

Umrah (part 1 of 2)

Description: An easy to follow guide outlining the essentials every new Muslim must know about *Umrah*, the lesser pilgrimage.

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Objectives:

- To learn the importance of *Umrah*.
- To learn the basic conditions associated with it.
- To learn how to perform it.

Arabic Terms

- *Hajj* " A pilgrimage to Mecca where the pilgrim performs a set of rituals. The *Hajj* is one of the five pillars of Islam, which every adult Muslim must undertake at least once in their life if they can afford it and are physically able.
- *Ihram* " A state in which one is prohibited to practice certain deeds that are lawful at other times. It is necessary when performing the rites of *Umrah* and *Hajj*.
- *Izaar* " A piece of cloth used as a waist-wrapper both by men and women.
- *Jihad* " a struggle, to exert effort in a certain matter, and may refer to a legitimate war.
- *Kabah* " The cube-shaped structure located in the city of Mecca. It serves as a focal point towards which all Muslims face when praying.
- *Mahram* " a person, man or woman related to a particular individual by blood, marriage or breastfeeding. One he or she is not permitted to marry, such as the father, nephew, uncle, etc.
- *Miqat* " A station wherein one would put on the garments of *Ihram* and enter the state of *Ihram*.
- *Niqab* " Face veil.
- *Ridaa* " A piece of cloth (sheet etc.) worn around the upper part of the body.
- *Sa'ee* " It is the walking and running between the hills of *Safa* and *Marwa*.
- *Safa* and *Marwa* " Hills between which people walk and run during the *Umrah*.

- *Talbiyah* " The proclamation Muslims chant during the pilgrimage.
- *Tawaf* " Circumambulation around the *Kabah*. It is done in seven circuits.
- *Umrah* " A pilgrimage to the Holy House of Allah in the city of Mecca, Saudi Arabia. Often referred to as the lesser pilgrimage. It can be performed at any time of the year.

Importance of *Umrah*

Its importance is found in numerous texts; we will list them here in point form:



1. oeBe consistent and perform *Umrah* after having performed the *Hajj*; for indeed it will remove poverty and sins in a manner similar to a blacksmith who would purify iron, gold and silver. Indeed the accepted *Hajj* has no reward except *Jannah* (Heavenly Abode)."[\[1\]](#)
2. oePerforming an *Umrah* followed by another will efface all the sins between the two."[\[2\]](#)
3. oeThe *Jihad* for the elderly, weak and women is *Hajj* and *Umrah*."[\[3\]](#)

Pillars of *Umrah*

There are three pillars of *Umrah*:

Ihram

Tawaf

Sa'ee

Ihram: *Ihram* refers to a state that one enters, wherein one is prohibited from doing certain things. These include wearing perfume, clipping nails or cutting hair and covering the head with direct head-gear.[\[4\]](#) A man wears two sheets called oe*lzaar*" and oe*Ridaa*" and he should leave his head uncovered. The oe*Ridaa*" covers the upper part of the body, whereas, the oe*lzaar*" covers the lower part of the body.

A woman can wear her regular clothing, but she should not wear gloves or a *oeniqab*". She may draw her headscarf over her face in the presence of non-*mahram* men.



Tawaf: It is the circumambulation around the *Kabah*. A person does this seven times.

Sa'ee: It is the walking and running between the hills of *Safa* and *Marwa*.

These are the three pillars of *Umrah*. *Umrah* also has two compulsory acts that must be met:

1. Entering the state of *Ihram* from outside the *Haram* (sanctuary) area (from a *Miqat* station).
2. Shaving or shortening the hair (for a man) and clipping a small portion for a woman.

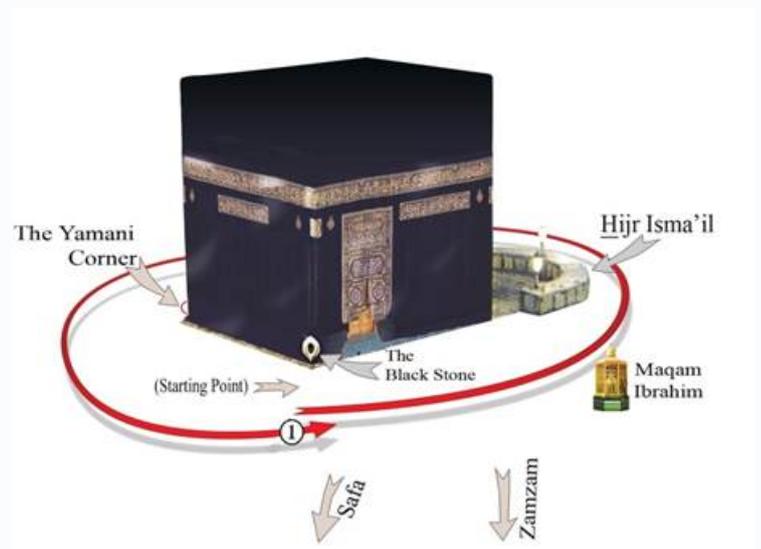
Procedure of *Umrah*

Once a person arrives at the *Miqat* station, whether this is by land or by air they must put on the necessary clothing of *Ihram*. A man may wear perfume on his body before entering the state of *Ihram*, if he chooses, but not on his garments. He should not apply perfume after entering the state of *Ihram*.

Before leaving the *Miqat* station, one should say: **oeLabbaik Allaahumma bi 'Umrah**" (Here I am O Allah in response to Your call performing *Umrah*). Upon saying this one enters the state of *Ihram*.

