

## Hajj-e-Azeem

- By Syed Nadeem Ahmed Jafri

### In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

*A guest visiting a house is sure to be disappointed if he finds it empty. No one would like to visit an empty house just to stare at plain walls and the floor, for anyone it's the people of the house who are more important than the house itself.*

*Also, it remains a fact that the reputation of any area or a mohalla is based on the reputation of its people staying there. If noble people leave the area and people of a bad reputation enter it, the image and reputation of the area would deteriorate accordingly. **Similarly, the honour of a house depends on the honour of its inmates.***

***Kaaba is 'House of Allah' but Allah (SWT) is not an Entity which can be confined to one place. He (SWT) says in the verses of Surah-e-Baqra (2:142 & 2:115) that East and the West belong to Him. He (SWT) is Omnipresent. So the assumption of Kaaba being House of Allah (SWT) because Allah (SWT) is in Kaaba would be a wrong assumption. Allah (SWT) is present everywhere in every mosque or in a park or anyplace as much as He (SWT) is present in Kaaba. Then why only Kaaba and no other mosque, has got the distinction of being known as 'Baitullah – The House of Allah?'***

***→ In this article we will try to find a suitable answer to this question and we will further contemplate on few verses to identify the noble people of Allah (SWT) who brought honour to the Kaaba and have the same rank and distinction as the House of Allah (SWT).***

We will begin with the verses of Quran praising Kaaba. The following verse is from Surah-e-Aale Imran:

- ***“(Indeed the first house that was appointed as a place of worship for mankind, is the one at Mecca (the Holy Ka’aba), blessed and a guidance to the whole world)” – (Surah-e-Aale Imran, ayah 96)***

Kaaba has the privilege to be appointed as **the first house of worship for the mankind**. It is also a guidance to the whole world.

- ***“Allah has made the Kaaba, the Sacred House, an asylum of security for mankind...” – (Surah-e-Maida, ayah 97)***

It is not only the first place of worship and the guidance but it is also an asylum of security for the mankind.

The Quran further says about Kaaba in the following ayah:

- ***وَ لِلّٰهِ عَلَى النَّاسِ حِجُّ الْبَيْتِ مَنِ اسْتَطَاعَ اِلَيْهِ سَبِيْلًا.***

- “It is on people for the sake of Allah **to perform Hajj of his House**, anyone who is able to undertake the journey to Him.” – (Surah-e-Baqra, ayah 196)

*Kaaba* is a guidance to the whole world, an asylum of security for the mankind and it has also got the privilege to be considered as – **Baitullah, the House of Allah (SWT), since it is the first house of worship for the mankind.**

It is mandatory for every financially capable Muslim to visit *Kaaba* once in his life time to perform *Hajj*. A hadith of Imam Sadiq (as) glorifying *Hajj* and its benefits for a Muslim is mentioned as under:

- “Persons who perform *Hajj* and *Umrah* are guests of Allah. He (SWT) will grant them their wishes and any prayer that they recite will be accepted. And if they pray for intercession about a person it will be accepted ... and **if they die in this way Allah (SWT) will forgive all of their sins**”.

In the following two ahadith the Imam (as) has also said that:

• إِنَّ الْحَجَّ الْمَبْرُورَ لَا يَغْدِلُهُ شَيْءٌ وَلَا جَزَاءَ لَهُ إِلَّا الْجَنَّةَ.

- “Nothing compares with the accepted *Hajj* and **it has no reward other than heaven!**”

• وَأَنَّ الْحَاجَّ يَكُونُ كَيَوْمٍ وُلِدَتْهُ أُمُّهُ.

- “A Person who performs *Hajj* **purifies himself from sins** like the day that he was born”.

(Ref: The above ahadith are quoted by Mohaghegh Yazdi in ‘Al-Urwat Al Wusqa’ and also in ‘Wasael al Shia’ by Sheikh Hurr Ameli and other scholars.)

