

PERFORMANCE OF *UMRAH*

Performance of *Umrah* is an emphasized practice of the Prophet (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) [*Sunnah muakkadah*]. The Messenger of Allah (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said: One *Umrah* to another *Umrah* is atonement for all the sins and mistakes committed between the two (Al-Bukhari & Muslim).

Rites of *Umrah*

Umrah consists of performance of these rites: To put on *Ihram*, to make tawaf of Ka'ba, to run between the hills of Safa and Marwah, to shave the head or trim the hair. These acts are to be done in the order as mentioned. The conditions and commendable practices which apply to Hajj, as described earlier, also apply to *Umrah*. The meequat for *Umrah* is the same as for Hajj. *Umrah* can be performed throughout the year but it is better to perform it during the month of Ramadan. The Messenger of Allah (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said: Performance of *Umrah* during Ramadan is equal to performance of full Hajj (Al-Bukhari & Muslim). All such practices which are permissible or impermissible are also permissible or impermissible in case of *Umrah*. Similarly, the nullifiers in respect of the rites common to both are the same.

How to Perform *Umrah*?

The performer of *Umrah* [*Muammir*] should proceed to his meequat, undertake the ritual bath, apply scent and then wear the *Ihram*.

For men *ihram* consists of two unstitched sheets. One he wraps around his lower body and other covers the upper part. Both sheets should preferably be white. Women can wear any dress except that it should not be ostentatious. Then he/she should make the will to perform *Umrah* and chant *talbiyah*. On arriving in Makkah, he/she first of all should perform the tawaf of Ka'ba. Tawaf should begin from the Black Stone chanting *takbeer* and should end at it. Meanwhile, one should keep on chanting and praying. If possible, one should perform two cycles of *nafl salat* behind the Maqam-i-Ibrahim; if not, then he should perform it anywhere in the harem. Then he should proceed

towards Safa. Facing Ka'ba he should raise his hands three times each time chanting *hamd* and *takbeer* and praying. Then he should make seven rounds between Safa and Marwah. Upon reaching Marwa one should chant *hamd* and *takbeer* and pray in the same manner as he has done at Safa. One must walk fast between the points marked in green. The rest he will walk normally. After completing *sa'yi* he will have his head shaved or hair trimmed. With the performance of these rites one is free from the restrictions of *Ihram* and becomes *halal*.

Formalities of Visiting the Prophet's Mosque

It is commendable for the pilgrims to visit the Prophet's Mosque in Madinah Munawwarah. The Messenger of Allah (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said: performing *salat* in this mosque of mine is better than performing 1000 *salats* in other mosques except the Masjid al-Haram [Ka'ba].

Formalities of a Visit to the Prophet' Mosque

1. Before entering the city of the Prophet one should take proper bath and put on neat and clean clothes.
2. One should enter the Mosque of the Prophet putting his right foot first and recite this prayer:

«أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الْعَظِيمِ وَبِوَجْهِهِ الْكَرِيمِ وَسُلْطَانِهِ الْقَدِيمِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ ، اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي ذُنُوبِي وَافْتَحْ لِي أَبْوَابَ رَحْمَتِكَ»

(Translation) ["I seek refuge in Allah the Great and by His magnanimous face and by his eternal power from the damned Satan. In the name of Allah. O my God please bless Muhammad and his progeny and bestow your peace upon them. O my God please forgive me my sins and open the doors of your mercy for me"].

3. If possible, one should pray two cycles of *salat* of *tahiyyatul-masjid* preferably in the Riyad al-Jannah [the space between the Prophet's pulpit and his grave. If not possible, then he should not struggle but pray anywhere he finds room.

4. Then he should approach the holy grave and standing before it respectfully should say in a low voice: *Assalam-o-Alaika ya ayyuhan Nabi wa Rahmatullah wa Barakatuh* [“Peace be on you O Vicegerent of God and God’s mercy and blessings”]. Then he should recite *tasliyah*. Then moving to the right, face the grave of Hazrat Abu Bakr, say salam and invoke Allah’s blessings for him. Then a little farther in the right is the grave of Hazrat Umar. One should also say salam here and invoke God’s blessings for him.
5. In this place one should take particular care not to do anything which is disrespectful. He should not touch the screen of the grave of the Prophet and should not raise his voice.
6. The visit to the Prophet’s mosque should be followed by a visit to the Jannatul-Baquee’ which is the resting place of innumerable companions of the Prophet and the martyrs. Before their graves one should recite what the Messenger of Allah used to recite:

«السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ يَا أَهْلَ الدِّيَارِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمِينَ، وَإِنَّا إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ بِكُمْ لِلْآخِرَةِ،
أَنْتُمْ لَنَا فَرَطٌ وَنَحْنُ لَكُمْ تَبَعٌ، وَنَسْأَلُ اللَّهَ لَنَا وَلَكُمْ الْعَافِيَةَ»

Assalam-o-alaikum ya ahlad-Diyar minal-Momineen wal-Muslimeen wa Inna Insha 'Allah bikum Lahiqoon. Nas 'alullah lana wa lakum al-A'ffiyah (Muslim) [“Peace be upon you O dwellers of these places from among believers and Muslims. And we are going to join you *in sha 'Allah*. We pray for our and your safety”].

* * *