones these things. Power, however, can do much to eradicate them.

Likewise, merely exhortations and good counsels will not help if you want to eradicate exploitation of man by

man, prevent misuse of human wealth and talent, stamp out oppression establish justice, erase corruption, stop bloodshed, give dignity to the down-trodden, restore equality, prosperity and peace to all. What is needed is a demonstration from those in power that corruption, oppression, injustice, exploitation, immortality and godlessness will not be tolerated; and that positive actions will be taken in accordance with God's laws to promote the creation of a just, God-fearing and God-loving society.

So, I say to you: if you really want to root out corruption now so widespread on God's earth, stand up and fight against corrupt rule; take power and use it on God's behalf. It is useless to think you can change things by preaching alone.

Origin of Corrupt Rule

What is the root cause of corrupt rule? What is the most fundamental change that would prevent power from becoming corrupt?

The lordship of man over man is the root cause of all corrupt rule. The only way to reform and change is to accept the sovereignty of God over man. Do not be surprised at hearing such a brief answer to the complex and profound question of the origin of evil in the world today. Search as long as you like for other answers, you will not find any.

Let us ask ourselves a few simple questions. Has the earth we live on been made by God or by some other being? Have the human being who inhabit the earth been created by God or by somebody else?

Have all the countless necessities of our lives been provided by God or by somebody else?

If the answer to these questions is God, if the earth, human beings and all the things needed to sustain them have been created by God alone, then obviously the land belongs to God, the wealth belongs to God and the people belong to God.

In such a situation, how can it be right and proper for anyone to establish his rule on God's earth or govern God's subjects by any law except that of God? Do you find it reasonable that the land be owned by one being but another being rules over it, that a property belongs to one person but some other person is treated as its owner, that the subjects belongs to one sovereign but another sovereign reigns over them? Such things clearly run contrary to reality, reason and justice. And because of this, wherever and whenever such a situation is found, the results are always disastrous.

Human beings who assume absolute powers to make laws of their own are bound to make mistakes because of their ignorance, and act unjustly and oppressively because of their selfish ends. First, they do not possess sufficient knowledge to frame correct and just laws for human life; and, second, devoid of fear of God and not seeing themselves accountable to God, they assume absolute powers. Being in power, they control people's means of livelihood; they are absolute masters of their lives and properties; they subject them to total obedience. Do you think, therefore, that, in such circumstances, they can be trusted to govern according to the tenets of truth and justice? Can you expect them to be proper trustees of public money? Can you hope that they will refrain from usurping people's rights, from collecting illegal wealth, and from subjugating God's creation to their own desires? Is it possible that such people will follow the right path and encourage others to walk along it? Never! Never! Thousands of years of human experience testify to the contrary. Witness those who feel no fear of God today, and are heedless of accountability in the Hereafter. How great despots, oppressors, betrayers of trust, and evildoers have they become after they have acquired power

God's Lordship Over Man

No man should rule over another man; all men should live under the One God. Thus fundamental change is needed in the framework of all human governments. Those who govern must not become masters but, recognizing God as their only Sovereign, must rule as His deputies and trustees. They must discharge their responsibilities with the consciousness that ultimately they will have to give an account of their trust to that King who knows both the seen and unseen. All laws should be based on the guidance of that god who has knowledge of all realities, who is the source of all wisdom. Nobody has the power to change God's laws or to amend them or to repeal them, otherwise corruption will creep in due to human ignorance, selfishness and desires.

What Islam demands from those who submit to God as the real Sovereign, their only Ruler, and who accept to abide by His laws as brought by His Prophet, blessings and peace be on him, is quite obvious. They should rise to bring their King's land under His law, to destroy the power of those rebels among His subjects who have set themselves up as sovereigns, and to free His subjects from the burden of slavery to others.

Merely believing in God as God and in His law as the true law is not enough. As soon as you believe in these two things, a sacred duty devolves upon you: wherever you are, in whichever country you live, you must strive to change the wrong basis of government, and seize all powers to the rule and make laws from those who do not fear God. You must also provide leadership to God's servants and conduct the affairs of their government in accordance with God's law, remaining fully conscious of living in God's presence and being accountable to Him in

the Hereafter. The name of this striving is Jihad.

