

Analysis of the Reasons for Postponing Hajj



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Introduction

We begin by affirming that indeed all praise is for Allâh. We praise him, we seek His help and we ask for His forgiveness. And we seek refuge in Allâh from the evils of our own selves and from the evils of our actions.

Whoever Allâh guides, no one can lead him astray, and whoever is led astray, there is no guide for him. I bear witness that there is no deity that has the right to be worshipped except Allâh – alone and with no partner – and I bear witness that Muhammad (ﷺ)¹ is His slave and Messenger.

“O you who believe, fear Allâh as He ought to be feared and do not die except as Muslims.” (Surah Aal `Imrân 3:102)

“O mankind, fear Allâh who created you from a single soul (Âdâm), and created from that its mate (Hawwâ). And from both of them, He brought forth many men and women. And fear Allâh to whom you demand your mutual rights. Verily, Allâh is the All-watcher over you.” (Surah An-Nisâ 4:1)

“O you who believe, fear Allâh and speak a word that is precise (i.e. truthful). He will rectify your deeds for you and forgive you your sins. And whoever obeys Allâh and His Messenger has indeed achieved a great success.” (Surah Al-Ahzâb 33:70-71)

Verily, the best of speech is the book of Allâh and the best of guidance is the guidance of Muhammad (ﷺ). The worst affairs are the newly-invented matters in the religion, and every such matter is a despised innovation (Bid`ah). And every² innovation in the religion is misguidance, and every misguidance is in the hellfire.

Allâh *subhânahu wa Ta`âlâ* tells us in the Qur'ân that Makkah is a blessed place wherein is guidance for all. He further tells us that pilgrimage thereto is a duty we owe to Allâh if we are able. Then what are the reasons that we neglect or are unable to perform this duty? This study paper presents an analysis of some of the topical reasons why Hajj is postponed and whether these are justified.

“Indeed, the first House of worship established for mankind was that at Makkah [previously called Bakka], **blessed and a guidance for the worlds.**

In it are clear signs such as the standing place of Ibrâheem. And whoever enters it shall be safe. **And due to Allâh from the people is a pilgrimage to the House for whoever is able to find thereto a way.** But whoever disbelieves then indeed, Allâh is free from need of the worlds.” (Aal Imrân, 3:96-97)

¹ ﷺ – SallAllâhu `alayhi wa sallam – a supplication to Allâh to grant His praise and security to Prophet Muhammad and to protect the Prophet's message.

² Ref. Saheeh Muslim, Book 7, Hadeeth 55.

Reasons why Hajj is postponed and their validity

[1] Social conditioning / culture

X

Proposed reason: A person may simply be used to seeing people go to Hajj in old age and has psychologically made this association. Therefore, one does not give time to thinking about it earlier.

Response: This culture is **not** from Islâm. A Muslim should hasten to any obligatory act of worship as soon as it becomes due.

[2] Desire to continue sinning until it is *out of one's system*

X

Proposed reason: A person might postpone Hajj to get all the sinning 'out of their system' giving them maximum to repent for.

Response:

- While this reasoning may seem logical to some, however, upon reflection it will become clear that this is a devious and rebellious thought, which goes against the spirit of Islâm. This type of scheming can have no blessing. Therefore, even if the person is able to execute his plan, what is the chance that Allâh will grant him an **accepted** Hajj (*Hajj Mabroor*)? And if he dies before completion of his plan, or repentance from it, then he becomes a loser, under the threat of Allâh's punishment.
- If someone has this thought, it would have taken a degree of honesty and self-analysis to realise it. Ultimately we may hide our inner thoughts from other people and even from ourselves but our Creator knows all.

[3] Lacking piety

X

Proposed reason: A person may feel that they are not worthy of Hajj due to their lack of piety.

Response:

- This is not a valid reason because most people themselves believe that they are not pious. The pre-requisite for Hajj is not to have attained full piety. A person who meets the criteria to be Muslim should not have so many

deficiencies to make them unworthy of Hajj. If someone feels they are outside the bounds of Islâm then this is very dangerous and needs to be rectified immediately by repentance (also see section 5 below).

- One should ask oneself sincerely whether the reason why they feel unworthy is because they wish to continue sinning, in which case the reason is actually in section 2 above.

[4] Lacking knowledge of the Deen (with no desire to seek it)

X

Proposed reason: A person may feel that they are not ready for Hajj due to lacking knowledge of the the religion.

Response:

- A person does not require scholarly knowledge about Islâm for Hajj; therefore the question is whether one is lacking knowledge of the basic fundamentals of the religion. If that is the case, then they should be seeking that knowledge immediately according to the best of their ability. That is, it is in itself not acceptable to postpone the seeking of that knowledge. This is a wider issue than just Hajj and will affect every act of worship. Sadly, some people turn their backs on Islâm, refusing to learn its teachings, making no attempt or plan to gain knowledge, making excuses about the lack of time whilst blatantly wasting away time on worldly matters. Allâh, the Most High, warns:
“And who does more wrong than he who is reminded of the *Âyat* (proofs, evidences, verses, signs) of his Lord, then he turns aside therefrom? Verily, We shall exact retribution from the *Mujrimun* (criminals, sinners).” (Al-Sajdah, 32:22)
- A Muslim must have knowledge of his/her faith. One should endeavour to understand the pillars of Islâm and *Îmân* (faith); this is not at all difficult and is usually attainable for an adult within a few weeks of accepting Islâm. Children born in a Muslim family usually attain this level of knowledge (well) before puberty. In addition to the fundamentals, one needs to know how to perform the obligatory duties of Hajj (note: the prerequisites of Hajj are covered later in section 6). Deeper knowledge of reasons behind rituals, history and background is not required, although it is all very interesting and can make the Hajj experience more profound. This can be acquired within a few weeks prior to the Hajj (depending on one’s aptitude).

