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THE URGENCY OF HAJJ

By Shaykh Zulfiqar Ahmed

The Blessed House

Hajj is a blessed pillar from among the noble pillars of Islam. Allah ﷻ honored a specific place on Earth by choosing it for His special blessings and ordered His House to be built there. To the naked eye this place in Makkah in Arabia is just a cube of rock and stone, but is the focal point for Allah's ﷻ special *tajalliyat* (blessings and mercy). The important concentration and descent of Allah's ﷻ blessings on this place is what earn it the name *Bait Ullah*, the House of Allah ﷻ.

Bait Ullah is not the name of just that cube in the desert but the holy location that is the target of Allah's ﷻ blessings. The location would still be termed *Bait Ullah* regardless of whether the brick structure that is known as the *Kaaba* was there or not.

All mankind is commanded to face this location in prayer to Allah ﷻ. Every believer is attracted to this place because it is an absorption point for Allah's ﷻ love and blessings. People from all walks of life come here for homage out of love because *Bait Ullah* is a magnet for people's hearts. The poorest of the poor who do not have enough to

eat or to clothe themselves will surely have a desire to see the House of Allah ﷺ. This is a fascinating attraction that is not limited to the rich but applies to all people, regardless of whether they have the means or not. This attraction does not fade when someone just reaches the Haram (the Grand Mosque) but gets stronger until it pulls people to the *Kaaba* itself so that they hug its draped cloth just like iron hugs its magnet.

Tests for the Claimants

Lovers who boast claims of love are usually tested by their beloved to test the strength of their claim. Allah ﷻ tests us in the same way to determine our worthiness. The first test is one of wealth that Allah ﷻ takes from us in the months of *Rajab* and *Shaban*. Believers are commanded to give *zakat* (alms) out of their earnings in the Name of Allah ﷻ because parting with one's hard-earned wealth is always trying.

Once successful in this test Allah ﷻ tests our resolve by ordering us to fast from dawn to dusk in the holy month of Ramadan. Believers are ordered to refrain from food and drink and other necessities in the daylight hours of this month. Once successful in these two tests believers prove that they are willing to do anything to prove their love for Allah ﷻ and now they are rewarded with an invitation to the House of Allah ﷻ.

Muslims ready themselves and are pulled to this House from all corners of the globe in their intense love for Allah ﷻ, and this is why Hajj is a journey not of obligation but of love. These are fortunate people who have been allowed

to come to *Bait Ullah* after countless days and nights of prayer and supplication. All the lovers of Allah ﷺ converge upon His House for the blessed pilgrimage in the first days of Zulhijja.

The First Hajj

Hajj became obligatory upon the Muslims in the ninth year of the Migration, and the Messenger ﷺ of Allah appointed Hadrat Abu Bakr ؓ as the leader of the first Hajj group. The verses of Sura *al Baraa* were revealed after this caravan of three hundred left for Hajj, and the Prophet ﷺ dispatched Hadrat Ali ؓ after the group with a special message. This message included the Divine proclamation that no unbeliever would be allowed into Makkah after the revelation because the honor of Hajj was only for those with the light of faith in their breasts.

Greatness of Hadrat Abu Bakr ؓ

Prayer and Hajj are two of the four commanded acts of worship that are congregational, while fasting and zakat are both individual acts. A noteworthy point here is that Hadrat Abu Bakr ؓ was appointed the leadership of both congregational acts in the lifetime of RasulAllah ﷺ, further illustrating that he was the natural leader after the Prophet ﷺ.

Hadrat Abu Bakr ؓ was always present alongside the Messenger ﷺ of Allah - he was present among the ranks of Badr; among the wounded of Uhud; among the defenders of the Battle of the Ditch, and was the Prophet's ﷺ companion in the Cave of Thaur. He was foremost in giving his wealth for the cause of Islam and foremost in sacrificing

all for the Messenger ﷺ of Allah, such that he is buried alongside the Prophet ﷺ in Madinah. He is known as *Thani Athnain* (the second of the two) because he would always be the second behind the Prophet ﷺ in every situation.

A Journey of Trial

Hajj is not a luxury tour or vacation, and Allah ﷻ has made hardship a necessary factor in Hajj. Those who depart with the mindset that Hajj is supposed to be easy get impatient and start complaining at the slightest inconvenience. Hence pilgrims need to begin their journey with the knowledge and intention that Hajj is a journey of trials and not one of luxury. We are lovers and not the beloved but yet we expect our every need to be catered to just like we were the beloved. This is a journey only for lovers, and whoever wants to travel as if he is the beloved will find that he will never get the opportunity for this grand journey.

