

- Haajar, left in the desert with her infant son, demonstrated unwavering trust in ALLAAH.

- Her perseverance in searching for water between As-Safaa and Al-Marwah is a powerful example of tawakkul (reliance on ALLAAH).

- ALLAAH rewarded her efforts by causing the well of Zamzam to spring forth.

- Reflect on this story during your own Sa'yy, considering how it applies to your life and faith.

Common Mistake #14: Some pilgrims think they need to do 14 laps, counting each direction as a separate round.

- Reality: You only need to do 7 rounds total, starting at As-Safaa and ending at Al-Marwah .

Common Mistake #15: Some pilgrims believe you must climb to the very top of As-Safaa or Al-Marwah

- Reality: It's sufficient to just ascend part of the way up each hill.

Common Mistake #16: Reciting "Innas-Safaa wal-Marwata min Sha'a'irillah" at the start of each round.

- Reality: This verse is only recited at the very beginning of Sa'yy when approaching As-Safaa for the first time.

Common Mistake #17: Running of women between the green lights

- Reality: Women are not required to run or jog at any point during Sa'yy.

Common Mistake #18: Thinking that you must maintain wudu (ablution) throughout Sa'yy

- Reality: While it's preferable to be in a state of purity, it's not obligatory for the validity of Sa'yy.

Key points:

1. You can start Sa'yy without wudu.
2. If you lose your wudu during Sa'yy, you can continue without renewing it.
3. However, it's recommended to maintain a state of purity if possible.

Interactive Sa'yy Guide: Step-by-step visualization

1. [] Start at As-Safaa, facing the Ka'bah
2. [] Recite: "Innas-Safaa wal-Marwata min Sha'a'irillah" (only at the beginning)
3. [] Recite the recommended supplications and make du'aa while facing the Ka'bah
4. [] Walk towards Al-Marwah at a normal pace
5. [] For men: Jog lightly between the green lights if able
6. [] Reach Al-Marwah, face the Ka'bah, and make du'aa
7. [] Return to As-Safaa, completing round 2
8. [] Repeat until you complete 7 rounds, ending at Al-Marwah

Additional tips:

- You can rest if needed during Sa'yy.

- It's permissible to drink water or eat if necessary.

- You can perform Sa'yy on any level of the mas'aa (the pathway between As-Safaa and Al-Marwah).

Reflection Exercise:

1. How does understanding the story of Hajar influence your perspective on Sa'yy?
2. What personal duas do you plan to focus on during your Sa'yy?
3. How can you maintain spiritual focus during this physical act of worship?

Remember: Sa'yy is not just a physical exercise but a deeply spiritual journey. Each step is an opportunity for reflection, du'aa, and drawing closer to ALLAAH.

TAQSEER OR HALQ (TRIMMING OR SHAVING OF HAIR)

As you approach the final stages of your 'Umrah, it's crucial to maintain your focus and avoid common oversights that could affect the validity or completeness of your pilgrimage.

Taqseer or halq marks the end of your state of Ihraam and is a crucial part of completing your 'Umrah.

- **For men:** It's preferable to shave the entire head, but trimming at least a fingertip's length from all over the head is also acceptable.

- **For women:** Trimming a fingertip's length from the end of a lock of hair is sufficient.

Common Mistake #19: Removing Ihraam prematurely by believing that Ihraam ends after Tawaaf and Sa'yy

Many pilgrims mistakenly believe that they exit the state of Ihraam immediately after completing Sa'yy.

- Reality: You remain in the state of Ihraam until you perform Taqseer or Halq.

Correct procedure:

1. Complete Tawaaf
2. Perform Sa'yy
3. Perform Taqseer or Halq
4. Only then are you released from the state of Ihraam

Remember: Until you perform Taqseer or Halq, all restrictions of Ihraam still apply.

Additional Points to Remember:

1. Farewell Tawaaf (Tawaaf-ul-Wadaa')

- This is not required for 'Umrah but is obligatory for Hajj.

- If you perform it voluntarily after 'Umrah, ensure you're in a state of purity.

