Introduction:

- It is a privilege that you have different occasions of worship in Islam. Every year you have a Ramadan and hajj. And even though Ramadan is over, you long for the next Ramadan, similar to hajj.
- There is no routine and that is the wisdom from Allah because He knows the human gets bored with routine.
- And these two pillars of fasting in Ramadan and pilgrimage are two months apart, and people ask why is it not spread out? The reason is in Ramadan, it is preparing our heart with fasting, praying, dhikr, at is as if you are building your faith and having taqwa at the end. And you need to carry this taqwa with you in hajj. Subhan Allah.
- The hajj is a journey to Allah and you need the taqwa, and whether you are going or not, you should still feel that you are going to hajj. A lot people say they feel the Eid Al Fitr but less for the Adha, but it is a eid for all the Muslims, you need to feel it.
- You have to have that feeling and happiness and excitement of the hajj season because it is one of the symbols of Allah.
- In Ramadan, you had the last ten nights and the night of decree, but now you have another chance and it is greater with the ten days of Dhul Hijah, because the ten days in Ramadan was preparation. And this is a mercy from Allah to give us this opportunity.

What are the first ten days?

- Sometimes people say why don’t we know the exact day of Ramadan or Eid, but this should show you that you are truly a slave of Allah, that even the day you do not know when it will be, so best to submit. Subhan Allah.
- The first ten days of Dhul Hijah are from the first of Dhul Hijah to the tenth.

What is its virtues?

- Allah swears by it (Surah Al Fajr: (وَٱلۡفَجۡرِ (١) وَلَيَالٍ عَشۡرٍٍ۬ (٢)) By the dawn; (1) By the ten nights (i.e. the first ten days of the month of Dhul-Hijjah))
- The tafsir says that it is the first ten days of Dhul Hijah.
- In Ramadan you had a month of worship, but Dhul Hijah is only ten days. Surah Al Hajj 28: (لِّيَشۡهَدُواْ مَنَـٰفِعَ لَهُمۡ وَيَذۡڪُرُواْ ٱسۡمَ ٱللَّهِ فِىٓ أَيهامٍ مهعۡلُومَـٰتٍ (That they may witness things that are of benefit to them, and mention the Name of Allâh on appointed days)
- In Ramadan you do so many deeds and you do not feel it because it is a blessed month, but the real challenge is with the ten days of Dhul Hijah, because the struggle is more thus the reward is more. The struggle is more because the shaitan is unchained, unlike during Ramadan. Anyone who does not have taqwa, then the shaitan can easily influence him. And you also have to struggle against yourself and others.
- Hadith: (وعن ابن عباس رضي الله عنهما قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: " ما من أيام العمل الصالح فيها أحب إلى الله من هذه الأيام " يعني أيام العشر (The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, "There are no days during
which the righteous action is so pleasing to Allah than these days (i.e., the first ten days of Dhul-Hijjah).” – Al Bukhari

- The reward for any good deeds during these ten days is the love of Allah. Subhan Allah. It is not a reward that is multiplied, but rather the love of Allah. Subhan Allah. When you know about this, you really don’t want to lose these days.
- Allah loves the righteous good deeds even more during these ten days. Whether it’s voluntary prayer, fasting, reciting Quran, dhikr, seeking knowledge, charity, etc.
- And these are the best days in the duniya. We have 365 days, and the best days are the first 10 days of Dhul Hijah. If you get asked what are the best days in your life? When you reach the 10 days of Dhul Hijah. Subhan Allah.
- The deeds during this time are the most beloved to Allah, there is more reward, and they are purer to Allah. And these are important days because the hajj gets performed in this period. And even if you are not physically there for hajj, but the excitement is in your heart for receiving these days, you get rewarded for it. Allah loves it when your heart is magnifying Him.
- We need to constantly say the takbeerat.