Hadrat Ghulam Habib ؒ used to say that he and the pilgrims would depart for Hajj by ship and reach Arabia after a grueling month's journey. Once reaching Jeddah the ship would remain at port for three days while immigration and immunization status would be verified. Today this same process does not even take a full three hours let alone three days. Advances in technology such as the aircraft have nullified the trials and tribulations that existed in those times and made travel easy for us but people still complain. Today the luxury exists for us to complete the entire Hajj trip in twenty days or less. The pilgrim should not be

desirous of hardship but nevertheless be steadfast and prepared for it.

Correcting our Outlook

The lifestyle that we have become accustomed to has spoiled us and we expect a limousine to be waiting at the airport to whisk us away and drop us right outside the Haram. There is a system to everything that we must realize and we must be prepared to allow it to run its own course. We need to realize that we are servants whom the Master is allowing to come visit His House and not the other way around.

Presidents and kings of this worthless and temporary world make their visitors wait for hours without explanation and we expect the Master of the universe to cater to our every need. To be allowed to come to Hajj is indeed a blessing for which we should be ready to bear double if not triple the usual burden.

Hajj is a journey and act of worship and there is always trial in worship no matter what form. If people desire luxury and comfort they are welcome to stay in their beds because no one is forcing them to go to Hajj. However, people must be prepared for hardship if they have already taken the first steps toward anything.

Invaluable Advice

Pilgrims must make sure that they are never verbally critical of anything on this sacred journey. Hadrat Ghulam Habib رحمۃ اللہ علیہ once told a story about a pilgrim who was shopping in the market in Madinah for groceries. A vendor suggested that he also buy some yogurt but the man declined saying

that the yogurt in Madinah is sour. He proceeded about his day and that night the Messenger ﷺ of Allah appeared to him in a dream. The Prophet ﷺ was angry and said, “You say the yogurt in my town is sour? Get out of Madinah!”

This pilgrim woke up very distressed and approached the local scholars (*ulama*) as to what he might do. Some of the *ulama* advised him to go to the noble burial site of Hadrat Hamza رضي الله عنه and pray to Allah سبحانه for mercy and a possible solution. This man did exactly this and presented himself at Hadrat Hamza’s رضي الله عنه tomb where he cried and begged forgiveness for his reckless speech.

That night Hadrat Hamza رضي الله عنه appeared in this pilgrim’s dream and acknowledged the latter’s profuse supplications but put them aside. Hadrat Hamza رضي الله عنه said sternly, “Once the beloved of Allah سبحانه has told you to leave you no longer have permission to stay. Leave now or you will be in danger of losing your faith.” Hence this person had no avenue but to leave.

Correcting our Intention

The above is a very poignant reason for keeping our complaining tongue in check for the few days that we are at Hajj. Wherever there is great benefit there will undoubtedly be shortcomings of many kinds because Hajj demands a monumental task of preparation in every field from transportation to sleeping arrangements for the pilgrims.

We need to keep focused on the purpose of this sacred journey and consider every shortcoming and trial as a blessing for us. Allah سبحانه is allowing filthy sinners like us to come to His House and so there is no need to make any

comments about anything. There have been countless people much more pious than us who have not been fortunate enough to see *Bait Ullah*. This is a journey of trials and not the luxury that we have unfortunately become accustomed to.

For a sincere and pious worshipper these complaints are only for *not* seeing the House of Allah ﷺ and disappear immediately once he or she looks upon the *Kaaba*. The House of Allah ﷺ has such a brilliant magnetism and awe that one does not consider a hardship as a hardship anymore because a believer realizes true peace and security in the House of Allah ﷺ just as a child finds security and love in its mother's arms. Furthermore, Hadrat Ashraf Ali Thanvi ؒ writes that the righteous find peace upon seeing *Bait Ullah* just as the believers will find peace when they enter Paradise. Here they forget all past worries and trials.

Sincerity and Sacrifice

The next important thing that pilgrims need to evaluate is sincerity. Undoubtedly sincerity is an essential requirement of every act of worship, but this requirement is given more emphasis here for the auspicious worship of Hajj. The simple reasoning for this is that Hajj is an act that is required only once a lifetime. A worship such as prayer is observed five times a day so if one prayer was offered without sincerity the person can try harder for the next prayer, but Hajj is a special occasion that only comes once a lifetime for most. Hence people need to be extra careful about what might seem to be the smallest issues.

