

Bismillah al-Rahman al-Rahim

With the Name of God, All-Merciful, Most Merciful

INNER MEANINGS OF HAJJ & ‘UMRAH - IMAM SHIBLI

The Companion of Shibli:

[1] Shibli asked me, “Did you make a firm intention (‘*aqd* – contract) for The Hajj?”

I replied, “Yes.”

Shibli: By your contract, did you nullify every contract opposing that contract [of Hajj for God] that you had concluded ever since you were created?

“No.”

Shibli: Then you did not make a firm contract.

[2] Shibli: Did you remove your clothes [before donning the dress of sacredness – *ihram*] ?

“Yes.”

Shibli: Did you strip yourself of everything [i.e. all attachments] ?

“No.”

Shibli: Then you did not remove your clothes.

[3] Shibli: Did you purify (wash) yourself [before donning the dress of sacredness – *ihram*] ?

“Yes.”

Shibli: Did all your faults leave you when you purified yourself?

“No.”

Shibli: Then you did not purify yourself.

[4] Shibli: Did you answer God’s call with *talbiyah* [after donning the dress of sacredness – *ihram*] ?

[The traditional words of this prayer, in answer to God’s call to people to make Pilgrimage to His House, are: *Labbayk Allahumma Labbayk. Labbayka La Shareeka laka Labbayk. Inn-al-Hamda wan-Ni’mata laka wal-Mulk. La Shareeka lak. (I am here, Dear God, I am here. I am here: You have no partner; I am here. Truly, all Praise and Favour belong to You, and all Kingdom: You have no partner.)*]

“Yes.”

Shibli: Did you find a similar *talbiyah* in answer to your own call of *talbiyah* ?

“No.”

Shibli: Then you did not answer God’s call.

[5] Shibli: Did you enter the Sanctuary (*Haram*) [of Mecca] ?

“Yes.”

Shibli: When you entered the Sanctuary (*Haram*), did you resolve to leave every prohibited (*haraam*) matter ?

“No.”

Shibli: Then you did not enter the Sanctuary (*Haram*).

[6] Shibli: Did you overlook Mecca [from the top of a surrounding mountain] ?

“Yes.”

Shibli: Did a spiritual state from Truth-Reality (*al-Haqq*) overlook you because of your overlooking Mecca?

“No.”

Shibli: Then you did not overlook Mecca.

[7] Shibli: Did you enter the [Sacred] Mosque ?

“Yes.”

Shibli: Did you know (feel) that you had entered His Proximity?

“No.”

Shibli: Then you did not enter the [Sacred] Mosque.

[8] Shibli: Did you see the Ka’bah ?

“Yes.”

Shibli: Did you see the actual goal for which you travelled to it?

“No.”

Shibli: Then you did not see the Ka’bah.

[9] Shibli: Did you run three circuits and walk four [in the total of seven circumambulations around the Ka’bah] ?

“Yes.”

Shibli: Did you run from the world (in the first three circuits) such that you knew that you had distanced yourself from it and disconnected from it? Did you find from the four circuits you walked, safety from that which you were running from, such that you increased in gratitude to God for it?

“No.”

Shibli: Then you did not run [and walk].

[10] Shibli: Did you touch the Black Stone and kiss it?

“Yes.”

Shibli cried out, saying: Woe to you! It is said that whoever touches the Black Stone has shaken hands with [God] The Truth-Reality (*al-Haqq*), Glorified and Exalted [because of the hadith: “The Black Stone is God’s Right Hand on Earth”]. Whoever shakes hands with [God] The Truth-Reality (*al-Haqq*), Glorified and Exalted, is in a state of safety. Did the effect of safety become manifest upon you?

“No.”

Shibli: Then you did not touch the Black Stone.

[11] Shibli: Did you stand for a moment in front of God, behind the Station [of Abraham], and did you offer two cycles of prayer?

“Yes.”

Shibli: Did you stand according to your station with your Lord, such that you were shown your purpose?

“No.”

Shibli: Then you did not pray.

[12] Shibli: Did you exit to Mount Safa [“purity”] and stand there?

“Yes.”

Shibli: What did you do there?

“I said *takbir* [*Allahu akbar* – “God is Greatest”], seven times. I mentioned the Hajj and asked God for it to be accepted.”

Shibli: Did you say the *takbir* of (and with) the angels, finding the reality of your *takbir* in that place?

“No.”

Shibli: Then you did not say *takbir*.

[13] Shibli: Did you descend from Mount Safa (“purity”) ?

“Yes.”

Shibli: Did all your faults leave you, such that you had attained purity?

“No.”

Shibli: Then you neither ascended, nor descended from, Mount Safa [“purity”].

[14] Shibli: Did you sprint [in the bottom of the valley between Safa and Marwah] ?