➔ *Kaaba* – the first house of worship, is the **House of Allah (SWT)**. Allah (SWT) fulfills our wishes and forgives all our sins if we visit *Kaaba*. Visiting *Kaaba* during *Hajj* **purifies us and rewards us with a place in Heaven.**

Keeping all the above merits of *Kaaba* in mind we can infer that there is no other place worthier than *Kaaba* to be a *Qibla*. But it is also a fact that *Kaaba* was not the original *Qibla* for Muslims. It got the distinction of becoming *Qibla* later on. For the first 17 months after the *Hijrat*, the *Qibla* of the Muslims for prayers was *Bait-ul-Muqaddas* (they faced *Bait-ul-Muqaddas* while offering namaz). Later on the holy Prophet (Pbuh&hp) got the following revelation to change the *Qibla* from *Bait-ul-Muqaddas* to *Kaaba*:

- (“Indeed We see **the turning of your face to heaven**, so **We shall surely turn you to a qiblah which you shall like; turn then your face towards the Sacred Mosque**, and wherever you are, turn your face towards it, and those who have been given the Book most surely know that it is the truth from their Lord; and Allah is not at all headless of what they do.”) – (Surah-e-Baqra, ayah 144)

The changing of *Qibla* from *Bait-ul-Muqaddas* to *Kaaba* has been done for a purpose. And Allah (SWT) has explained this in the following ayah:

- (“*We decreed the qiblah which you faced before that **We may know who follow the Apostle and who turn away in haste.***”) – (Surah-eBaqra, ayah 143)

The *Qibla* for Muslims was changed from *Bait-ul-Muqaddas* to *Kaaba* as desired by our beloved Prophet (pbuh&hp). Thus **the change of Qibla was more of the Prophet (pbuh&hp)’s wish than it was Allah (SWT)’s.** The purpose for doing this was **to differentiate the true followers of the holy Prophet (pbuh&hp)** from the disobedient ones.

But years before *Kaaba* became *Qibla*, one of the most prominent event of the history of Islam took place in *Kaaba*. It was the birth<sup>1</sup> of our beloved first Imam – Hazrat Ali (as). The wall of *Kaaba* opened up for lady Fatema binte Asad (sa) - Mother of Imam Ali (as) - and she, as if by some unseen force, went inside the *Kaaba* and the wall closed. She stayed there for 3 days. On Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> Rajab of 30 Aamulfeel Imam Ali (as) was born in *Kaaba*.

(Ref: Muhammad ibn Talha el-Shafei in *Matalib-us-saool*, page 11, Hakim in *Mustadrak*, page 483, Vol. III, El-Umari in *Sharh Ainia*, page 15, Halabi in *Sira*, page 165, Vol. I, Sibti ibn al-Jauzi in *Tadhkera Khawasil Ummah*, page 7, Ibn Sabbagh Maleki in *Fusoolul Mohimma*, page 14, Muhammad bin Yousuf Shafei in *Kifayet al-Talib*, page 261, Shablanji in *Nurul Absar*, page 76, Ibn Zahra in *Ghiyathul Ikhtisar*, page 97, Edvi in *Nafhatul Qudsia*, page 41, Mohaddith-e-Dehlvi in ‘*Izalatul Kholafa*’)

Most scholars accept the fact that **Imam Ali (as) was the only man in history to be born in Kaaba.** Hakim ibn Hazm in his *Mustadrak* and *Nuru'd-din Bin Sabbagh Maliki* in *Fusulu'l-Muhimma*, *Fasl I*, p. 14, say: **“No one before Ali (as) was born in the Kaaba.** This was a distinction given to **Ali (as) in order to enhance his honor, rank, and dignity.”**

- ✓ We can thus infer that though *Kaaba* was the first house appointed for worship for mankind, Allah (SWT) and the Holy Prophet (pbuh&hp) did not elevate it to the rank of *Qibla* for Muslims till the **birth of Imam Ali (as) took place in it.**

In the first section of this article we have gone through the *ayah 96 of Surah-e-Aale Imran*, which says that the *Kaaba* is the guidance to the whole world. Now let us see the following ayah:

- “(O Prophet, surely, **you are a warner and for every people there is a guide**)”. (Surah-e-Ra’ad, ayah 7)