Disputes and arguments are a very normal part of life, which may intensify because Hajj is a long journey that people have to undertake together. Arguments may increase between friends or between family and relatives because unfortunately people do not want to listen but want to lead. We need to keep in mind that this journey is sacred and cannot easily be repeated and so there is no need for any kind of argument or dispute whatsoever.

We are Muslims and only temporary travelers in this life, so it is not always necessary that we absolutely have to have the best seat on the bus or the best room in the hotel. We should try and make sure that others in our party are more comfortable than we are rather than inconveniencing them so that we are more at ease. This is a journey of trials and we need to learn to compromise.

Purity of Means

The most important thing that pilgrims need to be absolutely sure of is the purity of the finances that are spent for Hajj. There should be no doubt whatsoever that the money for every aspect of the journey from travel to lodging arrangements is legally permissible (*halal*), with not the slightest hint of being prohibited (*haram*). Hajj will only be accepted if the means used for it are *halal*.

A hadith in relation to this states that a man was crying to Allah ﷻ as he clutched the draperies of the *Kaaba* but his supplication was not accepted. This was because his earning was *haram*, which made his food and clothing *haram*. Supplication (*dua*) will never be accepted here because the very means used to come there are *haram*, and

hence the finances used for Hajj need to be absolutely pure. Someone in doubt about the lawfulness of his earnings should discuss the issue with the local *ulama* in his city.

The great *ulama* of Islam have dedicated their whole lives to the Holy Quran and *sunnah* and therefore have the knowledge to solve every potential situation. For example in this case of doubt regarding earnings, they have said that such an individual is permitted to complete his Hajj with a loan. Hajj would thus be completed with *halal* finances and whatever means he uses to pay back the loan is another matter.

Points to Ponder

The Messenger ﷺ of Allah said that among the signs of the Endtime would be that the wealthy among the Muslims will go to Hajj for vacation; the poor will go to beg; and the *ulama* will go to boast of their superiority over the other Muslims.

In light of this hadith the *hujjaj* (pilgrims) must make it a point to never boast of their Hajj to others. They not only risk having it invalidated but Allah ﷻ may never give them another chance because of their arrogance.

On the other hand others may try to justify not going or make the excuse of limited financial resources. These people should keep in mind that the Messenger ﷺ of Allah said that Allah ﷻ increases the livelihood and economic means (*rizq*) of those who perform Hajj and Umra. Allah ﷻ will also increase His blessings for those who have little but save methodically with the sincere intentions and desire of performing Hajj.

The Lover's Destination

Every journey has a destination and the destination of Hajj is the pleasure of Allah ﷻ. There are two kinds of *hujjaj*: those who are fortunate to see (*ziyarah*) *Bait Ullah* and those still more fortunate who are able to see the Creator of *Bait Ullah*.

This is why the *tawaf* (circumambulation) that is performed after the gathering of Arafat is called *Tawaf-e-Ziyarah*. Those who have worked hard against their evil desires and lower self (*nafs*) are able to see the bounties of Allah ﷻ in all their glory, and those who have not obviously cannot partake in this experience. Thus it is essential to have a righteous *alim* or *shaykh* in one's company so that he may guide at every point.

Hajj is a journey of love and desire, and upon close examination love is found to be the paramount force in every action within Hajj. As a general rule lovers whose purpose is a specific beloved pursue their quest single mindedly and ignore all else. They make no attempt to beautify themselves like a wife might do for a husband because the one purpose of getting to the beloved overpowers all other desires or concerns.

The rites and rituals of Hajj personify this intense desire of the lover. From the beginning of the journey the lover is told to shed all outer décor and don the *ihram*, two simple and unstitched sheets of white cloth. For the duration of the journey and Hajj itself this lover is not allowed to apply any sort of scent, nor is the lover allowed to trim the hair or nails.

Lovers maddened with love and desire usually not only speak of their love but publicize it loudly in chants or poetry. Hence when the lover of Allah ﷺ starts on this quest he is also commanded to raise his voice and shout that he is coming to his beloved: *Labbaik Allahumma labbaik!*

Our elders who have gone before us understood and practiced the meaning of this cry, and hundreds would receive guidance because of their efforts. Today we go physically but fail to effect any change within ourselves and return exactly as we were and return to our same heedless lives.