Temptation of Power

We all know that power can corrupt. Temptations rise within our hearts to behave as gods once we acquire control over the lives and wealth of people. Taking power is less difficult than protecting ourselves from abusing that power when it is taken. The problem is how to stop ourselves turning ourselves into gods rather than being servants of God. For what benefit is it to anyone if we get rid of one Pharaoh and promptly replace him with another? Therefore, before calling upon us to undergo this severe trail of having power, Islam considers it necessary to prepare us for it.

You have no right to start fighting for power until you have cleansed your hearts of all selfishness. You should develop such purity of heart that when you fight you do not fight for personal or national aggrandizement, but solely to secure Allah's pleasure and to improve the lot of His creation. Merely on the basis of reciting the Kalimah, Islam does not permit you to wage war against God's creation, in the name of God and His Messenger, the same evil acts which the oppressors and rebels of God perpetrate. You must, therefore, have the necessary strength to shoulder such heavy responsibility.

Rituals, a Training Course

The Prayer, Fasting, Almsgiving and Pilgrimage at their deepest level provide preparation and training for the assumption of just power. Just as governments train their armies, police forces and civil services before employing them to do their job, so does Islam, the Din given by Allah. It first trains all those who volunteer for service to God before allowing them to undertake Jihad and establish God's rule on earth.

There is one fundamental difference however. The work for which the secular governments employ their servants do not require qualities like fear of God, moral excellence and piety. Their employees can be adulterers, drunkards and liars, and it will not matter as long as they can carry out the task they have been given. But the work which Allah entrusts to His servants is wholly of a moral character. It is, therefore, essential that such men should be God-fearing and virtuous. Indeed, their training aims to make them morally so strong that when they rise to establish the caliphate of God on earth, they will be equal to this great task.

If they fight, they do not fight to acquire for themselves wealth, property and land, but to secure Allah's pleasure and for the benefit and well-being of His creation. If they gain victory, they must not become proud and arrogant; rather their heads should be bowed before their God. If they become rulers, they should not enslave people; rather they themselves should live as God's slaves, allow none to be a slave of anyone except God. If they acquire control over wealth, they should not fill their own pockets nor those of their relatives or their community; rather they should distribute these God-given treasures equitably among all His subjects according to their needs and circumstances.

No other method of training people to assume such great responsibilities exists except the *'ibadat* (act of worship) that Allah has enjoined upon you: Salah, Sawm, Zakah and Hajj. Only when Islam has prepared its men does it tell them: Now you are the most pious slaves of God on earth. So go forward and fight; dislodge the rebels of God from the government and take over the powers of caliphate.

You are the best community brought forth for mankind. You enjoy the doing of right and forbid the doing of wrong; and you believe in God (al 'Imran 3:110).

Governments Run by God-conscious People

Imagine in what a happy state God's creation will be where the army, police, judiciary, tax authorities and all the other government functionaries are God-fearing and consider themselves accountable to Him in the Hereafter where all government policies and laws are formulated on the basis of Divine guidance, where unjust actions have no place, where evil is quickly rectified by a government constantly ready to promote virtue with all its power and resources.

Such a government will quickly be able to reform the people; it will shut the door against oppression, exploitation, immorality and other prevalent vices; it will reform education to develop the right kind of thinking and attitudes. Once people have the chance to live in a just and fair, peaceful and moral society, eyes turned blind by long exposure to a godless leadership will, sooner or later, begin to perceive and recognize the Truth. Likewise, hearts furred up by vices surrounding them for centuries will become clear again and begin to see the

Truth. No more, then, will people find any difficulty in understanding the simple truth that Allah alone is their God and they should serve no one else, and that the prophets who claimed to have brought His guidance were truthful.

Thoughts which today look extremely difficult to instill into the minds of people will penetrate automatically. Teachings which cannot be explained today through speeches and books will be understood immediately. For they will see with their own eyes the vast difference between a world run on man-made laws and one governed by Divine guidance. Submitting to the One god and accepting the truthfulness of His Prophet, blessings and peace be on him, will be very easy; to reject them will be almost impossible. I doubt that more than a handful of people in a thousand will display such great obstinacy as to reject the truth of Islam in preference to Kufr. Who will choose a thorn as against a flower?