The above ayah says that Allah (SWT) has **appointed a guide for the mankind.** Sa`labi writes in his *tafseer* on the authority of *Abdullah ibn Abbas* that when this verse was revealed, the Holy Prophet (pbuh&hp) said that **through Ali (as), Muslims will be guided.** It

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<sup>1</sup> The light of *Ahlulbait* (as) was revealed much before Adam (as) was born and this *Kaynat* was created. Here, the word ‘birth’ is used to mention a historical event of ‘physical’ revelation of Imam Ali (as) in *Kaaba*. Since every reference mentions it I had to use it in this context.

has also been recorded by various authentic sources in other prominent books (Ref: Durr-e-Mansoor, Mulla Jalaluddin Suyuti, Vol 4 Page 45, Ibn-e-Asakir)

- ✓ So while ***Kaaba – Baitullah*** is the guidance to the whole world, **Imam Ali (as)** and the Imams from **the Ahlulbait (as) are the appointed guide for the mankind by Allah (SWT)**.
- ✓ ***Kaaba*** is the **first house of worship** for the mankind, **Imam Ali (as) is the first Imam** of the entire *Kaynat*.

In the following verse of *Surah-e-Aale Imran*, Allah (SWT) praises His chosen people for their nobility and conduct:

- “You are **the best of the nations raised up for (the benefit of) men**; you enjoin what is right and forbid the wrong and believe in Allah. – (*Surah-e-Aale Imran*, ayah 110)

In the verse 97 of *Surah-e-Maida*, which we have seen in the first section of this article, Allah (SWT) has said that the ***Kaaba*** is the **asylum of security for the mankind**. While in the above ayah of *Surah-e-Aale Imran*, Allah (SWT) addresses and praises His chosen people who are raised **for the benefit of mankind**. They guide the mankind to the right path. **They are equal to Kaaba in the eyes of Allah (SWT) in that sense**.

While explaining the above ayah *Ibn-e-Abi Hakim* has quoted *Hazrat Abu Ja'far* that **they are the Ahlulbait (as) of the holy Prophet (pbuh&hp)**. (Ref: *Tafseer-e-Suyuti*, Vol 2, P 64)

There is a prominent hadith of the holy lady *Fatema (sa)* on the rank and importance of *Ahlulbait (as)*. She (sa) has said:

- "Verily, Allah made **obeying us (Ahlulbait) - the regulation of the nation** and **our (Ahlulbait's) leadership - the safeguard from disunity**. (Ref: *Al-Ihtijaj vol.1 p.97, Bihar Al-Anwar vol.29 p.223*)
- ✓ Thus ***Kaaba*** is the **asylum of security for the mankind**, the **Ahlulbait (as) are the best of the nations raised for the benefit of mankind**.
- ✓ ***Kaaba*** is the **asylum of security for the mankind**, the **leadership of Ahulbait is the safeguard from disunity for their followers**.

Comparing the rank of **Imam Ali (as)** with ***Kaaba*** our beloved Prophet (pbuh&hp) has said in the following two ahadith that:

- “**Ali (as)**, the pride of **your place** is like that of **House of Allah**. People of themselves go to House of Allah; **the House of Allah does not go after the people**. So when I am no more, if these people of themselves, elect you as their Caliph, do become their Caliph. If they don't approach you, **never go to them so long as they themselves do not come up to you**.” (Ref: *Usd-ul-Ghaba Vol 4 P 31, Kunooz-ul-Haqaique P 173*)

- “**Ali (as)** holds the **position of the Kaaba.**” (Ref: *Mustadrak Al-Sahihain of Al-Hakim Al-Nisabori*, 3/122; *Musnad Ahmad*, 3/82; *Al-Tabarani*, 6/155; *Kenz Al-Omal*)

Imam Sadiq (as) in the following hadith has explained why the *Ahlulbait (as)* are called ‘*Alay-Allah*’ – the family of Allah (SWT):