A lovesick boy stands outside the window or door of his beloved hoping for a sign of recognition. The lover of Allah ﷺ circles the House of Allah ﷺ with the same maddened desire like a moth circles a flame.

Moths to A Flame

Tawaf is the only ritual within Islam that men and women are commanded to perform in the same vicinity, whereas there is separation in all other situations. Men and women are separated in prayer with a partition to cite just one example. This may seem strange because Islam is very strict in terms of male and female interaction but the *ulama* have written a fascinating explanation for this:

The lovers of Allah ﷺ journey tirelessly for the chance of worshipping at *Bait Ullah*, and once they reach this magnificent shrine men lose all sense of their masculinity and women likewise lose heed of their femininity, and in maddened desire they focus only on *Bait Ullah*. Allah ﷺ

wanted to establish for all mankind that His lovers lose all sense of themselves and relinquish all other loves when coming to worship Him.

Allah ﷻ wanted to further establish the reality that His love is paramount and superior to all other loves that may exist. This is truly the case because even husbands and wives focus only on Allah ﷻ instead of themselves. It is the only occasion when men and women worship and cry in the same vicinity with no thought to one another.

Recognizing the Enemy

The lover would hate anyone who tried to keep him away from his beloved or hindered his quest to attain nearness to the same. Satan tries to create a rift between mankind and Allah ﷻ and so the *hujaj* stone the devil at the stone throwing ritual at the Jumurat.

Lovers always shower their beloved with gifts as an outpouring of their love and labor hard to be noticed. Likewise the pilgrims also present a sacrifice to Allah ﷻ at the conclusion of Hajj.

Most Generous of Hosts

The *hujaj* are guests of Allah ﷻ at Hajj, as He commanded Hadrat Ibrahim ؑ to announce an open invitation to all to come worship at His House. Allah ﷻ is the Supreme Host, and takes great care of His guests even more than we honor someone who may come to our house.

The Messenger ﷺ of Allah said that even the person who sits and looks upon *Bait Ullah* is a recipient of Allah's ﷻ countless blessings. We are unfortunate in that we do

not recognize His supreme hospitality, otherwise we would be in Paradise on Earth.

Being such an understanding and kind host, Allah ﷻ has not put any insurmountable difficulty in Hajj. Hajj is not a short prayer that old people would miss because they are slower in performing their ablution or slower to form ranks. Moreover, if this were the case the majority of ladies might miss out on this grand occasion, having spent hundreds to reach there and only to be in their menses and unable to pray at the assigned time.

This reasoning is why the only requirement for the pilgrim on the plain of Arafat between the Dhuhur and Isha prayers is just to stay focused and attentive to Allah ﷻ (*wuquf*). In *wuquf* the person may offer prayers or supplicate to Allah ﷻ for anything and for as long as he wants, for Allah ﷻ has placed no limitations on this *wuquf*. In this and countless other ways Allah ﷻ has made Hajj very easy upon the people by allowing for different circumstances and needs rather than restricting their worship to one or few specific acts.

Mercy of Allah ﷻ

The Messenger ﷺ of Allah said there is a special and blessed location between *Rukn-e-Yamani* and *Hajr-e-Aswad* where seventy thousand angels stay constantly attentive and say “Ameen” in unison to the supplications of the pilgrims performing *tawaf*. Such people are tremendously fortunate to have Allah’s ﷻ angels saying “ameen” to their desires and needs.

This is a journey of intense desire and love in which the beloved gives much more than the lover deserves, for this Beloved has infinite treasures. We might pay a worker in our home his earned wages and nothing more, but Allah ﷻ listens to our every need and desire and gives us even more than the wages that we may have earned. In this journey of love and desire the individual will receive what he had yearned and worked for. The devotee runs out of requests but the Beloved's treasures never diminish for His treasures are infinite. This is a stream from which everyone can drink from because it never dries.

Vast Knowledge of Our Elders

Hadrat Ghulam Habib ؒ once related that at one Hajj he would read the Holy Quran and supplicate to Allah ﷻ at the completion of every verse depending on whether the verse inspired love or fear. He completed the entire Holy Quran in this fashion, having offered more than a hundred supplications. These people were indeed fortunate because they understood the realities of Allah's ﷻ infinite bounties. It is obvious that we are the losers because we do not understand such things because we do not even know how to ask.