2. Maintaining the spirit of Ihraam:

- Even after officially exiting Ihraam, strive to maintain its spiritual essence by continuing to avoid sinful acts and focusing on worship.

3. Zam Zam water:

- While drinking Zam Zam is not a part of 'Umrah rituals, it's a blessed act. Remember to drink it facing the Qibla, in three breaths, and make du'aa.

Reflection Exercise: Review Your 'Umrah Journey

Take a moment to reflect on your 'Umrah experience:

1. What were the most challenging aspects of your 'Umrah, and how did you overcome them?
2. How has this journey affected your spiritual state?
3. What lessons or practices from your 'Umrah do you hope to carry into your daily life?
4. Are there any parts of your 'Umrah that you feel unsure about and might need to consult a scholar regarding?

Final Checklist:

- Completed Tawaaf correctly
- Performed Sa'yy properly
- Performed Taqseer or Halq
- Ensured all obligations of 'Umrah are fulfilled
- Made du'aa for acceptance of your 'Umrah

Remember: The completion of 'Umrah is not just the end of a journey, but the beginning of a renewed spiritual life. Strive to maintain the closeness to ALLAAH that you've cultivated during this blessed experience.

TIME MANAGEMENT AND PRIORITIES

Balancing Rituals and Prayer Times:

One of the challenges during 'Umrah is managing your time effectively to fulfill all obligations and recommended acts without neglecting the five daily prayers. Proper time management ensures a more spiritually fulfilling experience.

Key principles:

1. Obligatory prayers take precedence over voluntary acts of worship.
2. Plan your rituals around prayer times, not vice versa.
3. Be flexible and prepared to adjust your schedule as needed.

Common Mistake #20: Neglecting Prayers During Rituals

Many pilgrims become so engrossed in 'Umrah rituals that they delay or miss obligatory prayers. This is a significant mistake to avoid.

- Reality: The five daily prayers are obligatory and should not be neglected or excessively delayed.

Correct approach:

1. If prayer time comes during Tawaaf:
 - Complete your current round
 - Leave the Tawaaf area
 - Pray in the designated prayer areas
 - Return and continue your Tawaaf from where (the number or round) you left off
2. If prayer time comes during Sa'yy:
 - Pause your Sa'yy
 - Perform the prayer
 - Resume Sa'yy from where you stopped

Remember: There's no harm in taking a break during these rituals. Your Tawaaf or Sa'yy remains valid even with a pause for prayer.

Tips for Effective Time Management:

1. Be aware of prayer times in Makkah, as they may differ from your home country.
2. Allow extra time for wudu and finding a spot to pray, especially during peak times.
3. Plan to arrive in Makkah to perform your rites during less crowded times, such as late night or early morning.
4. Don't rush your rituals. It's better to perform them with presence of mind than to hurry through them.

Reflection Exercise:

1. How can you balance the excitement of performing 'Umrah with the discipline of maintaining your prayers?
2. What potential challenges do you foresee in managing your time, and how can you prepare for them?
3. How might proper time management enhance your spiritual experience during 'Umrah?

Remember: The goal is not just to complete the rituals, but to do so in a way that maximizes your spiritual connection and adherence to all Islamic obligations.

CONCLUSION

Congratulations on completing your study of "Sacred Steps: Avoiding 'Umrah Missteps". We hope this guide has provided you with valuable insights to perform your 'Umrah with confidence, mindfulness and spiritual focus. Remember that while avoiding mistakes is important, the true essence of 'Umrah lies in your sincere intention and devotion to ALLAAH.

May ALLAAH accept your 'Umrah, forgive your sins, and grant you a blessed journey. Aameen.

Key takeaways:

1. Preparation is crucial, both physically and spiritually.
2. Understanding the correct procedures helps you focus on worship.
3. Maintaining the right intention throughout your journey is paramount.
4. Respecting fellow pilgrims and sacred spaces enhances the collective experience.
5. Balancing rituals with obligatory prayers ensures a comprehensive act of worship.

Your 'Umrah journey doesn't end with the completion of the rituals. Strive to carry the spiritual growth, lessons, and closeness to ALLAAH that you've cultivated during this blessed experience into your daily life.