- Upon being asked about awarding the Quraish with glorified status, among the Arabs, and (the reason for calling) some as ‘**آل الله**’ **the family of Allah (SWT)**, the most Exalted the most Majestic. Imam Abu Abdullah Al-Sadiq (as) replied: They are called ‘**آل الله**’ **the family of Allah because they are in the Holy House of Allah.** (Ref: *Aamali-e-Sadooq*.Page-285; *Bihar*.Vol-15, Page-257; *Rawzatul Wayazeen*.Vol-1,Page-66)

And for the love of Imam Ali (as) our beloved Prophet (pbuh&hp) has said that:

- “**Love for Ali (A.S) is faith, and hatred for Ali is hypocrisy.**” (Ref: *Ibn Al-Maghazeli*, 67; *Al-Khawarizmi*, 236; *Fara'id Al-Samateen*; *Yanabi' Al-Mawda*.)
- ✓ Just the way **Kaaba is a differentiator between a true follower of the holy Prophet (pbuh&hp) with a kafir** – as inferred from the above-mentioned ayah (*Surah-e-Baqra*, ayah 143); the **love for our beloved Imam Ali (as) is a differentiator between a true believer with a munafiq.**

→ Thus by contemplating on the event of the birth of Imam Ali (as) in *Kaaba*, the above-mentioned verses and the above-quoted ahadith of the Prophet (pbuh&hp) and *Masoomin* (as) we can infer that:

- ✓ The **rank and the position of the Imam (as) from Ahlulbait is equivalent to Kaaba – Baitullah** in the eyes of Allah (SWT)
- ✓ The importance of **Imamat of the Ahlulbait is at par with the Qibla** of Islam

Let us go a little further in identifying the similarity between the *Baitullah* and the *Ahlulbait* in this section. In the previous section we saw that it was **the desire of our beloved Prophet (pbuh&hp)** that the *Kaaba* becomes *Qibla* for Muslims. Keeping this fact in mind let us ponder upon the following ayah from *Surah-e-Maida*.

- (“**O Apostle! deliver what has been revealed to you from your Lord; and if you do it not, then you have not delivered His message, and Allah will protect you from the people; surely Allah will not guide the unbelieving people.**”) – (*Surah-e-Maida*, ayah 67)

In the above ayah Allah (SWT) has ordered the holy Prophet (pbuh&hp) to deliver **His message which was revealed to the Prophet (pbuh&hp) earlier**. Allah (SWT) further explains the importance of the message to the holy Prophet (pbuh&hp) by saying that **if the Prophet (pbuh&hp) did not deliver the message it would be considered as if he (pbuh&hp) has not delivered any message of Allah (SWT)**. This explains two things:

1. It was **Allah (SWT)’s desire** that the message should be delivered.

2. It was such an important message that **Allah (SWT) equated the deliverance of this message with the hard-work of 23 years of our beloved Prophet (pbuh&hp).**

The above ayah was revealed in *Ghadeer-e-Khum* when the holy Prophet (pbuh&hp) was returning to Medina after offering his last *Hajj*. After the revelation of this ayah he (pbuh&hp) called all the pilgrims and in front of them he declared **Mawla Ali (as) as his successor** and announced “*Man Kunto Mawla fa hazaa Ali un-Mawla*”.

(Ref: *Tafseer al Kabir* by *Fakhr al Din Mohammed ibn Umar al razi* (1357/1938), *Umdatul Qari fi Sharh Sahih al Bukhari* - by *Al Ayni*, *Tafsir al Nisaboori*, v6 P194, *Sahih Tirmizi*, V2, P298, *Bukhari*, V5, Book 59)

- ✓ It was the **Prophet (pbuh&hp)’s desire** that the ***Kaaba*** gets the distinction of becoming a ***Qibla*** while it was **Allah (SWT)’s desire** that **Mawla Ali (as) gets the distinction of becoming an Imam and the successor of the holy Prophet (pbuh&hp).**
- ✓ The importance of **Imamat of Imam Ali (as)** is equal to the **hard-work and perseverance of 23 years of the Prophethood** of our beloved Prophet (pbuh&hp).