Acceptance of *Dua*

We may not know the exact times at which *duas* are accepted, but hadith has told us that there are seventeen key locations at Hajj where *duas* are accepted. *Hujjaj* should make a point of learning these key locations so they may be able to offer prayers here and beg from Allah ﷻ. No one

knows the blessed moment when Allah ﷻ may accept a particular *dua* or prostration from his servant.

The difference between the Hajj of the righteous beings of Allah ﷻ and that of common people is that of night and day.

Various Conveyances

Hadrat Ibrahim bin Adham ؑ was on his way to Hajj on foot when someone asked him his destination. He answered that he was going to Hajj and so the man was surprised because on foot this would be an insurmountable journey and said, “But you need transportation for Hajj.” Hadrat Ibrahim bin Adham ؑ replied that he not only had a means of transportation but also had many such means.

The man was perplexed by this reply because he could not see any such mode of transport and asked Hadrat to show him. Hadrat Ibrahim bin Adham ؑ said:

“When in difficulty I will rely on patience as my transportation, and when I am blessed I will use gratitude as my transport. During sorrow I will rely on *inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji’oon* to carry me, and on *La hawla wa la quwatta illa billa* to carry me whenever combating *nafs* and Satan. If I encounter any circumstances of sin I have the vehicle of *tawba* to see me through. If someone bigger confronts me I will use the vehicle of *Allahu Akbar*, and I shall complete my Hajj using these different means at every point.”

The Insight of a Believer

A seeker studying under Hadrat Shibli رحمته الله appeared at a gathering after being absent for some time. Hadrat Shibli رحمته الله asked where he had been and so this young man answered that he had just returned from Hajj. The following is the conversation that ensued.

Hadrat Shibli : “When you took off your clothes in order to don the ihram, did you also make intention of stripping the clothes of sin from your body?”

Student : “No I did not make such an intention.”

Hadrat Shibli : “Did you make intention to present your whole body and soul in front of Allah سبحانه when you said *Labbaik?*”

Student: “No I did not make such an intention.”

Hadrat Shibli: “During *tawaf* did you realize that you were touching the Right Hand of Allah سبحانه when you greeted *Hajr-e-Aswad* with your salams?”

Student: “No I did not realize any such thing.”

Hadrat Shibli : “Did you feel that you were hugging the Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم of Allah when you hugged the draperies of the Kaaba?”

Student: “No I did not feel that.”

Hadrat Shibli : “When you passed by the door of the *Kaaba* did you beseech your Lord like a beggar beseeches a king?”

Student: “No I did not beseech Him like that.”

Hadrat Shibli: “Did you make intention for total and sincere repentance from all your sins no matter how small when you were at Arafat?”

Student: “No I did not make such a strong intention.”

Hadrat Shibli : “Did you make firm intention to make Satan your mortal enemy when you stoned the devils?”

Student: “No I did not make an intention like that.”

Hadrat Shibli : “Did you make intention to sacrifice your *nafs* and desires for the sake of Allah ﷻ when you performed the animal sacrifice?”

Student: “No I did not make an intention like that. I only sacrificed the animal.”

Hadrat Shibli : “Did you see the Beloved when you performed the *Tawaf-e-Ziyarah*?”

Student: “No I did not see anything like that.”

Closing this discussion Hadrat Shibli said to the young man, “My dear child, you have not performed Hajj. You should don the ihram anew next year as if you are going for the first time and perform Hajj exactly as I have taught you.”

These are just some examples of the vast difference between the Hajj of the common man and that of the *auliyyaa* (Friends of Allah ﷺ). We should all learn lessons from the lives of these magnanimous people and try to implement these ways in our lives.

Signs of the Acceptance of Hajj

The *mashaikh* have written that there are many signs that Allah ﷻ has accepted the pilgrim’s Hajj. Hadrat Ashraf Ali Thanvi ؒ writes that the first of these signs is that upon leaving this sacred land the pilgrim has an intense desire in his heart to return for another Hajj. Such people are fortunate because Allah ﷻ accepts their deed and ignites a flame of desire in their hearts that will keep them yearning for Makkah.

In contrast there are those unfortunate wretches who leave with nothing but complaints and vow not to return because they had such a bad experience. Such people return empty handed because their Hajj is not accepted.

The Inner Self Revealed

Bait Ullah has such an incredible effect on people that a person’s true inner condition becomes exposed whenever he

comes in front of it and sends his greetings upon *Hajr-e-Aswad*.