They would then begin to chant the *Talbiyah* saying: **oeLabbaik Allaahumma labbaik, labbaika laa shareeka laka labbaik, innal-hamda wan-ni'mata laka wal mulk, laa shareeka lak**"[5].

They continue to chant this until they reach the *Kabah* and begin to perform the *Tawaf*. A man is to uncover his right shoulder throughout the *Tawaf*; this is done by placing the middle part of the *Ridaa* under the right arm and tossing both ends of the sheet on the left shoulder.



Thereafter one is to circumambulate around the *Kabah* seven times; each time begins from the Black Stone. One is not required to physically touch or kiss it, but when one is in line with it, they begin their circumambulation at that point. During the *Tawaf* one should be mindful of Allah, asking of Him and begging for His mercy. One should avoid



idle talk and laughter, for this maybe a once in a lifetime chance which should not be squandered heedlessly!

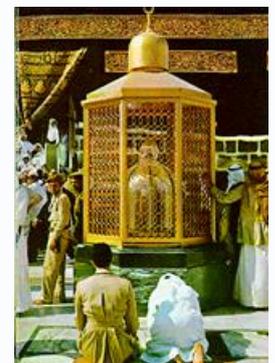
It is praiseworthy for one to walk with a faster pace in the first three rounds.

The Prophet, may the mercy and blessings of Allah be upon him, would say the following between the Yemeni corner and the Black Stone:

Rabbanaa aatina fid-dunya hasanah wa fil-aakhirati hasanah wa qina 'adhaban-naar

Meaning: O our Lord, bless us with goodness in this life and in the next life as well and save us from the torment of Hell.

When the seventh round is finished, one should cover their shoulder and perform a two unit prayer behind *Maqam* of Ibrahim (Station of Ibrahim [6]). If this is not possible (due to crowds) then one can pray anywhere in the Mosque.



After the prayer one should drink the *Zamzam* water for it is blessed. The Prophet said: **'Zamzam water is for what it was drunk for.'** [7]

With this, the first segment of the *Umrah* is complete. As one approaches the hill of *Safa* they are to recite:

oeInnas-safaa wal-marwata min sha'aa-iril-laah, faman hajjal-baita a-wi'tamara falaa junaaha 'alaihi an yat-tawwafa bi-hi-maa wa man ta-tawwa'a khairan fa-innallaaha shaakirun 'aleem."

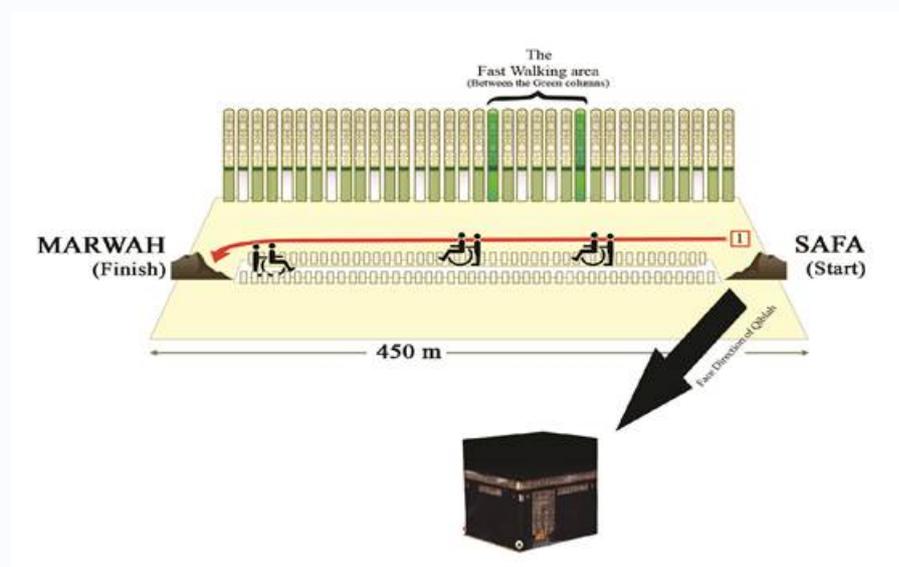
Meaning: Indeed, *as-Safa* and *al-Marwah* are among the symbols of Allah. So whoever makes *Hajj* to the House or performs *Umrah* - there is no blame upon him for walking between them. And whoever volunteers good - then indeed, Allah is appreciative and Knowing. **(Qur'an 2:158)**

After this one should say: ***oeAb-da'u bi-maa bada-allaahu bihi."***

Meaning: I begin with what Allah has begun with.

This is only said at the first time.

After this, one walks towards the slight incline on the hill of *Safa* and then faces the *Kabah*. This is a time where supplication is accepted and one should repeat their prayers three times.



After this, a person should walk between the hills of *Safa* and *Marwa* and run between the green lights, until they reach the hill of *Marwa*. Here one is to supplicate as they did at the hill of *Safa*. This trip between the hills of *Safa* and *Marwa* is considered one trip; a person does seven trips starting from *Safa* and ending at *Marwa*.

The last step in the *Umrah* is to shorten or shave the hair for a man and to clip a small portion for a woman. With this the *Umrah* is completed.

In part two we will discuss important issues that pertain to *Ihram* and discuss important tips that one should be aware of when performing *Umrah*.

Endnotes:

[1] *Tirmidhi*

[2] *Saheeh Al-Bukhari*

[3] *An-Nasa'ee*

[4] More information on this is found in part 2.

[5] Meaning: Here I am O Allah in response to Your call, here I am. Here I am, You have no partner, here I am. Verily all praise, grace and sovereignty belong to You. You have no partner.

[6] This is the point where Prophet Ibrahim stood to build the Kabah.

[7] *Ibn Hibban*

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