

Hajj, Umrah and Ziyarah

By Umar Mamdani

Hajj is the fifth pillar of Islam. It is the big Muslim Pilgrimage that you should perform if you have the money to do so. Hajj is done in the month of Dhul-Hijjah. Umrah is the small Pilgrimage that is not obligatory. Umrah is the Pilgrimage that can be performed at any time of the year. Ziyarah is visiting the significant places in Makkah and Madinah.

I performed Umrah with my family this year. We left for Makkah from Nairobi and wore our Ihram at Nairobi airport. When we reached Makkah we settled down and then we went to do Umrah. During Umrah we recited the Talbiyah. We entered the Haram and saw the Ka'ba and made dua. Then we started our Tawaf which is seven rounds counterclockwise around the Ka'ba starting at Hajar al-Aswad which is the black stone from Jannah and ending at Hajar al-Aswad. We recited Ratibul Haddad when doing Tawaf. After finishing Tawaf, we prayed two rakat Salah Sunnah behind Maqam Ibrahim. Maqam Ibrahim is the Station of Prophet Ibrahim (A.S). We drank zamzam water and then we went for Sa'i where we walked between Safa and Marwa seven times starting at Safa and ending at Marwa. Sayyidatina Hajar (A.S) ran between these two hills looking for water for Prophet Ismail (A.S) when he was a baby. When we finished Sa'i we prayed two rakat Salah and made dua. Then we went to shave our hair. This completed our Umrah.

The Muslims who are performing Hajj, first complete Umrah and then go to Mina on 8th of Dhul-Hijjah. In Mina they live in tents. On the 9th of Dhul-Hijjah, they go to Arafat and make lots of dua. You need to go to Arafat in order to complete your Hajj. After Arafat the Muslims go to Muzdalifa where they spend the night and collect 49 pebbles. They sleep on the bare ground. Then, they go to Mina where they sacrifice an animal to feed the poor because it is Eid al-Adha and then throw seven pebbles at the big pillar which represents shaytan. After the animal is sacrificed, the men shave their hair and women cut some of their hair. They come out of Ihram and wear normal clothes. They return back to Makkah to do Tawaf. When the Tawaf is completed they go to Mina and throw pebbles at the three pillars for the next two days, the 11th and 12th. On the 12th, they return to Makkah to make Tawaf al-wada, which is the farewell Tawaf.

When we went for Ziyarah in Makkah we visited Mount Hira where Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) received the first revelation. We also visited the places where you go to during Hajj time. We visited Mina and saw all the tents where all the pilgrims stay. We also visited Arafat and climbed Jabal Rahmah where Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) made his last sermon. We went to Jannatul Mala where Sayyidatina Khadijah (R.A.A) is resting and prayed Fatiha. My great grandmother is also buried here.

We took a bus to go to Madinah and on the way to Madinah we did Ziyarah of Badr. When we got there, we prayed Maghrib Salah and behind the Masjid we saw the area where the Battle of Badr took place. In Madinah we had to book a time slot and got a chance to visit the Rawdah, the place where Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W), Sayyidina Abu Bakr (R.A.A) and Sayyidina Umar (R.A.A) are resting. We made dua and Salawaat. We went to Jannatul-Baqi and prayed Fatiha there. On the second day in Madinah, we went for Ziyarah of Mountain Uhud and Masjid Quba. When we got to Mount Uhud we saw the place where the Battle of Uhud took place and where the Companions of the Prophet (S.A.W) are buried and we prayed Fatiha for them. In Masjid Quba we prayed two Rakat Nafil Salah before going back to Masjid Nabawi. We also visited Taif, where Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) was stoned when he went to preach Islam. We went to a date palm tree farm and bought lots of dates to bring back home.

Hajj is a very important pillar of Islam. All Muslims from all over the world perform Hajj together and live and stay together and pray together. It unites Muslims from all around the world. Once you have completed your Hajj, all your sins are forgiven. May all of us get the opportunity to go. Amin.