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The role of pilgrimage to Mecca (Hajj) in gaining moral virtues and avoiding moral vices

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ABSTRACT

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The goal: of research is to study about the training role of Haj in the present society. This paper considers the role of Haj in creating and strengthening social mutual understanding as well as gaining moral virtues and avoiding moral vices. This objective is achieved by analyzing Quran verses, muslim Imams' quotations and the commandments of religious men. Methodology: This is a descriptive analyzing study which it has been done based on a series of reliable resources. Conclusion: Haj is an important religious duty with different dimensions such as personal, social, cultural, educational, economic, and political; if the pilgrims to Mecca (Hajjis) and the officials of education system consider these features, they can get plenty of spiritual achievements. In addition to acknowledging the great journey of Hajj, its educational effects in different.

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1. Introduction

Haj is the most mysterious worship. Hajjis with any rank act like the wise people who, in the path of this educational journey, increase their knowledge of the world and purify their spirits. Haj is the best rendezvous of muslims where they will be familiar with each other and use the purifying and unifying Islamic culture to educate

the others. It is an educational moral duty which possesses individual and social virtues. One of the main achievements of Hajj is the purification of soul and clearness from mental and moral wickednesses by which Haji can reach the utmost humanity and close his (or her) spirit to God. This achievement is so critical that Hajjis must programme for it some months before going on pilgrimage to Mecca. On the one hand, Hajjis must get essential information about this great spiritual educational journey; on the other hand, they must be morally and mentally prepared, so that they can do self – training as well as real purification.

1.1. General objectives

The main goal of this paper is to consider the educational role of Hajj in gaining moral virtues and avoiding moral vices.

1.2. Minor objectives

Analyzing the role of Hajj in creating and reinforcing the mutual understanding as well as social unity of Hajjis.

Analyzing the influence of Hajj rituals on gaining moral virtues

Analyzing the influence of Hajj rituals on avoiding moral vices

1.3. Main question

What are the individual and social effects of Hajj?

Minor questions:

What are the effective factors in creating and reinforcing mutual understanding as well as social unity in the Hajjis (pilgrims to Mecca)?

What are the effective factors in gaining moral virtues by Hajjis?

What are the effective factors in avoiding moral vices by Hajjis?

2. Research methodology

The bases for the methods of this research and its analysis are library and content respectively. The clear messages (training patterns) were analyzed through content analysis. In this method, clear content and messages are described systematically and quantitatively. Therefore, we can consider it as a method for changing quality inputs into quantity ones. This research has been performed using flash cards of first hand as well as secondary resources. First hand resources include the holy Quran, nahjolbalaghe and remarks of Muslims' innocent men (Imams); secondary resources are Islamic elites' educational-social papers.

3. The main research findings

Since different nations attend in the great congregation of Hajj and Hajjis can meet each other, showing good behavior which is a moral virtue is essential. The Almighty God says in Quran: "rude remarks, abusive language and quarrel are not proper in Hajj" (Bagare: 197). It shows that real training is achieved by Hajjis provided that they avoid bad behavior during Hajj journey. Therefore, for analyzing moral virtues and vices as well as the educational role of Hajj in gaining moral virtues and avoiding moral vices. At first we start from a moral virtue, then negative equivalence and anti-value are discussed.

Moral virtue	Negative equivalence	Anti-value
modesty	flattery	pride

The word 'modesty' is related to a manner in which humans consider themselves lower in front of others and respect their spiritual values. Modesty is a humble manner arising from pure beliefs in contrast to pride. Hajji is humble to those who possess divine values, whether they are poor or rich since piety is important for them. Hajji doesn't abandon divine values because he (or she) knows that it is a kind of captivity for him (or her). Flatter is a manner arising from humans' earthy interests which, because of this spiritual educational pilgrimage, Hajji hates it. Pride is the opposite of modesty; it is a manner by which humans disobey God's commands. It arises from self-love. Since Hajji is humble, he (or she) avoids being proud. Hajji shows modesty to God and others.

3.1. The role of Eham in gaining moral virtues by Haji

To wear Eham clothing, a Haji must do the Eham ceremonial washing ablutions that is to repent of his (or her) sins and to wear a symbolic clothing of sincerity.