(الله أكبّر الله أكبّر الله أكبّر لا إله إلا الله، الله أكبّر الله أكبّر الله أكبّر)

Allah is the Greatest, Allah is the Greatest, Allah is the Greatest, there is no god but Allah, Allah is the Greatest, Allah is the Greatest, and to Allah is all praise

- Omar bin Khattab (ra) used to go to the marketplace and say the takbeerat loudly.
- Allah wants you to magnify Him so that you remember Him only, during these important days we need to remember that Allah is the Greatest. We should not attach ourselves to anything besides Allah. And this reminds you of tawheed. And to Allah are all the praises. Give credit only to Allah. So there is takbeer, taheel, and tahmeed.
- Magnifying Allah can even be thinking of the greatness of these days, just this feeling you can get rewarded for it.
- Note: When making the sacrifice you do not make a separate one for the deceased, they are already included in the family sacrifice.
- If you fast the Day of Arafah, which is the 9th of Dhul Hijjah, Monday, Oct 14, the virtue is expiation of sins from the last year and next year. How the next year? If it is done sincerely from the heart, then Allah will protect you from falling into sins. Subhan Allah.

Hajj – Journey of a Lifetime

Introduction:

- This is not a physical journey, but a journey of the heart, so with your heart imagine we are going on a journey of a lifetime.
- Hajj is one of the pillars of Islam which is required to be done once in a lifetime. Since this is a worship that is done at least once in your life, it means it is a worship that will make you see the reality of everything and experience so many different situations and go to different places in a short period of time. You experience all that you get to experience in a lifetime.
Tawheed in Hajj:

- It is teaching us that we will only travel and pack only for Allah, just as we pray only for Allah, and fast only for Allah, and give money only for Allah.
- Like all worships, it is based on tawheed (لا اله الا الله).
- Why do we want to learn about hajj even if we are not going?
  - To make us long and look forward to go to hajj.
  - To teach us unity: Islam teaches us unity, and when you hear that someone is going, you would feel the same way as if you are going. Even if you are at home, but your heart is with all of the symbols of Islam, and you are longing for it - then even this intention and feeling Allah will reward you for it.
  - Some people think they only want to go to hajj if they have sinned and are older, so they can repent then – but this is a misconception.
  - We want to feel the significance and importance of this pillar.
  - Surah Al Hajj 32: (ذَٲلِكَ وَمَن يُعَظِّمۡ شَعَـٰٓٮ ِرَ ٱللَّهِ فَإِنههَا مِن تَقۡوَى ٱلۡقُلُوبِ) (Thus it is and whosoever honours the Symbols of Allâh, then it is truly from the piety of the hearts)
    - How can you feel the taqwa in your heart, when you magnify the symbols of Allah, and hajj is one of those symbols.

Virtues of Hajj:

- People think it is just a physical journey, but it is more of actions of the heart. During this time, where is your heart? This is a journey of a lifetime, and just as in this life, we are going from one decree to another (one station in hajj to another) and meeting different people, it reminds us that we need to really focus while on this journey.
- When we have interactions with people, it can cause conflict and delays, but with the hajj, it is teaching you that you have a goal and you want to finish it. Similarly in life, you need to overlook this and move forward because your goal is the pleasure of Allah and paradise.
- To be a slave of Allah: Surah Al Imran 97: (فيه ءَايَـٰتُُۢ بَيِّنَـٰت ٍ۬ مهقَامُ إِبۡرَٲهِيمَ وَمَن دَََلَهُ   ََانَءَامِن ٍ۬ا وَللَِّهِ عَلَى ٱلنهاسِ حِج ٱلۡبَيۡتِ مَنِ ٱسۡتَطَاعَ إِلَيۡهِ سَبِيل ٍ۬ وَمَن فَرَ فَإِنه ٱللَّهَ ََنِى  عَنِ ٱلۡعَـٰلَمِينَ) (In it are manifest signs (for example), the Maqâm (place) of Ibrâhim (Abraham); whosoever enters it, he attains security. And Hajj (pilgrimage to Makkah) to the House (Ka'bah) is a duty that mankind owes to Allâh, those who can afford the expenses (for one’s conveyance, provision and residence); and whoever disbelieves [i.e. denies Hajj (pilgrimage to Makkah), then he is a disbeliever of Allâh], then Allâh stands not in need of any of the 'Alamîn (mankind and jinn and all that exists)
  - You have to do tawaf 7 times, you do it – sa’e 7 times, be at Mina at this time, etc. so all of this is teaching us that we have to be slaves of Allah and not question.
  - The moment you enter the ka’aba you are safe. Do not think people will steal, etc.
  - It is a command from Allah to perform the journey to the House of Allah. And whoever denies it, or postpones it, or does not see its importance, then verily Allah is in no need of the universe.
- Exactly above the Ka’aba, in the 7th heaven is the Bait Al Ma’amoor, which is where 70,000 angels go, and never enter again. Fortunately for us we can return to the Ka’aba.
Expiation of sins like a newborn: Hadith: (مَنْ حَجه للَّهِ فَلَمْ يَرْفُثْ وَلَمْ يَفْسُقْ رَجَعَ يَوْمِ ولَدَتْهُ أُم هُ) (The Prophet (p.b.u.h) said, "Whoever performs Hajj for Allah's pleasure and does not have sexual relations with his wife, and does not do evil or sins then he will return (after Hajj free from all sins) as if he were born anew.") – Al Bukhari.

The acceptable hajj has the reward of (يرجع يوم ولدته أم) – return as a newborn.

During the hajj, you will come across many different types of cultures and people, and you cannot judge others, you really need to guard your heart. The struggle is high but it is more than worth the reward of returning as a newborn, free of sin.

Paradise: Hadith: (الحج المبرور ليس له ثواب إلا الجنة) (∨The Messenger of Allah said: Hajj Al-Mabrur brings no less a reward than Paradise.") – An Nisaee

Preparation for the Journey of a Lifetime (لااستعداد لرحلة العمر)

Repentance and settle any scores with those you have wronged: (التوبة و رد المظالم لأهلها) before leaving for this journey, you want your balance of sins to be zero. You want to settle anything with those you wronged. And we need to be in this state all the time because the journey of hajj is actually a rehearsal to the journey of the Day Judgement, and we will all eventually go on this journey. You want to always repent because you do not know when the start of your real journey will begin (leaving this earth), and then you will not be able to return. You want to go with your heart clean and clear. On a journey, you need to be light and free of burden, and it is the sins that weight you down. May Allah forgive us all our sins. Ameen.

Provisions and best provision is taqwa: packing with your clothes, ihram, etc. that is only a physical, the best thing to carry and pack with you is your taqwa in the heart. Be patient and grateful with the people.

Transport: before people used to go by camel, even by foot, they would travel for months. So we need to be thankful to Allah to have it easy for us. But we have to remember the ride that we will all ride, which is the ride of the janazah, when our bodies will be carried by our loved ones and placed beneath the earth.

Leaving the family behind: we have only one life and it is so precious, and so when we leave everything behind while on hajj, it represents that we will one day leave everything behind, and leave our house and family, and the only thing we will have will be our good deeds. And there is nothing that can make us leave except for Allah. Life itself is a journey and we are travelling to our final destination as each second passes. This is the artificial life, it is not real, it will end. The next life is the real life and real enjoyment. So we need to feel that we are travelers and it is by Allah’s permission that He will take us when our time has come.

Ihram: as we reach the point of meeqat, that is when the hajj begins. The men need to remove anything stitched, so they all wear white. So everyone is the same, at that time no one knows other’s status, cultural identity, etc. It is forbidden to cut the nails, hair, and fragrance. A person is truly in a state of simplicity. Your behavior should also change, no arguing, shouting, screaming, etc, you need to behave because you are a guest of Allah. So it really teaches you submission and to be a humble slave of Allah. At that time, a person will also remember that when he leaves, he will not take anything from the duniya except for his shroud. We don’t know
that one day someone else will remove our clothes, and it will remind us that one day we will go to our graves, and it will be the same for everyone. This journey shows you the reality of this life, because this life can be deceiving and make you do things without thinking.