***Kaaba – Baitullah*** was purified for the pilgrims by Prophets Ibrahim and Ismail (pbuh) as mentioned in the following ayah from *Surah-e-Baqra*:

- “*And we enjoined Ibrahim and Ismail saying : Purify My House for those who visit (it) and those who abide (in it) for devotion and those who bow down (and) those who prostrate themselves.*” – (*Surah-e-Baqra*, ayah 125)

For the purification of the *Ahlulbait (as)*, Quran says:

- “*Verily, Verily Allah intendeth but to keep off from you (every kind of) uncleanness, O Ahlulbait, and purify you with a thorough purification.*” – (*Surah-e-Ahzab*, ayah 33)

Thus it is **Allah’s Will** that the people of household – the *Ahlulbait (as)* remain purified from all kind of uncleanness and thus **they are ofcourse infallible** as per the above ayah. (Ref: *Tafseer Durr-e- Mansoor*, *Mulla Jalaluddin Suyuti*, Vol 5, P 198-199)

- ✓ Allah (SWT) ordered **Ibrahim (as) and Ismail (as)** to purify ***Kaaba*** while Allah (SWT) **Himself purified Ahlulbait with a thorough purification** and made them infallible.

➔ ***Kaaba is Baitullah*** – House of Allah (SWT) and **Mohammed (pbuh) wa Aale Mohammed (pbut) are the Ahulbait** – The Chosen people of the Household. Honouring *Kaaba* and showing respect to it **without knowing the rank and position of the *Ahlulbait (as)*** is similar to respecting a house **without respecting the people associated with that house.**

During *Hajj* there are two mandatory things which Muslims do without which *Hajj* remains incomplete:

1. The first is called **Sa'y**, here a pilgrim shuttles between *Safa* and *Marwah* for 7 times. **This is to remember the shuttling of Lady Hajra (as) in search of water for her thirsty infant son – Ismail (as) between these two hills.**
2. The second important thing is offering an animal as a sacrifice in *Mena* on the day of *Eid* (10<sup>th</sup> of *Dhu'l Hijjah*). This is to commemorate **the willingness of Ismail (as) to sacrifice himself on the Command of Allah (SWT)**. In the following ayah Allah (SWT) appreciates this trial of Ismail (as):
  - **“(Most surely this is a manifest trial. And We rescued him in exchange of a Great Sacrifice (Zibhe Azeem). And We perpetuated (praise) to him among the later generations” - (Surah-e-Sa'afat, ayah 106-107-108)**

The ayah says it was indeed a manifest trial of Ismail (as). **Allah (SWT) honoured the willingness of Ismail (as) to sacrifice himself but exchanged it with a Zibhe Azeem.**

This *Zibhe Azeem* – The Great Sacrifice mentioned in the above ayah is the **martyrdom of Imam Husain (A.S) and his household at the battlefield of Karbala.** (Ref: *Merajjunnabuwat, P 35*)

Allah (SWT) appreciated the **self-less gesture of Lady Hajra (as)** of running around in search of water for her thirsty child so much that He (SWT) made **Sa'y** an integral part of *Hajj*. But Ismail (as) **did not have to remain thirsty as his thirst was quenched by the fresh stream of Zam Zam water.**

**The intent of Ismail (as) to sacrifice himself on the Command of Allah (SWT) had been liked by the Almighty Allah** and it is also **an important part of Hajj**. On 10<sup>th</sup> of *Dhu'l Hijjah* Muslims across the world sacrifice an animal to commemorate this act. **His sacrifice too did not take place in reality as Allah (SWT) replaced him with an animal.**

While on the other hand at *Karbala* **the thirsty household of Imam Hussain (as) was martyred.** **Ali Asghar (as) - the 6 month old thirsty son of Imam Hussain (as) – was brutally martyred at Karbala** when Imam Hussain (as) took him along to the battlefield seeking water to quench his thirst but instead of giving him water, the enemies martyred him. **The thirst of Ismail (as) was quenched by Zam Zam water while Ali Asghar (as) remained thirsty as he was being martyred.**

**Imam Hussain (as) was martyred while in prostration on 10<sup>th</sup> Moharram at Karbala.** His head was mercilessly severed by the enemy. **On 10<sup>th</sup> Dhu'l Hijjah at Mena Ismail (as) was saved** by Allah (SWT) when He (SWT) replaced Ismail (as) with an animal during the sacrifice.