For a long time, brothers, you have been performing the various acts of worship without giving any thought to the ultimate purpose behind them. Never did you prepare yourselves for that purpose. But now, I say, you must understand that a heart devoid of any intention to undertake Jihad will find all ritual worship empty of meaning. Nor will those acts bring you any nearer to your God.

6.CENTRAL IMPORTANCE OF JIHAD

Brothers in Islam! Why is Jihad so central to Islam? To understand this, let us first recollect the meanings of three keywords: Din, Shari'ah and 'Ibadah.

Din means obedience and submission.

Shari'ah tells us how to obey and submit; it the law.

Ibadah means worship

Din, Shari'ah and 'Ibadah

Acknowledging that some one is your ruler to whom you must submit means that you have accepted his Din. He now becomes your sovereign and you become his subjects. The commandments and the codes that he gives you constitute the law or the Shari'ah which you must follow. Once you live in obedience to him according to the law laid down by him, you are serving and worshipping him: this is 'Ibadah. You, then, give him whatever he demands, obey whatever he orders, abstain from whatever he forbids, observe whatever he instructs or decides in all your affairs.

Din, therefore, actually means the same thing as state and government; Shari'ah is the law of-that state and government; and 'Ibadah amounts to following and complying with that law. Whenever you accept someone as your ruler and submit to his orders, you have entered that person's Din. If you accept that Allah is your ruler, you have entered Allah's Din; if your ruler is some particular nation you have entered that nation's Din; and if it is your own nation or your people, then you have entered the people's Din. To whatever you submit yourselves, you have entered its Din; and you are performing the 'Ibadah of the whose laws you are following.

Duality of Din

It is necessary to spell out this point because, once you have grasped it, you can see that it is impossible for you to follow more than one Din at a time. Of various rulers, only one can rule your lives; of various systems of law, only one can become the law of your lives. And of the various objects of worship, it is only possible for you to worship one god.

You may object that this is not strictly true; as a matter of belief we can accept one ruler, even if in practice we obey another; we can worship one god, even if we submit to someone else; our hearts can believe one law, even if the affairs of our lives are regulated by another law.

In reply, I say: 'No doubt this can be done, and in fact it is being done; but this is Shirk---and this Shirk is sheer falsehood'. In reality, you are followers only of that being's Din whom you are actually obeying. Is it not then utter hypocrisy to call that being your ruler and to claim to belong to his Din whom you do not obey? What benefit will such belief give you if only your tongues ad hearts subscribe to it? Is it not meaningless to assert that you have faith I his Shari'ah when all your

Affairs are conducted in violation of this Shari'ah and in fact you follow another Shari'ah? Is it noa pseudo-exercise to accept a certain being as your object of worship and bow your heads o the ground before hi when in practice you give service to another being?

Only that being is your object of worship, and only him are you worshipping whose orders you obey, whose prohibitions you observe, whose limits you do not violate, whose code you follow in all your affairs, whose procedures regulate your transactions, whose decision you always seek and submit to, whose Shari'ah governs your dealings with other people, and on whose summons you surrender all your talents and powers, your hearts

ad brains, hands and feet, all your possessions, even your lives.

Whatever you say your beliefs are, it is your actual practice which constitutes the reality, mere lip-service carries no weight. If you obey a king's Din, Allah's Din will have no room in it. And if you submit to popular sovereignty, or to the Din of Britons or Germans, or to your nation and motherland, then again Allah's Din will have no place in it. But if, in reality, you are adherents of Allah's Din, there will be no room for any other Din.

Every Din Wants Power

A total Din, whatever its nature, wants power for itself; the prospect of sharing power is unthinkable. Whether it is popular sovereignty or monarchy, communism or Islam, or any other Din, it must govern to establish itself. A Din without power to govern is just like a building which exists in the mind only. But it is the building which actually exists, in which you actually live, that is important. Through its door you go in, through its door you come out. Its roof is above you, its walls surround you. You arrange your living pattern according to its shape and facilities.