- **At your service (لبيك و سعديك)**: As soon as you enter the meeqat, this dua’a is recited to say that I am your service oh Allah, I will take commands only from you. And this reminds us that we should be in this state all the time, that we are slaves of Allah, which is so honorable. Allah does not want you to be a slave of money, desires, status, or another human. Allah wants you to be at His service and this is the honor. And when you are a slave to anything besides Allah then that is the humiliation.
  - Allah will reply back and say (لبيك و سعديك), I will help you. Allah will help us to worship Him, and this means that we cannot do anything without Allah.
  - The voice needs to be raised (by the men) because it is one of the symbols of hajj, and as you are saying it, the stones and trees will be saying it with you and they will bear witness on the Day of Judgement. Subhan Allah.

- **Mecca (مكة)**: when you enter the Sacred House, you really need to behave.
  - **Surah Al Baqarah 125**: And (remember) when We made the House (the Ka'bah at Makkah) a place of resort for mankind and a place of safety. And take you (people) the Maqâm (place) of Ibrâhim (Abraham) [or the stone on which Ibrâhim (Abraham) A.S. stood while he was building the Ka'bah] as a place of prayer (for some of your prayers, e.g. two Rak'at after the Tawâf of the Ka'bah at Makkah), and We commanded Ibrâhim (Abraham) and Ismâ’îl (Ishmael) that they should purify My House (the Ka'bah at Makkah) for those who are circumambulating it, or staying (I'tikâf), or bowing or prostrating themselves (there, in prayer).)
  - Allah made Mecca a place of security and wanting to always return to it. The more you go, the more your heart gets attached to it. People keep returning. It is like a magnet. This is the meaning of (مثابة).
  - Allah chose Mecca and Allah chose the time when you can make the hajj, it really is submission. You need to remember that this House is so special because of the time of Ibrahim (as). From the time of Adam the foundation was there, and then Allah commanded Ibrahim and Ismail (as) to raise the foundation of the House of Allah.
  - Then Allah commanded Ibrahim (as) to call the people to make hajj to this house. Ibrahim (as) said that no one is there, it is a barren desert, how will my voice reach everyone.
  - **Surah Al Hajj 27**: And proclaim to mankind the Hajj (pilgrimage). They will come to you on foot and on every lean camel, they will come from every deep and distant (wide) mountain highway (to perform Hajj) And to this day people are answering the call of Ibrahim (as), subhan Allah. So when you do something, Allah appreciates.

- **Tawaf (طواف)**: you will stop saying (لبيك). And this is showing as if you are going from one decree to another in this life. Though there are so many people, you need to feel as if you are the only one there. You will make go round seven times, starting from the black stone. And this is
representing as if you are like the angels, that you are going around the pleasure of Allah. You are not honoring the house itself, but you are honoring the commands of Allah. You are in a state of worship, do not be busy with looking at others, or mobile. You want to be like an angel, like an obedient slave of Allah, turning around the pleasure of Allah. You want your life to revolve around the pleasure of Allah. Even when you go there, there will always be people, so ask Allah the All-Vast (الواسع) to give you space. There are people who go at the same time, and those who think it was crowded, and those who think it is spacious. Subhan Allah.

- Prayer behind Maqam Ibrahim (as): it is not to worship this maqam, but to follow the way of the Prophet (pbuh). It is said that Ibrahim (as) was working so diligently, that his footprints were imprinted on the earth. It is the sunnah to pray to units behind Maqam Ibrahim and then drink zamzam water.