A person might be a habitual backbiter and slanderer. Hence when he appears before *Bait Ullah* his heart will burst open exposing his true nature for all to see. Thus such a person will become obsessed with slandering others despite being in the blessed House of Allah ﷺ. He will not be able to stop himself from slandering others even in this sacred location because the power of *Bait Ullah* will have exposed him for what he truly is.

Consequently the same applies to the righteous servants of Allah ﷺ whose condition is purified even more because they are righteous and grateful. Such people will tolerate all difficulties presented at Hajj for the sake of Allah ﷺ and count them as blessings.

This is the reason why some people return cleansed of their sins and rectified whereas others return worse than they were before. The difference is that the Hajj of the former party is accepted whilst the Hajj of the others is not, and so the latter continue down the path of wretchedness.

Acceptance of our Hajj is the biggest reason why we must cry and beg to Allah ﷺ on this sacred journey. We must cry so much that Allah ﷺ accepts us if only out of pity. Our righteous elders would weep and beg for years so Allah ﷺ would accept their Hajj and turn their lives around.

Acceptance through Humility

A righteous man had completed seventy Hajj, and was now leaving for his last Hajj together with his son. Both of them

donned the ihram but when they proclaimed “Labbaik!” they heard a voice that said “La Labbaik!” meaning that their Labbaik was not accepted.

Hearing this voice the son said to his father, “What is the use of continuing if our Labbaik is not accepted? Take off the ihram.”

The father turned to his son and said, “My son, I heard the same voice when I performed my first Hajj and now am hearing it again on my seventieth Hajj. Tell me if there is anywhere else we can go or any other door where we can beg from other than that of Allah ﷻ? I have to come here again and again whether He accepts or not because there is no other door at which I can ask.”

Allah ﷻ accepted these words from his servant and inspired him thus: “We have accepted all your past Hajj because of your humility today.”

Love and Desire

Hajj is truly a fascinating journey of love. Some people become deluded and think that it is only about finances and that only sufficient money can take them there. There are countless wealthy people who have left this world without being able to see *Bait Ullah*, and consequently there are countless people who cannot afford clothes on their back but they find themselves at *Bait Ullah*. This is a journey of desire.

Keeping this in mind Hadrat Ghulam Habib رضى الله عنه related a very compelling story. He said that he performed Hajj once during the 1930s when oil had not yet been discovered in Arabia. The land was gripped in so much poverty that

children in the street would fight over the melon rinds that the pilgrims would discard.

Hadrat related that an old man approached their caravan one day and motioned to his stomach indicating that he was very hungry. Hadrat requested his wife to bake some bread for him and so his wife took out some flour and water to prepare the bread.

The old man stepped forward as she was about to light the stove and helped himself to some of the uncooked flour in a glass. He then mixed some water and ate his concoction. He turned to Hadrat and said that he was so hungry that his stomach was aching terribly but now he could wait because he had eaten some of the uncooked flour. This was the height of poverty and hunger in Arabia at that time.

Soon after Hadrat and his wife reached *Bait Ullah*. Here they would occasionally encounter a poor little boy whom they would feed and give money to. Hadrat's wife developed a fondness for the boy and invited him to return with them. She highlighted all the advantages of living in comfort in his new home with a new family whereas he had nothing but poverty and loneliness to look forward to in his current condition.

The little boy listened with keen interest and beaming eyes as Hadrat's wife finished telling him everything he would have in their home. He thought for a moment and then pointed to *Bait Ullah* and said, "Will this also be there?" When Hadrat's wife apologetically said no then the boy said that he had no reason to go because *Bait Ullah* was not there.

Bait Ullah's amazing attraction even in the depths of poverty baffles the mind. In this example this little boy is not willing to leave his poverty and hunger stricken life despite all the advantages a new family life would bring because it would mean parting with *Bait Ullah*.

This proves the fascinating fact that this journey is not reserved just for the wealthy. The poor have nothing but their intense love for the House of Allah ﷺ and so the mercy of Allah ﷻ pulls them to this sacred place. They complete this fantastic journey because their intense loves writes it in their destiny.

A Fascinating Account of Love

Hadrat Mufti Jamil Ahmed ؒ of Jamia Ashrafia Lahore used to relate a story about a cowhand outside of Lahore whose only work was raising and milking cows. He developed an intense desire to see *Bait Ullah* but naturally was very poor and had no means.