What point is there, while living in a building whose architectural design obliges you to adopt certain living patterns, in pretending that you believe in a different sort of building altogether or that you are 'really' living therein. You cannot live in a building which exists only in your heads. In exactly the same way, there is no meaning in asserting that a certain Din is true while living your lives according to another Din. That Din alone is real and genuine whose authority is established on earth, whose laws are followed, and according to whose rules and regulations one's affairs of life are conducted. Let us look at some examples.

Popular Sovereignty

'Popular sovereignty' means that people of a country are its paramount sovereign; so it is a Din. Now their lives should be governed by a Shari'ah which people have themselves framed; and all the inhabitants of that country should obey and serve their own authority. How can this Din be established unless the sovereignty of people reigns supreme in the country, and unless a Shari'ah framed by people's representations is enforced? And if it is, there can be no room there for monarchy, for foreign rule, or for anyone else.

Monarchy

'Monarchy' means that a king is the paramount sovereign of a country; so it is a Din. Now he alone shall be obeyed and his Shari'ah alone enforced. If not, then it is futile to acknowledge the king as the sovereign and paramount ruler and his Shari'ah as the supreme law. If popular sovereignty is supreme or a foreign power takes over, no trace will be left of the monarchy nor will anyone be able to follow it.

British Rule

In India (*In 1938-39 India was ruled by the British.*) the Din of the British prevails. It prevails because the Indian Penal Code and the Civil Procedure Code are enforced by British power. All your affairs are carried out within the limits prescribed by the British and all of you bow your heads in obedience to their orders. As long as this Din prevails, no other Din, no matter how fervently you profess to follow it, can have any reality. And if the Indian Penal Code and the Civil Procedure Code ceased to operate and British orders were not obeyed, then 'Din of the British orders were not obeyed, then 'Din of the British' would lose all meaning.

Din of Islam

Exactly similar is the position of the Din of Islam. This Din means that Allah alone is the Lord of everything on earth and He alone is the Sovereign. Thus, He alone must be obeyed and served, His Shari'ah alone must govern all affairs of our lives.

What does Allah's sovereignty imply? That His will must run supreme in the world: legal judgements must be based on His Shari'ah, the police must operate according to His commandments, financial transactions must be carried out in conformity with His laws, taxes must be levied as directed by Him and spent as specified by Him, the Civil Service and the army must obey His code, people must devote their abilities, capacities, and efforts to fulfilling His desires. Further, Allah alone must be feared, His subjects must submit to Him only, and man must not serve anyone but Him.

Unless the Kingdom of God is established, these objectives cannot be realized. How can Allah's Din accept to co-exist with any other Din, when no other Din admits of such partnership? Like every other Din, Allah's Din, too, demands that all authority should genuinely and exclusively be vested in it. If it is not, the Din of Islam will not be there, and it will be futile to pretend that it is. That is the point which the Qur'an has repeatedly stressed: And they were not enjoined anything but that they should serve God, making submission exclusively His, turning away [from all false gods](al-Bayyinah 98:5).

It is He who has sent forth His Messenger with the Guidance and the way of Truth, so that he makes it prevail over all ways[religions], however much Mushriks [who take gods beside God] may dislike it (al-Tawbah 9: 33). And fight them, until there is no rebellion [against God], and all submission is to God alone (al-Anfal 8: 39). Authority [to lay down what is right and what is wrong] belongs only to God; He has commanded that you shall not serve any but Him (Yusuf 12: 40).

So whoever hopes to meet his Lord, let him do righteous deeds, and let him not make anyone share in his Lord's service (al-Kahf 18: 111).

Have you not seen those who assert that they believe in what has been sent down to you, and what was sent down before you, and yet desire to summon one another to the rule of powers in rebellion against God, although they have been commanded to reject them.....We have not sent any Messenger, but that he should be obeyed by God's leave (al-Nisa' 4: 60-4).

Read these Quranic Ayahs bearing in mind the true meanings of Din, Shari'ah and 'Ibadah, and you will understand their message.