Moral virtue	Negative equivalence	Anti-value
Sincerity for God	Sincerity for People	hypocrisy

Sincerity is the most valuable manner in which the human empties his (or her) mind from material concerns and just wants the relation with God. The origin for this manner is human's Love to God and awareness of his superior values. Imam Ali (peace upon him) says: "sincerity is the basis for worship" (Bokaei, Miqate Haj, 1385). Sincerity indicates that God has accepted spiritual soul of pilgrims' Haji. There is no doubt that the association between Haj and sincerity is essential since the main objective of this spiritual journey is to become one whom God loves. Sincerity is achieved by keep oneself aloof from hypocrisy and ostentation. It may be a recreational journey for some people and they do that hypocritically. So they cannot gain sincerity. Haji must be held for the God's sake not people so that he himself awards this sincerity.

The man + act and intention + love to God-Sincerity

The man + act and intention- love to God-hypocrisy

In fact, when a Haji makes his (or her) act and intention sincere, he (or she) tries not to commit a guilty anymore, obeys God's commands, and compensates his (or her) past faults. After Eham (that is to enter in Harem and deny oneself samethings) , Haji doesn't do some things to satisfy God, for example he (or she) doesn't fight because he (or she) knows that's a kind of selfishness.

Those people who tell lies cause hatred and disunion in the society , instead Haji asks forgiveness with his (or her) tongue and with this spiritual act serves the society. He (or she) doesn't tell lie because he (or she) knows it is a kind of self-praise. In his (or her) pilgrimage to Mecca, Haji just sees God and by this way, the fact becomes clear for him (or her).

Moral Virtue	Negative equivalence	Anti-Value
Good temper	flattery	Bad temper

Good temper is one of the most important characteristics of pious muslims. Its origin is humility. The humble people behave others according to their positions so that their self-respect is honoured. Flattery makes people lose their self-respect. Since Haji tries not to behave proudly and has strong faith in God, he (or she) is good-tempered. Everyone in the world praises good temper because it is the origin of the all virtues.

3.2. The role of Eham in avoiding moral vices by the Hajis

Normally , in the great congregation of Haj in which muslims of all countries attend and meet each other. Good temper is necessary. Allah in muslims' holly book Quran says : "rude remarks, abusive language and quarrel are not proper" (Baqare :197). It shows that moral training needs pilgrims not to quarrel with each other during this spiritual journey. Haji tries to be sociable during Hajj ; this behavior changing occurs during Miqat and Eham.

The man + faith in God = good temper

The man + pride = bad temper

Haji never tells lie because he (or she) knows it comes as the result of need and meanness. When in Eham , he (or she) believes that hypocrisy and deceit are resulting from unbelief in God. Telling lie desolates families and even it may results in quarrel and fight. Abusive language shows the person's moral weakness and recklessness but Haji knows that pure spirit is important since moral vices such as envy, greed, anger and soon all are mean and material.

3.3. The educational role of symbolic running between Safa and Marva in gaining moral virtues

Running between Safa and Marva is spiritual running towards God. In this manner, Haji has both fear and hope.

Haji constantly has fear and hope ; he (or she) is not just afraid of God without hope and he (or she) is not just hopeful without fear of afterlife punishment. When running toward Safa , Haji tries to purify himself (or herself)

from sins and when running toward Marva he (or she) tries to reinforce his (or her) courage and resistance. So one of the educational roles of the symbolic running between Safa and Marva is to learn to have trust in God. To realize courage and resistance to difficulties.

Moral Virtue	Negative equivalence	Anti-Value
Being afraid of Good	Disappointment at God	Not to be afraid of God

Fear is a manner, resulting from a vigilant conscience and belief in God, in which human being is worried about their present and future worship status; he (or she) is not sure if he (or she) is favored or disfavored by God. However, he (or she) is hopeful. The main effects of fear are: (1) he (or she) sees himself (or herself) under great control of God and doesn't disobey him; (2) he (or she) resists his (or her) sensual demands.

The man + divine punishment + not to worship God properly ⇒ fear

The man + divine punishment – appreciating divine favour ⇒ disappointment

The man + human punishment ⇒ being afraid of people

The pious people are constantly between fear and hope, although their severity differs; this is the educational key of symbolic running between Safa and Marva. In fact, it means that "O God, I'm between fear and hope; it is neither absolute hope without being afraid of your punishment." So Haji is always running between fear and hope. We never forget fear since lascivious thoughts always are to incite us. When running between Safa and Marva, Haji remembers that the founder of Kaaba (Ibrahim) was not deceived by Satan. Aitola Javadi Amoli says that: "symbolic running between Safa and Marva is, according to Imam Sajad (peace upon him), spiritual moving toward God."

