

Importance of Hajj (Pilgrimage to Mecca) in Islam

The āyah referring to importance of Hajjis from Surah Āl-‘Imrān (3:97). Below is the full verse, its translation, and detailed tafsīr with supporting aḥādīth.



Qur’anic Āyah (Surah Āl-‘Imrān 3:97)

Arabic:

فِيهِ آيَاتٌ بَيِّنَاتٌ مَّقَامُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمَنْ دَخَلَهُ كَانَ آمِنًا وَلِلَّهِ عَلَى النَّاسِ حُجُّ الْبَيْتِ مَنِ اسْتَطَاعَ إِلَيْهِ سَبِيلًا وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ عَنِ الْعَالَمِينَ



Translation (Sahih International)

“In it are clear signs [such as] the standing place of Ibrāhīm. And whoever enters it shall be safe.^[L]^[SEP] And [due] to Allah from the people is a pilgrimage to the House – for whoever is able to find thereto a way. But whoever disbelieves – then indeed, Allah is free from need of the worlds.”



Key Phrase Explained

- Hajj is an obligation (farḍ) upon people.

- “Only those who are physically and financially able.
 - “وَمَنْ كَفَرَ” Scholars explain: denying the obligation of Hajj, or deliberately rejecting it.
 - Allah does not need anyone’s worship; the benefit is for us.
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Tafsīr by Classical Scholars

1. Tafsīr of Ibn Kathir

- This āyah establishes that Hajj is obligatory once in a lifetime for those who are able.
 - “Ability” includes:
 - Financial means (provisions and travel)
 - Physical ability
 - Safe route
 - About “whoever disbelieves”:
 - It refers to one who denies Hajj as an obligation, which can amount to disbelief.
 - Not performing Hajj out of laziness is a major sin, but not disbelief unless denied.
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2. Tafsīr of Al-Tabari

- “Istita‘ah (ability)” means:
 - Having provisions and a mount (means of transportation).
 - The phrase “Allah is free of need”:
 - Allah does not benefit from obedience nor is harmed by disobedience.
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3. Tafsīr of Al-Qurtubi

- This āyah is the strongest proof for the obligation of Hajj.

- He highlights:
 - Consensus (ijmā‘) that Hajj is farḍ once in a lifetime.
 - He also notes:
 - Some scholars interpreted “kufr” here as extreme ingratitude, not literal disbelief unless denial occurs.
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4. Tafsīr of Fakhr al-Din al-Razi

- Emphasizes the wisdom behind linking Hajj with ability:
 - Islam does not burden beyond capacity.
 - The ending shows:
 - Allah’s independence vs. human dependence.
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Ahādīth Related to This Āyah

1. Obligation of Hajj Once

Narrated by Abu Hurairah:

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: ^[SEP]“O people, Allah has made Hajj obligatory upon you, so perform Hajj.” ^[SEP]A man asked: “Every year?” The Prophet ﷺ remained silent... then said: “If I had said yes, it would have become obligatory...”



Reference: Sahih Muslim (1337)

2. Definition of “Ability” (Istita‘ah)

A man asked the Prophet ﷺ about “ability” He said: “Provision and a mount.”



Reference: Sunan al-Tirmidhi (813), Hasan

3. Severe Warning for Neglecting Hajj

Narrated from Ali ibn Abi Talib:

The Prophet ﷺ said: “Whoever possesses provisions and a mount that will enable him to reach the House of Allah and does not perform Hajj, then it does not matter if he dies as a Jew or a Christian.”



Reference: Sunan al-Tirmidhi (812) (Note: Scholars differ on its strength, but it shows seriousness.)

4. Hajj is One of the Pillars of Islam

The Prophet ﷺ said: “Islam is built upon five... including Hajj to the House...”



Reference: Sahih al-Bukhari (8), Sahih Muslim (16)



Summary of the Āyah

- Hajj is:
- A divine obligation (farḍ)
- Required once in a lifetime
- Condition:
- Only for those who are able (financially, physically, safely)
- Warning:
- Denying Hajj = serious matter (may lead to kufr)