

## HAJJ THE PILGRIMAGE

Written by Administrator

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Hajj is the name of the Pilgrimage to Makkah, in Saudi Arabia. It is duty incumbent upon any Muslim who is able and can afford to go there and perform the rituals included in the pilgrimage. This should be done at least once during a Muslim's lifetime.

Quran Chapter 3: Verse 97: 'In it are clear signs [such as] the standing place of Abraham. And whoever enters it shall be safe. 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.'

The origins of Hajj and its rituals date back to the time of the Prophet Abraham, over a four thousand years ago.

The procedure of Hajj takes place in the month of Dhul-Hijjah, the twelfth month of the Islamic calendar.

Qur'an Chapter 22: Verse 27: 'And proclaim to the people the Hajj [pilgrimage]; they will come to you on foot and on every lean camel; they will come from every distant pass'

Qur'an Chapter 2: Verse 197: 'Hajj is [during] well-known months, so whoever has made Hajj obligatory upon himself therein [by entering the state of ihram], there is [to be for him] no sexual relations and no disobedience and no disputing during Hajj. And whatever good you do - Allah knows it. And take provisions, but indeed, the best provision is fear of Allah . And fear Me, O you of understanding.'

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The procedure of performing Hajj unites Muslims from all over the world. People of every colour, race and ethnic background come together in the holy city of Makkah to perform the same actions, at the same time, wearing the same clothes and saying the same words.

This duty reminds all Muslims that everyone was created equal by Allah, and the only distinguishing factor between them is the strength of their faith and piety.

Quran Chapter 49: Verse 13: 'O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted.'

In the year 2009 it is claimed that over 3 million Muslims made the pilgrimage. This number represents the largest annual gathering of any faith in the world.

The rituals of Hajj include the following:

Ihram: Putting on the 'Ihram', which is the two piece of unstitched white cloth that all men must wear whilst performing Hajj. This clothing reminds all Muslims that they are equal in the site of Allah. Women do not face the same restrictions as men, however they are also encouraged to wear simple clothing.

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Tawaf– The circling of the Ka'bah, the cubed building in Makkah (known as the House of God), towards which all Muslims face when praying five times a day.

Sa'ee – a fast walk or run between the two hills of Safa' and Marwa near the Ka'bah, in the footsteps of Hajar the wife of Abraham (Ibrahim), when God ordered him to leave her and their infant son Isma'il in the desert. This led to the formation of the city of Makkah.

Qur'an Chapter 2: Verse 158: '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.'

In desperation, Hajar ran several times between these two hills in search of water for her son to drink as the weather was extremely hot and their water was finished. As a result, Allah caused the well of Zamzam water to appear by Isma'il's feet. This ritual thus commemorates Hajar's struggle.

Visiting and staying at Mina, Arafat and Muzdalifah - three sacred places near Makkah.

Stoning the Jamarat - throwing pebbles at three pillars in Mina which represent Satan (Shaytan). The stoning of these pillars represents Muslims' rejection and defiance of the Shaytan, or the devil. This ritual also dates back to the time of Abraham as when he was called by Allah to sacrifice his son, he was approached by Shaytan several times who tried to encourage him against Allah's Command.

Ibrahim threw stones at Shaytan, showing his rejection of his temptation, and his submission to

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Allah's command.

Sacrifice of an animal - Again, this tradition stems from the time of Prophet Ibrahim. Ibrahim was ordered by Allah to sacrifice his son. He and his son willingly set out to fulfill the command. However, as just Abraham was about to sacrifice his son, Allah stopped him, saying that he had proven his loyalty. Allah then sent a ram for them to sacrifice instead.

Quran Chapter 37: Verse 107: 'And We ransomed him with a great sacrifice'