

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

To the Sacred House of Allāh

Abū al-Ḥasan Mālik al-Akhḍar

IT IS NOT HIDDEN from anyone that making pilgrimage to House of Allāh is a pillar of our faith. Every year millions of Muslims travel by air, land, and sea to the Holy Precincts to circumambulate the Ancient House and to make *saī* between *Ṣafa* and *Marwa*. It is the life ambition of many millions more. ‘*Umrah*, or the lesser pilgrimage, too, is from the great rites of the Religion, an expiation for the worshipper’s sins. The Prophet (ﷺ) stated: “From ‘*Umrah* to ‘*Umrah* is an expiation for what is between them [from sins], and the *Hajj Mabruṛ* has no reward except *Jannah*.”¹ For such a promise, one must be willing to make the necessary sacrifices. In hopes of having one’s sins pardoned and reaching for the reward of *Jannah*, one should make his preparations in the nearest hour; while in sound health and possessing wealth, to travel to *Baytullah al-Ḥarām*.

In addition to the expiation of sins, pilgrimage has many other rewards, from them, meeting, sitting, and benefitting from the noble scholars of the Religion. For years news would reach us of *Shaykh* ‘Abd al-Muḥsin al-Abbād’s lessons in the Prophet’s Maṣjid, explaining the classical works of *Sunnah*, most specifically, those known as the Six Books of ḥadīth. And in his explication of the ḥadīth of Jibrīl, the *Shaykh* clarifies that *Hajj* and ‘*Umrah* are perfect opportunities to benefit from the people of knowledge: “It is desirable for the pilgrim to take advantage of the opportunity to travel to the *Haramayn* to gain knowledge of his Religion and refer back to the scholars to learn that which confounds him in matters of his Faith [...]”² He relates this to the first narration in *Imām* Muslim’s *Ṣaḥīḥ* in the “Book of *Imān* (Faith).” In this report, the *Tābi’* Yaḥya b. Ya‘mar states that he and his companion Ḥumayd b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ḥimyarī were going to perform *Hajj* or ‘*Umrah* and wanted to take the opportunity to meet with one of the Prophet’s Companions, so as to ask him concerning those who were denying Allāh’s Divine Decree in Baṣrah. What we learn from the narration, as *Shaykh* ‘Abd al-Muḥsin explains, is that these *Tābi’īn* saw *Hajj* and ‘*Umrah* as a chance to implement the command of Allāh: “Ask the people of knowledge when you don’t know” [*al-Anbiya* 21:7]. Following this, the *Shaykh* cites the story of Yazīd al-Faqīr, who mentions that he was “infatuated with the ideology of the *Khawārij*.” He states that he and a band of *Kharijites* intended to make *Hajj* and afterwards go out among the people and proselytize them. However, when they arrived in al-Madinah, they found the noble companion Jābir b. ‘Abd Allāh (رضي الله عنه) clarifying that which those *Khawārij* had from doubtful matters. They listened to Jābir’s clarification and repented from their falsehood en masse, save one individual.

¹ Collected by al-Bukhārī, no. 1773

² Al-‘Abbād, *Sharḥ Ḥadīth Jibrīl fī Ta‘līm al-Dīn (Dar al-Tawhid, 1428 H/2007 CE)*, 13-14.

This time is like no other, for each year during *Hajj* and *‘Umrah* season, scholars from nearly every region of Kingdom descend upon the *Haramayn*, teaching lessons, answering questions, and passing verdicts. This allowed some of our brothers from the States to lay eyes on the great scholar of this era *Shaykh* Ṣāliḥ al-Fawzān for the first time at the *Haram* in Makkah responding to the questions of pilgrims from around the world. And it is by the Grace of Allāh that for more than a decade, our brothers at Premier Hajj and Umrah (UK) and Guidance Tours (US) have established packages that not only walk the pilgrim through each of the rites, but have coupled this with knowledge-based seminars. Past seminars have included lessons and exhortations from the likes of *Shaykh* Rabi’ b. Hādī al-Madkhalī, *Shaykh* ‘Ubayd al-Jābirī, *Shaykh* Muḥammad b. Hādī, *Shaykh* ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Muḥiyadīn, *Shaykh* ‘Abd Allāh al-Bukhārī, et al. What a great opportunity, as the aforementioned benefit from *Shaykh* ‘Abd al-Muḥsin illustrates, to combine between the rites of *Hajj* and *‘Umrah* and sitting at the feet of the scholars of *Sunnah*.

Thinking back to the end of the nineties and the beginning of the 2000's, we recall the deaths of some of our elder *‘Ulama* in close succession: *Imām* Ibn Bāz, *Imām* Al-Albānī, *Imām* Al-‘Uthaymīn, and *Imām* Muqbil—may Allāh have mercy upon them all. And as we look today, we realize that some of the senior scholars are in their 80's, the likes of *Shaykh* Rabi’, *Shaykh* al-Fawzān, and *Shaykh* ‘Abd al-Muḥsin—may Allāh preserve them. This thought was in the front of one pilgrim’s mind on *‘Umrah* in 1435 *Hijrī* (2014)—almost in tears—when he witnessed *Shaykh* ‘Abd al-Muḥsin being brought to his lesson in the Prophet's Masjid in a wheelchair. This after years of seeing the *Shaykh* walk to his chair on his own two feet. He went on to mention that this memory was enough to stir him to return to the *Haramayn* again this year.

Moreover, these trips are a rare opportunity to meet with our *Salafī* brothers and sisters from lands scattered across the map, reuniting with some we haven't seen in years, some we may never see again. Ayyūb al-Sikhtiyānī (رحمته الله) stated: “My love for the season [of pilgrimage], and my love to be there increases due to me meeting some of my brothers [in Islām] in that time, whom I’m not able to meet at any other time.”³

May Allāh (عز وجل) bless all who are able to make the journey to fulfill the rites of the *Hajj* and *‘Umrah*, to benefit from the noble scholars, and to gather with their *Salafī* brothers and sisters worldwide. May He also grant them safe passage home, returning them securely to those they left behind.



³ Ibn Ma‘īn, *Tārīkh Ibn Ma‘īn*, (*Markaz al-Baḥth al-‘Ilmi wa Iḥya al-Turāth al-Islamiy*, 1399 H/ 1979 CE), 3/18.