May the spiritual insights gained during this pilgrimage continue to illuminate your path long after you return home. Ameen.

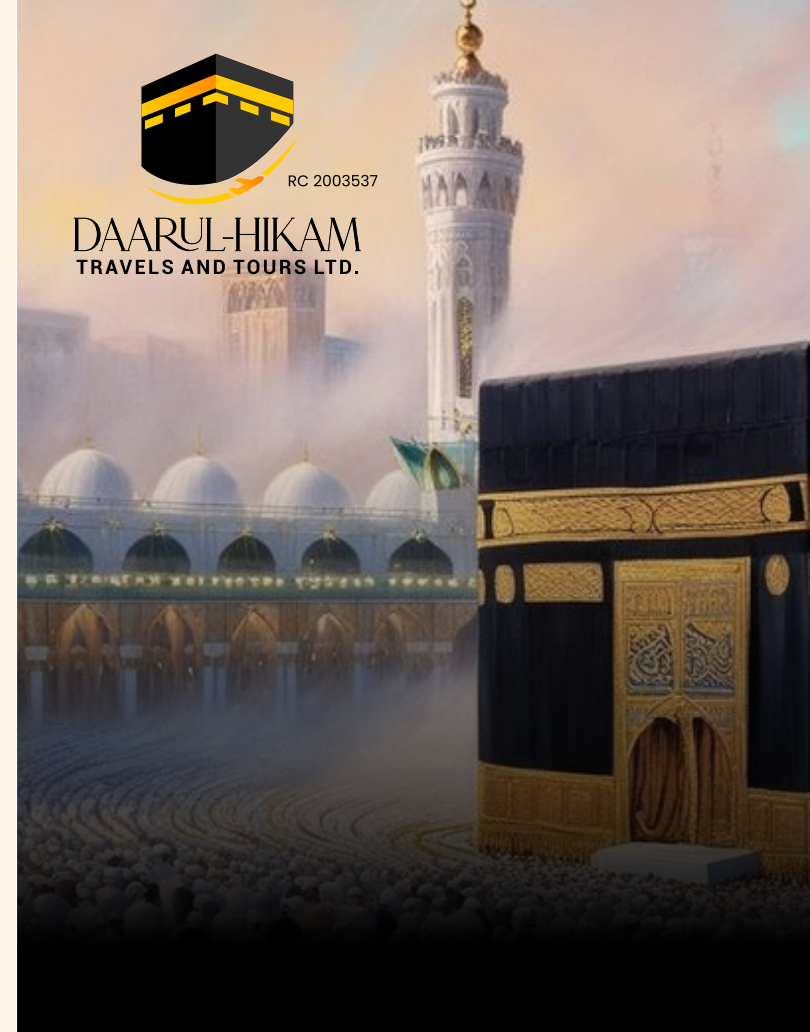


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SACRED STEPS: AVOIDING 'UMRAH MISSTEPS

INTRODUCTION

Praise be to ALLAAH, and may His Blessings and Peace be upon the Messenger of ALLAAH ﷺ, his family and all his companions.

Welcome, dear intending pilgrim, to "Sacred Steps: Avoiding 'Umrah Missteps". This interactive guide is designed to help you navigate the beautiful journey of 'Umrah with confidence and spiritual focus.

The purpose of this ebook is to highlight common mistakes made during 'Umrah and provide you with the knowledge to avoid them. By understanding these potential missteps, you'll be better prepared to perform your 'Umrah correctly and derive the maximum spiritual benefit from this blessed experience.

How to use this interactive guide:

- Read through each chapter carefully
- Engage with the interactive elements, such as quizzes and checklists
- Reflect on the information provided and how it applies to your upcoming journey
- Use the reflection exercises to deepen your understanding and preparation
- Refer back to specific sections as needed during your 'Umrah

Remember, this guide is a companion to support your journey. Always consult with knowledgeable scholars or official 'Umrah guides for definitive rulings on Islamic matters.