“Yes.”

Shibli: Did you flee to Him, disavow yourself of your fleeing, and arrive at your existence/being?

“No.”

Shibli: Then you did not sprint.

[15] Shibli: Did you arrive at Mount Marwah (“thirst quenched with water”) ?

“Yes.”

Shibli: Did you see Tranquillity at Marwah, such that you took it, or did it descend upon you?

“No.”

Shibli: Then you did not arrive at Mount Marwah.

[16] Shibli: Did you go out to Mina (“desires”) ?

“Yes.”

Shibli: Did you place your desires in God, in a different state from that in which you had disobeyed Him?

“No.”

Shibli: Then you did not go out to Mina.

[17] Shibli: Did you enter the Mosque of Khayf (“fear / awe”) ?

“Yes.”

Shibli: Did you fear God whilst entering and exiting? Did you find fear unparalleled elsewhere ?

“No.”

Shibli: Then you did not enter the Mosque of Khayf.

[18] Shibli: Did you proceed to ‘Arafat (“recognitions”) and stand there ?

“Yes.”

Shibli: Did you recognise the state for which you were created, the state that you intend and the state which you are becoming? Did you recognise the One Who Teaches you to recognise these states? Did you see the place to which there are the indications, for it is He Who enables the breaths of the souls in every state ?

“No.”

Shibli: Then you did not stand at ‘Arafat.

[19] Shibli: Did you then leave for Muzdalifah (“the one nearing”) and see the Sacred Place [the area around Muzdalifah] ?

[NB God commands in the Qur’an, “**Remember God at the Sacred Place.**” (*al-Baqarah*, The Heifer, 2:198)]

“Yes.”

Shibli: Did you remember God with a remembrance that made you forget whatever is other-than-Him, such that you were occupied with Him only?

“No.”

Shibli: Then you did not stay at Muzdalifah.

[20] Shibli: Did you return to Mina and slaughter [the sacrificial animal] ?

“Yes.”

Shibli: [The sacrificial animal being] your self and ego?

“No.”

Shibli: Then you did not slaughter [the sacrificial animal].

[21] Shibli: Did you cast stones [at the devil] ?

“Yes.”

Shibli: Did you cast your ignorance aside from yourself by an increase in knowledge that manifested upon you ?

“No.”

Shibli: Then you did not cast stones.

[22] Shibli: Did you shave your head ?

“Yes.”

Shibli: Did your (false) hopes decrease ?

“No.”

Shibli: Then you did not shave your head.

[23] Shibli: Did you visit the Ka’bah ?

[During the Hajj, there are three compulsory trips to the Ka’bah: Arrival (*Qudoom*), Visit (*Ziyarah/Ifadah*) and Farewell (*Wida’*).]

“Yes.”

Shibli: Were any realities unveiled to you, or did you see any increase in divine generosity and honour upon you because of this visit, for the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace, said, “**The Hajj and ‘Umrah pilgrims are the Visitors of God. It is a duty upon the one being visited to honour his visitors.**”

“No.”

Shibli: Then you did not visit the Ka’bah.

[24] Shibli: Did you exit the state of *ihram* (*sacredness and prohibition*) into that of matters being *halal* (permissible) ?

“Yes.”

Shibli: Did you resolve to eat only what is *halal* ?

“No.”

Shibli: Then you did not enter the state of being *halal*.

[25] Shibli: Did you perform the Farewell Visit to the Ka’bah ?

“Yes.”

Shibli: Did you bid farewell to your soul and spirit entirely ?

“No.”

Shibli: Then you did not perform farewell (*wad’*), and you must return (‘*awd*). See how you perform the Hajj after this, for I have instructed you. When you perform the Hajj, strive that it may be as I have described to you.

[Ibn ‘Arabi:] So know, may God strengthen you, that I have only quoted this story for notification, reminder and for it to be known that the Way of the People of Allah upon this has continued with their spiritual states in it. This was Shibli’s understanding during his Hajj, for he only asked based on his own taste and experience: did others experience the same, or not? Another person might experience the same, or something higher or lower, for “all of them have a known station.” [A reference to the angels: “All of us have a known station.” (*al-Saffat*, Those Ranked In Rows, 37:164)]

I have not invented a path in the considerations (inner meanings) of these acts of worship different to what has preceded me, except that people’s tastes and experiences are of different levels according to God’s care of each servant in such matters.

Source: Ibn ‘Arabi, *al-Futuhāt al-Makkiyyah* [The Meccan Openings], *Kitāb Asrār al-Hajj* [Book of the Secrets of the Pilgrimage], Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, Beirut, 3rd ed., 2011, vol. 2, pp. 437-8

Translation [with added notes & numbering of paragraphs]:

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