

Ramadan Daily Quran Studies, compiled by Dr Zahid Aziz, 2026

Derived largely from the writings of Maulana Muhammad Ali

Produced by:

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Study 24: Pilgrimage (*Hajj*) – 1

- As an institution *ḥajj*, or the pilgrimage to Makkah, existed before the advent of Islam from very ancient times. The belief that the territory around Makkah is sacred, and that the Ka'bah is the centre of pilgrimage, existed since long ago. There is no record showing that this belief was introduced at any time within known history.
- Among Arabs before Islam, the Ka'bah was known by the name *Bait Allah* or House of God, and they believed that no enemy could destroy it.

- All the main features and ceremonies of the pilgrimage in Islam existed before the coming of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. They were based on the authority of the prophet Abraham.
- However, before the time of the Prophet Muhammad, people had added various idol-worship practices to it. Idols had been placed in the Ka'bah and at other important places. The Ka'bah itself had within it 360 idols which were worshipped.
- Another wrong practice was that some tribes considered themselves as too high to mix with others during the pilgrimage.

- Even before Islam had made the pilgrimage as a duty of Muslims, and reformed it, it recognized the sacredness of Makkah and that the pilgrimage to it was a practice established by Abraham. While the Holy Prophet ﷺ was still at Makkah, he was told in his revelation to say to people:

إِنَّمَا أُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ رَبَّ هَذِهِ الْبَلَدَةِ الَّذِي حَرَّمَهَا وَلَهُ كُلُّ شَيْءٍ ...

“I am commanded only to serve the Lord of this city,
Who has made it sacred, and to Him belong all things. ...”

— 27:91

- The Quran also says that Abraham had prayed to God as follows:

وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ هَذَا الْبَلَدَ آمِنًا وَاجْنُبْنِي وَبَنِيَّ أَنْ نَعْبُدَ الْأَصْنَامَ ﴿٣٥﴾

“And when Abraham said: My Lord, make this city secure,
and save me and my sons from worshipping idols.” — 14:35

رَبَّنَا إِنِّي أَسْكَنْتُ مِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي بِوَادٍ غَيْرِ ذِي زَرْعٍ عِنْدَ بَيْتِكَ الْمُحَرَّمِ رَبَّنَا لِيُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ
فَجَعَلْ أَفِيدَةً مِنَ النَّاسِ تَهْوِي إِلَيْهِمْ وَارْزُقْهُمْ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

“(Abraham said:) Our Lord, I have settled a part of my offspring in a valley
unproductive of fruit near Your Sacred House, our Lord, that they may keep up
prayer; so make the hearts of some people yearn towards them, and provide
them with fruits; perhaps they may be grateful.” — 14:37

- It is important to emphasize the above facts because critics of Islam allege that it was only after the Holy Prophet ﷺ had migrated to Madinah, and then won the battle of Badr, that he began to look forward to conquering Makkah.
- They say that in order to create a basis for his conquest he thought of declaring Makkah as a sacred city and a place of pilgrimage.
- However, the pilgrimage had been declared a part of Islam while the Holy Prophet ﷺ was still at Makkah, very shortly before his departure for Madinah. The Quran stated:

وَإِذْ بَوَّأْنَا لِإِبْرَاهِيمَ مَكَانَ الْبَيْتِ أَنْ لَا تُشْرِكْ بِي شَيْئًا وَطَهِّرْ بَيْتِيَ لِلطَّائِفِينَ وَالْقَائِمِينَ وَالرُّكَّعِ

السُّجُودِ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَأَذِّنْ فِي النَّاسِ بِالْحَجِّ يَأْتُوكَ رِجَالًا وَعَلَىٰ كُلِّ ضَامِرٍ يَأْتِينَ مِنْ كُلِّ فَجٍّ عَمِيقٍ ﴿٢٧﴾

“And when We pointed to Abraham the place of the House, saying: Do not set up any partner with Me, and purify My House for those who make circuits and stand to pray and bow and prostrate themselves.

And **proclaim to mankind the Pilgrimage**: they will come to you on foot and on every lean camel, coming from every remote path”.

— 22:26-27

- Abraham had been commanded by God to establish the practice of pilgrimage to Makkah to the House known as the Ka'bah, as stated above. The command “Proclaim to mankind the Pilgrimage” was addressed to Abraham, and it was again addressed to the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.
- It contains a great prophecy that Makkah will become the centre to which people will come for pilgrimage. It was announced just at the time when the Holy Prophet ﷺ was being driven away from Makkah by his enemies, who were the sole masters of the place.

- Just when Makkah seemed to have lost every chance of becoming a Muslim centre, and when the Muslims themselves were in danger of being entirely destroyed, a great prophecy is announced in the strongest words that Islam will spread to all countries of the world, and Makkah will become the universal centre to which pilgrims from all nations will come.
- It was also prophesied in the Bible that this would happen. The prophet Isaiah, who appeared among the Jews about 1400 years before the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, foretold to them:

- “It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it.” (Isaiah, 2:2).
- Being the “highest” and “raised above the hills” does not mean physical height. It means, of course, being the highest in dignity and honour in the hearts of mankind.
- As foretold by Isaiah to his people, “all the nations shall flow to it”. And the Ka‘bah is that house of the Lord to which all the nations come.

- The Quran says:

وَإِذْ جَعَلْنَا الْبَيْتَ مَثَابَةً لِّلنَّاسِ وَأَمْنًا ط ...

“And when We made the House a resort for mankind and a (place of) security ...”

— 2:125

- Isaiah had prophesied the same. God said to him not only about *his nation, the Jews*, but also all nations:
 - “I will bring (them) to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer. ... For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.” (Isaiah, 56:7)

END OF STUDY 24