

Hajj Stories

Whose Fault Is it Anyway?

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‘I hope my Hajj will be accepted Doc,’ he said. It was about a week before we were to don our Ihrams for Hajj and he came to consult me about some rash that he had developed. I explained to him that everyone who has been on Hajj lives with that same trepidation. Some of us who have been on this Blessed Journey multiple times will never be certain if any of them have been approved by our Creator. ‘We come with the Niyah to perform this obligation to our Lord, a debt to be settled,’ I replied. ‘It is incumbent on us to believe that Allah will never deny us any of His favours unless we deliberately flout any of His instructions. There are so many means for atoning for unintentional mishaps that surely you will be amongst those who will be as sinless as a new-born baby,’ I added. He looked at me sadly. ‘I am worried,’ he replied.

I was perplexed. I have had some interactions with him on the journey so far and he certainly was not an anxious person. He was a rational person who was very well versed in his Deen and in fact inspired many others to make the most of their journey so far. He would arrange for additional Tawaafs and if uncertain on any aspect of Hajj would ask

the scholars in our group. ‘What is bothering you?’ I asked. He hesitated and I gently prodded. ‘Sometimes it helps to talk. You are in my consulting rooms and it is of course very confidential,’ I added. ‘No, no, it is not medical at all. It has to do with my past and I really feel so inadequate and not a real Muslim,’ he replied. ‘Those who are so conscious of their Deen, as you are surely, will not have a past that Allah will not look mercifully onto,’ I said.

He went on to relate his story. He was conceived before his parents were married. Unlike his two siblings who were born after his parents had a Nikah performed, it bothered him that he will not be permitted to inherit from his father when the latter passes away. ‘It is not the money issue Doc, it is the fact that I am somehow different through no fault of my own. In fact, my parents were not Muslim when I was born. They discovered this beautiful religion when I was a few months old and got married soon thereafter. Since then, they have really lived their lives as devout Muslims. My mother

teaches at a Muslim school and my father is well respected in the community. They made every effort to show me and my siblings how perfect our religion was. I will always be eternally grateful to them for this,’ he continued.

‘My siblings were born in wedlock to Muslim parents and I really feel like an outcast even though no one in the immediate

travelling with our group. ‘Would you mind if I asked the Sheigh to join us?’ I asked. He willingly consented. An interesting debate followed and the Sheigh emphasised to him that Allah’s laws were not there to punish him but rather to protect society. His parents reverted after he was born and only looked forward. They have been on Hajj and surely asked forgiveness for their shortcomings. ‘Remember

ment, every other ritual can be delayed, can be performed by proxy or can be settled by paying a penalty. ‘The best Duaa you can make is for your parents,’ the Sheigh said. ‘They raised a great person like you and the same applies to your siblings. Rejoice and celebrate their good deeds and may they continue being stalwarts in the community,’ he concluded.

“I really feel so inadequate and not a real Muslim”

family ever mentions anything to me. I have a distant paternal Muslim family member, who never approved of my mother, who occasionally brings up the topic of illegitimate children in Islam and the stigma attached to it. That is when I really feel that I am being punished for my parents’ sins. I am financially well off and certainly do not need any inheritance. My father is a wonderful person and he is acutely aware of the Islamic laws.

Throughout my life he somehow tried to give me more of his possessions than to my siblings. They never had any issues with it

that Allah’s capacity to forgive exceeds us humans’ capacity to sin,’ the Sheigh smiled. ‘When we are on Arafat, Allah asks us to believe that He will forgive all our faults and transgressions. Not believing that we will be forgiven is incorrect. Surely your parents’ Duaas when they stood at the time of Wuqoof would have been accepted,’ he said.

Both the Sheigh and myself were aware that we were dealing with someone who had niggling doubts about his adequacy as a Muslim. We often stand on Arafat wondering if we had correctly

It appeared as if a massive load was removed from his shoulders. Maybe he always knew that his guilty feelings were not substantiated by his religion but merely needed that knowledge reinforced. ‘I am going to just look forward and not dwell in the past,’ he smiled and left the room. I saw him that evening video calling his parents and could not help overhearing him telling them how much he loved and appreciated them. Later on he approached me at supper. We were in Azizyah, a suburb just outside Makkah. ‘Doc I hear you go to the Haram every evening. I



When we descend from the plains of Arafat we have to believe in Allah’s infinite mercy

as I contributed a lot to the family through my good professional income. It just feels like a never-ending burden that I forever will need to live with,’ he lamented.

‘It’s not your fault and Allah does not apportion blame on you at all,’ I tried to rationalise. I knew that my next and last patient for that session was one of the Islamic scholars that was

adhered to all the prescribed rituals, if we had not inadvertently transgressed somehow or forgotten any essential act. We then remind ourselves that when we repay this debt we owe to our Creator that so many avenues exist to ensure its settlement. Except for the absolute requirement of having to be on Arafat, even if it is even for a mere mo-

want to perform a Tawaaf for my parents. May I join you?’ he asked. ‘Of course you may,’ I replied.

The day of Hajj arrived and our group all stood outside at the time of Wuqoof. He came up to me and the Sheigh coincidentally approached me about a fellow Hujjaaj whose medical condition worried him. ‘I am past the past and going to embrace the future,’ the young man told us. ‘Make the most of the present, your time here and what it can mean for all of us,’ the Sheigh replied. It was the time when we would

be as close to our Creator as would ever be possible. It was a time for reflection, a time for repentance, a time for acceptance that Allah would determine our fate. For him it was time to accept that his past was not of his doing and moving forward was in everyone’s best interest.

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