Jihad in Islam

The din of Allah, like any other Din, does not allow that you merely believe in its truth and perform certain worship rites. If you are a true follower of Islam, you can neither submit to any other Din, nor can you make Islam a partner of it. If you believe Islam to be true, you have no alternative but to exert your utmost strength to make it prevail on earth: you either establish it or give your lives in this struggle.

By this criterion alone can be tested the sincerity of your faith. With a sincere belief, you will find it impossible even to sleep comfortably if you are made to live under another Din, not to speak of giving service to it, getting rich under it, or enjoying its comforts. Every moment you spend under another Din will be a bed of thorns; every morsel of food a poison.

Even if you passively accept to live under another Din, you are not a believer in the true sense of the term, no matter how assiduously you offer one Prayer after another, how many long hours you spend in meditation, how beautifully you explain the Qur'an and how eruditely you write and speak on Islam. But, if some people actively serve another Din and fight its wars, no words are enough to describe their abominable behaviour. A day will soon come when they will meet their Maker and taste the wages of their sins. If they consider themselves Muslims, they are deluding themselves. With a little common sense, they could have understood how illogical it is to accept one Din as true and then, at the same time, agree to the dominance of another contrary Din, or actively work for it. Fire and water may exist together, but not such conduct with faith in Allah.

All that the Qur'an says in this regard cannot be reproduced here, but I cite a few Ayahs:

Do men think that they will be left to say, 'We believe', and they will not be tested? And, indeed, We tested those who were before them. God will surely mark out those who speak truly, and He will surely mark out the liars (al-Ankabut 29: 2-3).

And some men there are who say, 'We believe in God', but whenever they are made to suffer for God's cause, they take the persecution by man as it were God's punishment. And, then, if help comes from your Lord, they will say, 'we have always been with you'. What, is not God fully aware of what is in the hearts of all beings? God will surely mark out who believe, and He will surely mark out the hypocrites (al-Ankabut 29: 10—11).

And God is not such that He will leave the believers in the state in which you are, till He shall distinguish the bad from the good (Al Imran 3:179).

Do you think you would be left [alone] while God has not yet seen which of you have struggled, and taken not--- apart from God and His Messenger and the believers---any helper (al-Tawbah9: 16).

Have you not seen those who would be friends with people with whom God is angry? They are neither of you nor of them...Those are Satan's party, who are the losers. Surely, those who oppose God and His Messenger [work against the establishment of the Religion of Truth], those are among the most abject. God has ordained, 'I shall surely prevail, I and My Messengers'. Surely God is All-strong, All-mighty (al-Mujadalah 58: 14---21).

Recognizing True Believers

True believers carry only one identification: all their efforts are directed to eradicating every false Din—and every Din other than Allah's is false—and establishing in its place the true Din. They live, suffer losses, and die in His cause. Whether they succeed or fail matters little. On the contrary, if they reconcile themselves to the domination of a false way of life or help make it dominant, they are liars if they claim to possess Iman.

Change Only Through Struggle

People who use the difficulty of establishing the true Din as a pretext for not trying to do so have their answer in Qur'an. Obviously, whenever you rise to establish the true Din, some false Din is already in a position of power, controlling all resources. Otherwise there would, by definition, be nothing to topple. It is, therefore, equally obvious that the replacement of this false Din by the true Din will always be a long and hard struggle. It cannot be accomplished, now or ever, easily and without any sacrifice. It is impossible to claim that you want the establishment of true Din while at the same time continuing to tolerate those parts of the false Din which appear to be of benefit to you personally. True Din can only be established precisely when people are prepared to give up the benefits and privileges they enjoy under the false Din.

Jihad fi sabili 'llah is never easy. It is meant only for those who have the will to fight for their cause; and such people are always few in number. Let those who claim to follow the true Din but are not prepared to make any sacrifice continue to serve their self-interests. While sacrifices are being made in the cause of Truth, such people are nowhere in evidence; when the battle is won, they will appear as if from nowhere, saying: '*Inna kunna ma'akum*' (we have always been with you; now come and give us our share.)

Let us not be like those who claim to believe in Allah, but give neither time, money, nor lives for the sake of His Din. Let us come forward and fight in Allah's cause with whatever we possess.