PREPARING FOR ‘UMRAH

Spiritual Preparation for ‘Umrah:

- Seek knowledge about the rituals and their significance
- Reflect on the purpose of your journey
- Make sincere repentance (tawbah) before departure
- Resolve any conflicts or debts with others
- Increase in good deeds and charity in the days leading up to ‘Umrah

Physical Preparation for ‘Umrah:

- Get in shape: Initiate a walking routine prior to the journey
- Practice patience, tolerance and self-control: You are bound to experience intense heat, pushing and standing in long lines due to large crowd.
- Rest well ahead of the holy journey.

IHRAAM

Entering the Sacred State of Ihraam:

Ihraam is more than just a state of dress; it’s a sacred state of being that marks the beginning of your ‘Umrah. It involves both physical and spiritual preparation, signifying your intention to perform the pilgrimage and your commitment to avoid certain behaviours during this holy journey.

Intention (niyyah) is the cornerstone of all acts of worship in Islaam, including ‘Umrah. It’s crucial to understand that the niyyah is made in the heart, not verbally. Your sincere intention to perform ‘Umrah for the sake of ALLAAH is what truly initiates your sacred journey.

Common Mistake #1: Misconceptions about entering Ihraam

Some pilgrims believe that merely wearing the Ihraam garments constitutes entering the state of Ihraam. This is incorrect. To properly enter Ihraam:

1. Wear the appropriate Ihraam clothing

2. Make the sincere intention (niyyah) in your heart to begin ‘Umrah

3. Recite the talbiyah: “Labbayk ALLAAHumma labbayk, labbayk la shareeka laka labbayk, innal-hamda wan-ni‘mata laka wal-mulk, la shareeka lak”

Remember: The intention is in the heart and doesn’t need to be spoken aloud.

Common Mistake #2: Passing the meeqaat without entering Ihraam

Many pilgrims mistakenly pass the meeqaat (designated boundary points) without entering the state of Ihraam. Here’s what you need to know:

- If you intentionally pass the meeqaat without Ihraam: This is sinful, and you must return to the meeqaat to make your intention (niyyah) for Ihraam. No penalty is required in this case.

- If you deliberately pass the meeqaat and do not return: This is sinful, and you are obliged to pay a penalty.

- If you accidentally pass the meeqaat:

Return to the meeqaat if possible and no penalty is due.

If you are not able to return to the meeqaat, take Ihraam from where you are but you are obliged to pay a penalty.

Note: In both cases of forgetfulness or accidental passing the meeqaat, you are not considered sinful.

Common Mistake #3: Believing that women who are menstruating or experiencing postpartum bleeding cannot enter the state of Ihraam.

- Reality: Women can and should enter Ihraam at the appropriate time, regardless of menstruation or postpartum bleeding. They can perform all ‘Umrah rituals except Tawaaf.

- **Important:** Once purified, these women can perform Tawaaf without needing to renew their Ihraam, as they were already in the state of Ihraam from the beginning.

Common Mistake #4: Thinking that there’s a specific colour for women’s Ihraam.

- Reality: Women can wear any modest clothing that covers their entire body except the face and hands. There’s no mandatory colour.

Common Mistake #5: Believing that praying two rak’ahs after entering Ihraam is obligatory

- Reality: This is a recommended sunnah, not an obligation.

Common Mistake #6: Not Changing the Ihraam when it gets soiled or dirty

- Reality: While it’s not obligatory to change your Ihraam garments, it’s recommended to keep them clean and change them if they become soiled.

Interactive Checklist:

General Practices Before Entering Ihraam:

- Perform ghusl (full body ablution) if possible
- Apply perfume on the body (not on ihram cloth) if possible
- Trim nails and remove unwanted hair

Proper Ihraam Attire and Practices

For Men:

- Upper garment (Ridaa)
- Lower garment (Izaar)
- Sandals or flip-flops
- Intention made in heart
- Recite talbiyah after making intention
- Avoid covering head directly

For Women:

- Modest, loose-fitting clothes
- Hijaab
- Comfortable shoes
- Intention made in heart
- Recite talbiyah after making intention
- Face and hands uncovered

Remember: The state of Ihraam is a spiritual condition that goes beyond just clothing. It’s a state of consecration and devotion to ALLAAH, where you refrain from certain worldly acts to focus on your spiritual journey.