After continuously asking people how he could go to Hajj someone finally told him that he could not go from Lahore but that pilgrims leave on ships from Karachi. Hence this cowhand boarded a train and reached Karachi. He asked the same questions of people at the station and was told that pilgrims left after gathering at the Haji Camp at the seaport.

The Haji Camp was far but fortunately some people who were going by that way offered him a ride and left him at the camp. Now this cowhand observed pilgrims boarding and leaving on ships for many days and wondered what he

could do since he neither had proper documentation nor any money for the journey.

He observed porters boarding and leaving the ships after helping the pilgrims with their luggage and was determined to somehow board one of the ships. One of the porters told him that he could only board the ship if he was wearing a porter uniform, and so he talked the porter into lending him a jacket which he would send back with some of the luggage being brought off the ship. This porter agreed and so this cowhand managed to smuggle himself onboard one of the ships bound for Jeddah.

The ship got underway and he asked a pilgrim named Abdullah to let him know when Jeddah was near. The ship neared Jeddah at nightfall and so this person let the cowhand know that Jeddah's lights were visible and the captain had announced they would be docking soon. This cowhand mounted the ship's railing and dived off the edge into the sea. Abdullah was shocked and ran to the edge to see if he would come up but it was dark and so Abdullah feared that the cowhand must surely have drowned.

As Abdullah performed Hajj and was leaving after the *Tawaf-e-Ziyarah* he noticed the same cowhand he had met on the ship dressed in fine white robes. They met enthusiastically and Abdullah asked what had happened to him. His friend invited him to his house so they could talk at leisure.

Once outside the Haram, Abdullah saw the cowhand get into a brand new limousine with a driver in front. He was perplexed and asked what was going on. The cowhand said

that the car and driver were his and he would explain everything at home.

Abdullah was even more at a loss when the limousine pulled up in front of a beautiful mansion and so asked his friend to tell him everything that had happened. Thus the cowhand started explaining.

He explained to Abdullah that he neither had paperwork nor money but a desperate desire to perform Hajj so he had jumped overboard. He did not know how to swim but half-drowned he reached the shores of Jeddah.

He laid half-conscious until dawn when he searched of a way out of the port and noticed a house. There he saw that two men were trying to milk a cow but the cow was not cooperating because the men obviously did not know the technique required.

After observing their unsuccessful efforts for some time, he motioned to these men that he could milk the cow if they would let him. The men agreed and so the cowhand situated himself next to the cow. Being a specialist at handling cows he was able to milk enough to fill not only one but two pails for the men.

By the grace of Allah ﷻ the owner of this house was the superintendent in charge of the port, and his wife wanted milk for her children. They had been very unsuccessful at handling their cow and so their children would remain hungry. The wife was so glad at having so much milk for the children that her husband said they would hire the cowhand permanently to milk their cow.

The cowhand explained his situation and the superintendent forgave him for not having his paperwork

and would arrange everything if only he would stay and milk the cow. This cowhand was a simple man and insisted that he only wanted to perform Hajj. The superintendent said he would arrange this too.

It so happened that the superintendent's father-in-law had a dairy farm on which he kept one to two hundred cows, and he too was having difficulty finding a specialist at milking his cows. The wife was so impressed that she called her father and boasted about their new cowhand and how beneficial he could be for the dairy farm.

They sent their new employee to the dairy farm where he very easily and efficiently milked many cows. The owner was very impressed and saw the solution to his problems. He offered the cowhand a job at the dairy farm but all the cowhand said he wanted to do was perform Hajj after which he had to return to his family.

The dairy farm owner was naturally very rich and was not about to see his new discovery get away. Hence he said that he would not only provide the cowhand a house and car by which he could go to Hajj and also Umra every day if he wanted to, but would also arrange the necessary paperwork to have the cowhand's family brought over to live on the farm.

The cowhand concluded his story saying that everything was now his whereas all he had set out to accomplish was see the House of Allah ﷺ.

Within Everyone's Grasp

Hadrat Mufti Jamil Ahmed رحمته اللہ علیہ said upon relating this story that such a story proves that everyone can perform Hajj if a

poor cowhand with no means can do it. Hajj is a tremendous journey that demands money, but this story proves that love and desire are much more a factor in that journey's completion.

The only shortcoming preventing us from this fabulous journey is the desire that is evident from this story. We as Muslims need to not only develop this love and desire within us but supplicate tirelessly to Allah ﷻ to grant us this so that we may get the ability to see His House again and again.

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