[5] Lacking Īmân (faith)

X

Proposed reason: A person may lack Īmân (faith) because they feel they have accepted Islâm as the religion of their family but have never really examined it to see if they truly believe.

Response:

- This is a wider issue than just Hajj and will affect all acts of worship. If a person has this thought, it would have taken a degree of honesty and self-analysis to realise it. This is a dangerous state in which to remain because a Muslim is someone who believes with certainty. The Qur'ân states:
"Allâh is He Who raised the heavens without any pillars that you can see. Then, He rose above the throne (in a manner that suits His majesty). He has subjected the sun and the moon (to continue going round). Each running (its course) for a term appointed. He regulates all affairs, explaining the âyât (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations) in detail, that you may **believe with certainty** in the meeting with your Lord." (Al-Ra`d, 13:02)
- Someone who feels that way needs to take the necessary steps immediately to enable them to affirm their faith, since without the certainty of faith, deeds are fruitless. If someone is faced with such a crisis of faith, they should be actively engaged in trying to resolve this rather than leaving it hanging as an issue for the future. True Īmân benefits a person in this life and the hereafter; without it one denies oneself the peace that is achieved in the remembrance of Allâh. A person may perform acts of worship to please the people, but will not feel any benefits of the acts within themselves.
- If anyone finds themselves in this poor state then they should seek knowledge and guidance as a priority to resolve the issues that affects their Īmân. Everyone accepts that no-one knows when death will strike, however most of us (inwardly) count on living till old age. So Islâm is quite often put on the back burner, to be picked up when we have more time. This is a sad trap and deception into which we could fall. That is, to spend the best years of our lives wavering from that which is in fact the most important thing in life. In the years when we are physically the fittest, mentally the sharpest, we decide to neglect our Īmân and utilise our resources to pursue something else (for example: career, business, non-Islâmic knowledge / academia) at our own expense. We may feel that Islâm is not going away anywhere, it will be here to pick up when we are "ready"; when we have achieved our goals in life. However, true submission to Allâh's will (which is Islâm) is to recognise that

worship of Allâh is the goal and purpose of life. We have to consider that in our lives every second counts. Therefore, even if we are fortunate enough to attain both old age and sound Īmân, how will we answer for our wasted youth? That is, what about the years where Islâm was deliberately put on the back burner?

[6] The pre-requisites for Hajj

Hajj becomes obligatory for a Muslim who is a free adult of a sound state of mind, with the necessary power and ability (Fiqh-us-Sunnah, vol. 5, no. 5). The ability to perform Hajj includes that:

- One is healthy / physically fit;
- The journey must be safe so that the pilgrim's life and possessions are safe and secure from any danger;
- One is able to arrange ones provisions and possession of means of journey.

(Fiqh-us-Sunnah, vol. 5, no. 7)

The above point about having the **power and ability** can be expanded, applying to affecting factors in current times, as follows:

- (i) Having financial means. Note: one can easily cheat oneself to becoming financially unable. E.g. someone attains the finance, but spends it on something which is not a necessity, i.e. a luxury. Also, one may invest savings for one's future instead of spending on Hajj (though the best investment is in one's *Deen*).
- (ii) Being able to provide means of support for dependants whilst one is away. One must ensure the rights of the dependents are given.
- (iii) Being able to undertake the journey. For example, if one lives far away and is unable to bear the hardship of the journey.
- (iv) Being able to take time off work. Note: one can easily cheat oneself by being indecisive, procrastinating the booking of leave or being unwilling to confront management with requests for leave.
- (v) Things absolutely beyond one's influence / control. This is a long list and may include inability to obtain the Hajj visa, missing the flight due accident on the way to airport, etc. If someone has sincerely made every attempt and is still unable to go, the intention and efforts of such a person will not be wasted *in-shâ-Allâh* they will be rewarded.

In addition to the above, there are also the obvious prerequisites for Hajj which are that it must be the correct time of the year for Hajj (Dhul-Hijjah). It is also required that the Muslim has knowledge of how to perform the obligatory rituals

of Hajj. Also, has knowledge of other obligatory duties that will need to be performed during Hajj (e.g. knows how to perform all obligatory Salâh).

Conclusion

The duty of Hajj seems to contend with more difficult issues, obstacles, attitudes and reasoning than the other pillars of Islâm. For example, every Muslim will accept that when the call for Salâh is given it is time for Salâh, when Ramadân comes it is time for them to fast, yet when (the month of) Dhul-Hijjah comes, it should be, likewise, time for Hajj (especially when one has not completed Hajj before). Of course, each pillar of practice has its prerequisites; these should not be increased or decreased from what is defined by the religion.

Hajj is a duty we owe to Allâh, to perform (at least) once in our lifetime, if able. Indeed, Allâh has not given everyone the ability to perform this duty; therefore it is from His Justice that He made this an obligation only for those who are able (*Alhamdulillah*). Therefore, those who are able should give thanks for that ability by performing the duty. If we are blessed with the ability to perform Hajj at a particular point in our life but we defer it, then there is a danger that in future we may not have that ability again.

The reasons one may hold for postponing Hajj will most likely fall into one of the six broad categories mentioned in the sections 1 to 6 of this paper. For a true Muslim, the reasons in all of the sections except section 6 are invalid and need to be addressed.

Wa Allâhu Ta`âlâ a`lam

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