

# **ZUL-HIJJAH**

The month of Zul Hijjah is the last month of the Islamic calendar and is also one of the four Sacred Months as Hajj is completed in this month. The key dates for this month are as follows:

- 1st -10th: Days of Virtue to be spent in extra acts of worship.
- 8th -13th: Days of Hajj for the pilgrims in Makkah.
- 9th: Yawm Al-Arafat- The Prophet (S.A.W) delivered his farewell sermon.
- 10th: Eid-ul-Adha (Festival of Sacrifice).
- 11th -13th: Ayyam Al-Tashriq- Days for Takbeer and Sacrifice.

## **First Ten Days**

The first ten days of Zul-Hijjah are the best for engaging in various acts of worship as they are specially blessed. There are many Hadith which mentions the importance of the first ten days of Zul-Hijjah and the virtues of performing acts of worship during these days, especially when these are done by the pilgrims within the vicinity of the Sacred Ka'bah. The Prophet (S.A.W) said: *“There are no days in which righteous deeds are more beloved to Allah than these ten days”*. The Holy Prophet (S.A.W) has also said: *“One fast during these days is equal to the fasting of one complete year and the worship of one night during this period is equal to the worship in Laylatul Qadr”*. Therefore every Muslim should avail of this opportunity by offering as much ibaadah during this period.

## **The 9th Day of Zul Hijjah**

The 9th day of the month of Zul Hijjah is called Yawmul Arafat (The Day of Arafat). It is the most virtuous day within the ten days. It is on this day that hundreds and thousands of Muslims from each and every corner of the world gather on the plain of Arafat to seek Allah's forgiveness. Pilgrims and non-pilgrims alike should earnestly pray for the forgiveness of their sins as the Prophet (S.A.W) said: *“There is no day on which Almighty Allah frees more people from the Fire of Hell as He does on the Day of Arafat and on that day Allah draws near to the earth and by way of exhibiting His pride remarks to the angels “What is the desire of these (Servants of mine)?”*

## **Hajj - 8<sup>th</sup> till 13<sup>th</sup> of Zul Hijjah – (PILGRIMS ONLY)**

The most important worship performed in this month is Hajj (one of the five pillars of Islam). Muslims from every part of the world assemble to perform this unique way of worship. The Hajj takes place annually from 8th to 13th Zul-Hijjah. It is an obligatory duty which must be carried out by every sane adult Muslim who is financially and physically capable of undertaking it at least once in a lifetime. There are promises of forgiveness for the pilgrim as the Prophet (S.A.W) said: *“Whoever makes pilgrimage for Allah and does not indulge in marital relations or obscene speech or commit acts of disobedience, will return from it as pure as the day on which his mother gave birth to him”*. The annual Hajj includes standing at Arafat for supplications, spending a night in Muzdalifah, spending a few days in Mina to pelt stones at the Jamarat, offering the sacrifice of an animal, circumambulation of the Ka'bah (tawaf) and walking between Mount Safa and Marwa in Makkah,. Though all the rites are done in imitation of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W), most of these acts are symbolic re-enactments of scenes that took place in the lives of Ibrahim (A.S), Hajra (A.S) and Ishmail (A.S) nearly 4,000 years ago.

Hajj combines both the physical and financial aspects of worship that are found in Salaat and Zakat respectively, but to a much greater degree. It teaches the pilgrim patience, self-control, sacrifice, sharing, unity, brotherhood, obedience, humility, serving, self-purification, denouncing worldly comforts and stripped of all possessions and prestige serves as a reminder of the journey to life after death. This unique universal gathering of believers from every corner of the globe breaks all barriers of language, race, social and economic status which are the basis of division among nations in the world. In the eyes of Allah, all are equal, the rich and the poor, the learned and the illiterate; race and colour have no merits. The gathering of over two million pilgrims on the plains of Arafat acts as a miniature rehearsal of the Day of Judgment when everyone will face Almighty Allah and be accountable for their deeds. The Hajj which has gained Allah's acceptance has a lasting effect on the pilgrims for the rest of their lives. It completely transforms their lives as if they have been born again and they live their lives according to the ideals of Islam.

### **Madinah-al-Munawwarah – (PILGRIMS ONLY)**

The Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) in the latter part of his life resided in the blessed city of Madinah-al-Munawwarah and also passed away here. The blessed tomb of our Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) is situated in Masjid-e-Nabawi. Although visiting Madinah-al-Munawwarah is not part of Hajj but visiting the Prophet's grave carries great rewards. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) said: *"Whoever performed Hajj and then visited my grave after my death, are like those who came to see me in my lifetime"*. It would be a sign of great loss on those people who return from their Hajj without having visited the Prophet's grave.

## **Recommended acts in the month of Zul-Hijjah**

- 1) Performing Umrah and Hajj.
- 2) To Fast on 9th Zul-Hijjah. The Prophet (S.A.W) himself used to fast on 9th Zul-Hijjah (Yawm Al Arafat) and said: *"Fasting on the Day of Arafat is an expiation of sins for two years; the year preceding it and the year following it"*. Fasting on 9th Zul-Hijjah is for non-pilgrims only.
- 3) To recite the Takbeer-e-Tashreeq after every congregational prayers from the Fajr of 9th Zul-Hijjah upto the Asar prayer of 13th Zul-Hijjah.
- 4) Making Sacrifice on Eid-ul-Adha.
- 5) Performing additional acts of worship such as abstaining from sins, performing Tahajjud (the late night prayer), repenting of one's sins, giving charity (sadaqah) and reciting the Qur'aan.