- Sae’ee between Safa and Marwah: There are two mountains called Safa and Marwah, and the sae’ee is the passage between these two mountains. There are verses that need to be recited. Surah Al Baqarah 158: (إن الصفا والمروة من شعاعين من الله) (Verily! As-Safâ and Al-Marwah (two mountains in Makkah) are of the Symbols of Allah). Sae’ee is to go from one mountain to the other for 7 times. This represents the time when Ibrahim (as) was commanded to leave his wife Hajjar and son Ismail. Though she did not have water, she was taking the means to find the water. And look how Allah honored her by making it one of the symbols of Allah. And this ‘coming and going’ represents what it means to be a slave of Allah. Just as a servant for a king, who is coming and going, similarly, this is our life for Allah, we are ‘coming and going’ to be at His service. It shows that we need to take the means. And her gift was to get the running water of zamzam.

- 8th of Dhil Hijjah – Day of Tarwiyah: this is the official start of hajj, and you need to go into state of ihram again. People are preparing to go to Mina, and while you are waiting this is to remind you that you will wait on the Day of Judgement. And just as people are going all in the same direction, similarly on the Day of Judgement, there is no escape.

- Day of Arafah: the hajj is all in preparation for this day. Hadith: (فَلاْيَا قَالَ فَلاْيَا يُعْتِقَ اللَّهُ مِنْ يَوْمِ عَرَفَةَ) (There is no day when God sets free more servants from Hell than the Day of 'Arafa.)
  - On that day, Allah will forgive their sins and they will be like newborns. The shaitan is the most miserable on this day, because he lost all of the years he made you sin, and in one day it is wiped out. Subhan Allah.
  - Everyone is waiting for this day. From the sunrise to the sunset, Allah will descend to the lowest heaven in a manner that suits His majesty. And He will boast to the angels about them, and say look at my servants who came from all over, and look at them with dusty hair and barefooted, and I bear witness that I forgive all their sins. Imagine the happiness. It is a feeling that cannot be explained, you feel the closeness of Allah.
  - At that moment, your dua’a and reciting will be different, you will be different, and the moment the sun sets, the people’s faces will be bright. And the first sin that is committed is people thinking that their sins were not forgiven.
  - On this day, you are declaring your testimony of faith on this day. You are renewing your oath with Allah. This is reminding you of the accounts on the Day of Judgement, and
Allah is forgiving you. This reminds you that Allah is close to you by His support, companionship, love, but He needs you to remember Him.

- And Allah will appreciate it from you. Never think that Allah will forsake you if you come to Him. The hajj is telling you how you will be closer to your Creator.
- Allah wants your heart, and it is a lifetime journey that is in preparation for the final journey.
- If you come to Allah walking, Allah will come to you running. But you have to make the first step.
- On this day, you should make the dua’a (لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له، له الملك و له الحمد يحيي و يميت و هو على كل شئ قدير) (There is no god but Allah alone, with no partner, to Him is the Kingdom, and to Him are all praise, He causes life and He causes death, and He is able to do all things)

- Muzdalifah (المدلف: the worship here is just to sleep outside and make you look at the universe around you, and to sleep on the ground below you. And it will remind you that just as you came from the earth, you will return to the earth. And even if you sleep for an hour, it is the best sleep because you are a ‘newborn’.

- Actions on the Day of Sacrifice (أعمال يوم النحر): this is the first day of Eid, and you take 7 stones, the size of chickpeas and you throw them against 3 pillars that represent the shaitan. That is when you declare enmity against the shaitan. You are now a newborn, and you do not want to fall into his trap again. You are telling him to keep away, do not come close to me, do not take me as your friend. Sometimes you will come across people who will throw the stones with heart, and it could hit people, but you cannot do something. Sometimes you will come across people who do not know, but you should not look down upon them.
  - Every stone you throw, then it is a light on the Day of Judgement.
  - You are sacrificing an animal on this day, though you are telling Allah that you deserve more, and I am ready to sacrifice everything for you.

- Farewell pilgrimage: you make tawaf around the ka’aba again as a sign of renewing your oath again.

*We ask Allah to grant us the acceptable hajj in our lifetime and to grant us paradise in our hereafter. Ameen.*