



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

The chance to visit the sacred cities of Makkah and Madeenah is indeed a great blessing and favour which Allah ﷻ bestows upon His chosen servants. The journey is one in which the servant, despite all his shortcomings, has the honour of being the guest of his Master and Creator, Allah ﷻ. Almost every traveller to these blessed lands entertains the wish of being able to reside in them forever.

It is however, worth pondering over the verdict of Imām Aboo Haneefah *rahmatullahi alayh* regarding a Muslim settling in the holy places. He was of the opinion that it is makrooh for the common people to reside in the blessed places, due to the fact that it would lead them to eventually lose the importance and sacredness with which these places should

be regarded. Sooner or later it would result in them behaving in a negligent and disrespectful manner.

This is evident in the behaviour of the majority of the visitors who, after initially appreciating the new environment, soon change their attitude. Sad but true. This is the case for many of us when we visit the blessed lands. Activities which are contrary to the Sharee'ah take place and the respect that should be observed by every Muslim, be he a visitor or a local resident, vanishes.

The following are just some examples of actions which many of us carelessly engage in, and by doing so, violate the rights of the two Harams. They should be avoided at all costs, whether one is visiting with the purpose of performing 'Umrah or Hajj, or whether one resides in these blessed places.

Talking in the Haram

Despite all the emphasis placed on remaining silent whilst in a masjid and being fully aware of the many virtues of engaging in 'ibādah, we engage in long conversations on themes related to worldly matters. This should be completely avoided. Rasoolullah ﷺ said, 'There will come a time upon people when they will talk about worldly affairs in the masjid. At such occasions, do not sit with them. Allah ﷻ does not need such people.' (Bayhaqi)

Using mobiles in the Haram

The ringing of mobile phones within the masājid has become obnoxiously common to the extent that they even ring during Salāh. It is commonly observed that people use the mobile phone whilst reading Qur'ān, doing tawāf and some are also disturbed in Salāh. We must

remember in these sacred places, to switch our phones off or - even better - abstain from entering with them in the first place. It is strange how we switch off mobile phones in our local masājid but use them freely in the Haramayn.

Unnecessarily meeting friends

The practice of going out of one's way to meet fellow visitors just for the sake of socialising should be avoided, as it amounts to a waste of valuable time. Use every second of your time in doing good. You have your whole life in which to socialise with them when you return.

Eating out in restaurants

Just for the sake of tasting different types of foods, we sacrifice precious time in which we could be gaining rewards. Some people go as far as missing salāh in the Haram Shareef due to eating out.

Committing sins

Disobedience to Allah ﷻ should be avoided at all costs. Casting evil glances and backbiting are the most common forms of sinning. We must exert extraordinary efforts to refrain from all sins and make a firm resolution to remain steadfast on this upon our return.

Spending time shopping

Rather than remaining in the Sacred Masājid to perform 'ibādah, we tend to spend enormous amount of time shopping. In reality, the majority of the items that are sold there are also available back home. Rather than starting to shop as soon as we arrive, we should confine the purchasing of our gifts and personal needs to the last 2-3 days of our stay in each city and fix hours per day so that the entire last days are not wasted either. This will help to ensure that we spend as much of our time as possible in 'ibādah.

Watching Television

The fact that a television set is found in nearly every room does not mean that we should watch it. Doing so would be a form of laghw, which is also a sin. Moreover, some people engage in watching films, movies or football games. All these should be shunned for they bring the Displeasure of Allah ﷻ.

Looking at the faults of others

We have a tendency to look at the mistakes and faults of others. We forget that every person around us is either a visitor or resident of the cities of Allah ﷻ and His Prophet ﷺ. Is it appropriate to disgrace either the visitor of Allah and His Rasool ﷺ or an inhabitant of their cities?

'Ibādah void of Spirituality

Whether it be tawāf, greeting the Prophet ﷺ or other acts of worship, our

devotions have all become mere rituals, to the extent that we perform 'Umrah every year during our holidays simply because it has become a trend to do so. We need to perform 'ibādah with the sense of the Sacredness of the Place and Greatness of the Creator with the sole intention of pleasing Him only.

'Virtues of Hajj' by Shaykh Muhammad Zakariyyā *rahmatullahi alayh* is a recommended read. It will help us rectify our behaviour and also reacquaint ourselves with the sacredness of the places we are visiting, enabling us to understand the significance of the actions we are carrying out.

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