3.4. The educational role of symbolic running between Safa and Marva in avoiding moral vices

If the proud people go on pilgrimage to Mecca and do the symbolic running between Safa and Marva, it makes them lose their pride and show humility. With symbolic running between Safa and Marva, Haji obtains moral virtues such as divine purity and generosity. Human's love to God makes him (or her) wean from his (or her) selfishness.

3.5. The educational role of talbih in avoiding moral vices

Language is main means to commit many sins such as gossip, telling lie, mockery and so on. Talbi is "Labbaik, Allahomma labbaik, labbaik la sharika laka labbaik, inalhamda valnemata", that is O God I confess the truth and refute the false beliefs. According to Aitola Javadi Amoli, the educational role of labbaik is that "O God, in this moment I'm obliged to obey you and do not commit sin any more."

Labbaik is to refine spirit from any sin. By saying labbaik, Haji is going not to sin any more with his (or her) words. He (or she) doesn't tell lies, doesn't ridicule others, doesn't gossip, doesn't accuse others falsely, ... any more.

Moral Virtue	Negative equivalence	Anti-Value
To have control on the words	Gossip, false accusation, lie...	To ignore the truth

Despite being tiny, tongue is an organ that has a great scope. Eyes just can see, ears just can hear and sense of touch is just useful for touchable things but the realm of tongue includes hearing, seeing, touching, material and spiritual matters, and movable and reasonable matters. If the members of a society say whatever they want and falsely accuse each other, it makes the unanimity change into enmity and conflict and finally destroys the social system. According to Islamic point of view, an uncontrolling tongue is one which ignores the religious limitations. A mohrem Haji never tells lie, never gossips, never accuses others falsely, and never ridicules.

The man + disrespect to people's honour ⇒ uncontrolling tongue (gossip, false accusation, ...)

The man + respect to people ⇒ benevolence

3.6. The educational role of Haj in creating and reinforcing social mutual understanding and unity

Some problems among Muslims include disunion and emerging different religions and sects as well as misunderstanding between them. God in Quran says: "a group of you must invite others to do good deeds, to avoid wrong deeds, so they are saved" (Ale Emran: 104).

Mutual understanding is achieved by unity which is one of Islam's great objectives. Islam has ordered in different ways that Muslims must congregate and meet each other so that affection is increased between them. Haj is the main Muslims congregation.

Haji tries to be affectionate with the other pilgrims. Imam Ali (peace upon him) says that "the objective of Haj is to reinforce the Islam bases". When somebody harms Haji, he (or she) not only doesn't take vengeance but also is affectionate with him (or her) and tries to know his (or her) problems.

4. Conclusion

Haj is an important religious duty which it has many different dimensions including moral, educational, personal, social, cultural, economical and political. Considering these dimensions, the Hajis can promote their knowledge of the world and attain perfection. One of the achievements of pilgrimage to Mecca is to purify the spirit from moral vices. Before going on pilgrimage to Mecca, Hajis must be prepared both spiritually and physically. Haj reinforces mutual understanding between the Hajis. All religious rituals of this spiritual pilgrimage from Mighat to Miad. Eham, Arafat, Mena, Slaughtering sheep in Mena, Haja-Alasvad stone, Kaaba, Talbi prayer, and symbolic running between Safa and Marve are effective in gaining moral virtues and avoiding moral vices.

Some recommendations for future researchers during pilgrimage to Mecca, pilgrims experience many theoretical and practical events each of them can be a useful guide for their new life. Therefore, using these experiences, they can prevent from doing past wrongs to live on the right way. The following are some recommendations:

Since many students go on pilgrimage to Mecca every year, we suggest that the ministries of education and higher education carefully train young pilgrims and teachers on the Haj; their correct performances indicate Iranian Islamic behaviors.

One of the main measures for the educational system to consider is programming and the correct execution of rules of pilgrimage to Mecca (Haj).

Public media must inform people about the role of Haj in normal training.

Programming and establishing information banks on the effects and sources of normal training.

Make young researchers familiar with the intellectuals and experienced researchers regarding the effects of moral training of pilgrimage to Mecca.

Providing specialized articles and magazines about the educational role of Haj in the society.

Holding specialized workshops in the relative colleges and Elmie Hawze on the methods of moral training in Haj.

Cooperation between Haj organization and allocating research budgets for studying about different dimensions of Haj and its role in the society.

Since the goal of this paper is the educational role of Haj in the present society, researchers can:

1) do their quality (field) and quantity studies about Hajis and the influence of Haj on their life.

2) study about the influence of electronic education and spaces on improvement of the quality of Hajis educational level.

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