- ✓ In my belief Allah (SWT) made the *Sa'y* of *Safa* and *Marwah* and *Qurbani* of animal mandatory in *Hajj* so that we ponder upon the above point and **remember the thirst and Zibhe Azeem of Imam Hussain (as)'s household whenever we perform Hajj, drink Zam Zam or sacrifice an animal during Eid.**

While Allah (SWT), all Merciful liked the gesture of Lady Hajra (as) and the intent of Ismail (as) so much the depth of love and appreciation that Allah (SWT) would be holding for Imam Hussain (as) and his brutally martyred, thirsty household which lost everything for the sake of Islam cannot be imagined. In order to understand this, we need to understand the merits and benefits of visiting *Karbala*.

In the first section of this article we have gone through the verse on importance of *Hajj* and discussed the ahadith of Imam Sadiq (as) on the merits of performing this ritual. Let us now see the merits and benefits of visiting the shrine of Imam Hussain (as) for a *Ziyarat*. Few of the ahadith of our beloved Imam Sadiq (as) on the *Ziyarat* of Imam Hussain (as) are mentioned as under:

- ❖ A tradition is narrated by *Raff'ah* from Imam Sadiq (a.s.): “When a lover of Imam Hussain (as) knows Imam Husain's (a.s.) right over the people and leaves his house for Imam's (a.s.) *Ziyarat* in this condition, without any pride and conceit, then a **1000 angels accompany him** from the right, with another **1000 angels on the left**. And **he will be rewarded as if he has performed 1000 Hajj and 1000 Umrah with a prophet or with the successor of a prophet.**” (Ref: *BiharulAnwar*, vol 101, pg 91, tradition 33)
- ❖ Imam Sadiq (as) narrates, “Allah has appointed some angels at Imam Husain's grave. **When the lover of Imam Hussain (as) makes the intention for Imam Husain's (a.s.) Ziyarat, Allah forgives all his sins.** When he takes a step to go for *Ziyarat*, he erases his sins. **His virtues multiply and they increase till the time he becomes worthy of Paradise.**” (Ref: *Wasailul Mohibbeen*, pg. 280)
- ❖ Imam Sadiq (as) has said: “From every drop of perspiration on the body of Imam Hussain’s (as) visitor (in the course of *Ziyarat*) **Allah creates 70,000 angels who glorify and seek forgiveness for Imam's (a.s.) visitors till the Day of Judgement.**” (Ref: *Mustadrak* vol 2, pg 204)

*Hajj* is the first step towards guidance. When we perform *Hajj* we go to the house of guidance **but when we perform Ziyarat we go to the duly appointed Guides.** Visiting *Kaaba* and performing the ritual there during *Dhu'l Hijjah is Hajj*. Visiting *Karbala* during *Moharram to understand the Zibhe Azeem of Imam Hussain (as) and his pious household is Hajj e Azeem.*

→ Thus we may conclude by saying;

- ✓ *Kaaba* is the **House of Allah (SWT) – Baitullah**, while Mohammed (pbuh) wa Aale Mohammed (pbut) are **the Chosen People of the Household – Ahlulbait (as).**
- ✓ *Kaaba* is **guidance to the whole world**, the **Ahlulbait are the appointed guides.**
- ✓ *Kaaba* is ***Qibla of Islam***, while the **love of Ahlulbait is Qibla of Imaan.**
- ✓ *Kaaba* is a differentiator between a **Muslim and a Kaafir**, the love for **Ahlulbait (as) is the differentiator between a Momin and a Munafiq.**

So let us pray that may Allah (SWT) guide us to perform ***Hajj of Baitullah*** and **Ziyarat of Ahlulbait (as)** so that each of us remains steadfast as a true Muslim and becomes a devout Momin.