Interactive Quiz and Reflection Exercise: Test your knowledge of Ihraam rules

1. True or False: Entering Ihraam is solely about wearing the proper clothing.

2. At what point must a pilgrim enter the state of Ihraam?

3. What is the ruling on passing the meeqaat without entering Ihraam?

4. What challenges do you anticipate in maintaining the state of Ihraam, and how can you prepare for them?

TAWAAF

Tawaaf, the ritual of circumambulating the Ka’bah seven times, is a central part of ‘Umrah. Performing it correctly is crucial for the validity of your pilgrimage. Let’s explore the essential aspects and common mistakes to avoid.

Starting Tawaaf Correctly:

The proper way to start Tawaaf is crucial for its validity. Here are the key points to remember:

1. Begin from a line parallel to the Black Stone (Hajarul-Aswad).

2. Make your intention in your heart to perform Tawaaf.

3. If possible, touch or kiss the Black Stone. If not, simply point towards it and say “Allaahu Akbar”.

4. Move counter-clockwise around the Ka’bah.

Common Mistake #7: Many pilgrims make the mistake of not starting their Tawaaf from a position parallel to the Black Stone.

- Reality: If you don't start from a line parallel to the Black Stone, that round doesn't count. You must complete a full seven rounds starting from the correct position.

Tip: Look for the green lights on the walls of Masjid al-Haram. These mark the starting line for Tawaaf.

Common Mistake #8: Performing Tawaaf while in the state of impurity

Maintaining a state of ritual purity throughout Tawaaf is essential.

You must be in a state of wudu (ablution) from the beginning to the end of Tawaaf.

- What if you lose your wudu? If this happens during Tawaaf:

1. Leave the Tawaaf area

2. Perform wudu again

3. Return and continue from where you left off (at the start of the incomplete round)

4. You don't need to restart from the beginning

Remember: This applies to minor impurities (hadath asghar). For major impurities (hadath akbar), you would need to perform ghusl and restart Tawaaf.

Common Mistake #9: Uncovering the Right Shoulder Prematurely (for men) from the moment they wear Ihraam.

- Reality: Keep both shoulders covered until you reach Ka’bah and just before starting Tawaaf, then uncover the right shoulder.

Idtibaa’ (the act of uncovering the right shoulder) is only done during Tawaaful-Qudoom (arrival Tawaaf).

Common Mistake #10: Overcrowding at the Black Stone

One of the most prevalent issues at the Ka’bah is the intense crowding around the Black Stone. This often leads to pushing, shoving, and potential harm to oneself and others.

- Reality: While it is a beautiful Sunnah, it is not mandatory. Your safety and the safety of others takes precedence.

Guidance for approaching the Black Stone:

1. If the area is not crowded, you may approach to touch or kiss it.

2. If it’s moderately crowded, you can touch it with your hand and then kiss your hand.

3. If it’s very crowded, simply face the Black Stone from any point in your Tawaaf and point to it, saying “ALLAAHu Akbar”.

Special note for women: Ummul-Mu’mineen Aisha (may ALLAAH be pleased with her) used to perform Tawaaf in an area away from men, not mixing with them. She would refuse to touch the Black Stone if there was crowding. Protecting your modesty is more important than touching the Black Stone.

Common Mistake #11: Performing raml (brisk walking) in all rounds of Tawaaf

Raml is only for the first three rounds of Tawaaful-Qudum (arrival Tawaaf) and Tawaaful-‘Umrah. It is not done in other types of Tawaafs such as:

Voluntary Tawaafs (Nawaafil Tawaaf)
Tawaaful-ifaadah (Tawaaf of Hajj)
Tawaaful-wadaa’ (farewell Tawaaf)

Common Mistake #12: Misconceptions about Touching Ka’bah Elements

Many pilgrims mistakenly believe they must touch or kiss various parts of the Ka’bah. Let’s clarify:

1. The Black Stone: As mentioned, touch or kiss if possible, otherwise point to it.

2. The Yemeni Corner: You may touch it with your right hand if possible, but don’t kiss it.

3. Other corners and walls of the Ka’bah: There’s no specific virtue in touching or kissing these.

4. The Kiswah (Ka’bah covering): Avoid pulling on it or taking pieces as souvenirs.

The Inner Dimensions of Tawaaf

- Reflect on the unity of Muslims circling the Ka’bah

- Contemplate the symbolism of making ALLAAH the center of your life

- Use each round as an opportunity for different types of dhikr or du’aa

- Consider the historical significance of the Ka’bah and the prophets who performed Tawaaf

Interactive Tawaaf Simulator:

Imagine you’re standing in front of the Ka’bah. Follow these steps to practice a correct start to your Tawaaf:

1. Position yourself parallel to the Black Stone

2. Men: Uncover right shoulder for first three rounds (if performing Tawaaful-Qudoom or Tawaaf of ‘Umrah)

3. Make your intention for Tawaaf in your heart

4. If possible, touch or kiss the Black Stone. If not, point to it and say “ALLAAHu Akbar”

5. Begin moving counter-clockwise around the Ka’bah

6. Complete seven full rounds

Common Mistake #13: You must pray the two rak’ahs after Tawaaf directly behind Maqaam Ibrahim

- Reality: While praying near Maqaam Ibrahim is recommended, it’s not obligatory. You can pray these two rak’ahs anywhere in the Haram.

- Advice: If the area near Maqaam Ibrahim is crowded, choose any available spot in the masjid to pray. The validity and reward of your prayer are not diminished by distance from Maqaam Ibrahim.

Reflection Exercise:

1. How do you plan to manage the physical challenges of Tawaaf, such as crowding or fatigue?

2. What du’as (supplications) do you want to focus on during your Tawaaf?

3. How can you maintain spiritual focus while performing the physical act of Tawaaf?

Remember: Tawaaf is not just a physical ritual but a profound spiritual experience. Strive to maintain focus on ALLAAH and the significance of your actions throughout.

Etiquette at the Ka’bah

The area around the Ka’bah is one of the most sacred spaces in Islam. Proper etiquette here is not just about following rules, but about showing reverence to ALLAAH and consideration for your fellow pilgrims. In this chapter, we’ll explore how to navigate this holy space with respect and mindfulness.

1. Maintain a state of spiritual and physical purity.

2. Lower your gaze and voice out of respect.

3. Be patient and gentle with others, especially in crowded areas.

4. Focus on your worship rather than taking photos or videos.

5. Avoid eating, drinking, or engaging in worldly conversations in the immediate vicinity of the Ka’bah.

Role-playing Exercise: Navigate Crowded Spaces Respectfully

Scenario 1: The area around the Black Stone is extremely crowded. What do you do?
A) Push through the crowd to touch it
B) Wait patiently for an opening, no matter how long it takes
C) Point to it from a distance and continue your Tawaaf

Scenario 2: You see someone struggling in the crowd. How do you respond?
A) Ignore them; everyone is responsible for themselves
B) Offer assistance if you can do so safely
C) Alert the nearby security or volunteers

Reflection Questions:

1. How can you prepare yourself mentally to maintain composure in crowded situations?

2. What strategies can you use to focus on the spiritual aspects of Tawaaf when surrounded by large crowds?

3. How might helping others or being patient in difficult situations enhance your ‘Umrah experience?

Remember: The essence of your pilgrimage is your intention and devotion to ALLAAH. Physical acts, while important, should not overshadow the spiritual purpose of your journey.

Sa’yy

Understanding the Sa’yy Ritual:

Sa’yy is the ritual of walking or running between the hills of As-As-Safaa and Al-Al-Marwah h seven times. This act commemorates Hajar’s search for water for her son Ismail. Performing Sa’yy correctly is crucial for the completion of your ‘Umrah.

Key points to remember:

1. Sa’yy starts at As-Safaa and ends at Al-Al-Marwah h .
2. One trip from As-Safaa to Al-Marwah counts as one round.
3. The return trip from Al-Marwah to As-Safaa counts as the second round.
4. You must complete seven rounds in total.

The Inspirational Story Behind Sa’yy: