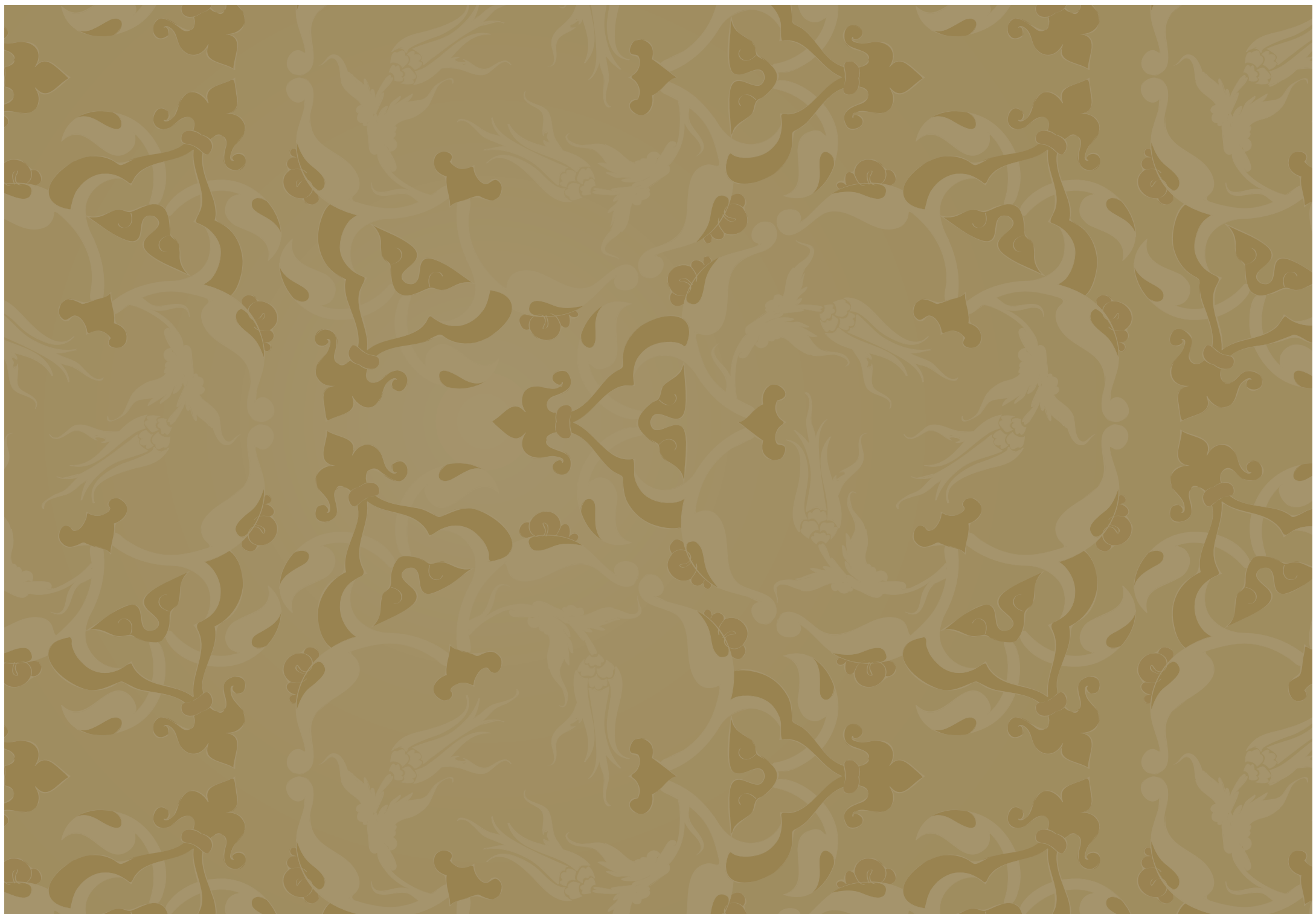


# HAJJ

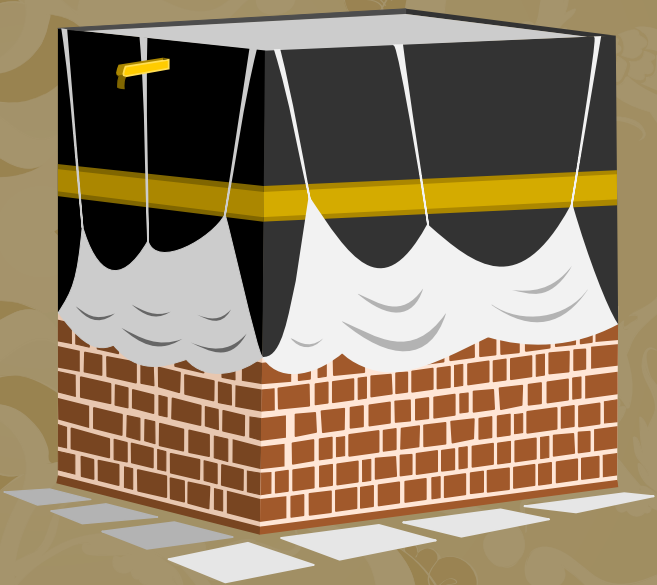
**New Muslims**  
Guide to Hajj and `Umrah





# **New Muslims**

## **Guide to Hajj and `Umrah**





# Table of Contents

Introduction

Meaning of Hajj

What's in a Worship!

The Wisdom behind Hajj

Hajj: Matchless Blessings

The Journey

Virtue and Piety

The Impact of Hajj

Hajj: A Collective Worship

Historical Background of Hajj

`Umrah: Its Meaning and Purpose

The Difference between Hajj and `Umrah

How Is `Umrah Performed?

Get Prepared

How, Where, and When Do I Start Hajj?

Hajj Rites

Rituals & Rulings

Women In Hajj: Any Difference?

Can a Woman Go to Hajj without Mahram?

Tawaf: Meaning and Significance

How to Perform Tawaf, What to Say?

Sa'i: Going Between the Safa and Marwah

Standing at `Arafat

Throwing the Pebbles: Its Wisdom & Timing

When Should We Throw the Pebbles?

Animal Sacrifice in Islam

`Eid Al-Adha

Visiting the Prophet's Mosque

Merits of the Prophet's Mosque

Visiting Al-Baqi`

Lessons from Hajj

Pick up the Blessings, Be Thankful

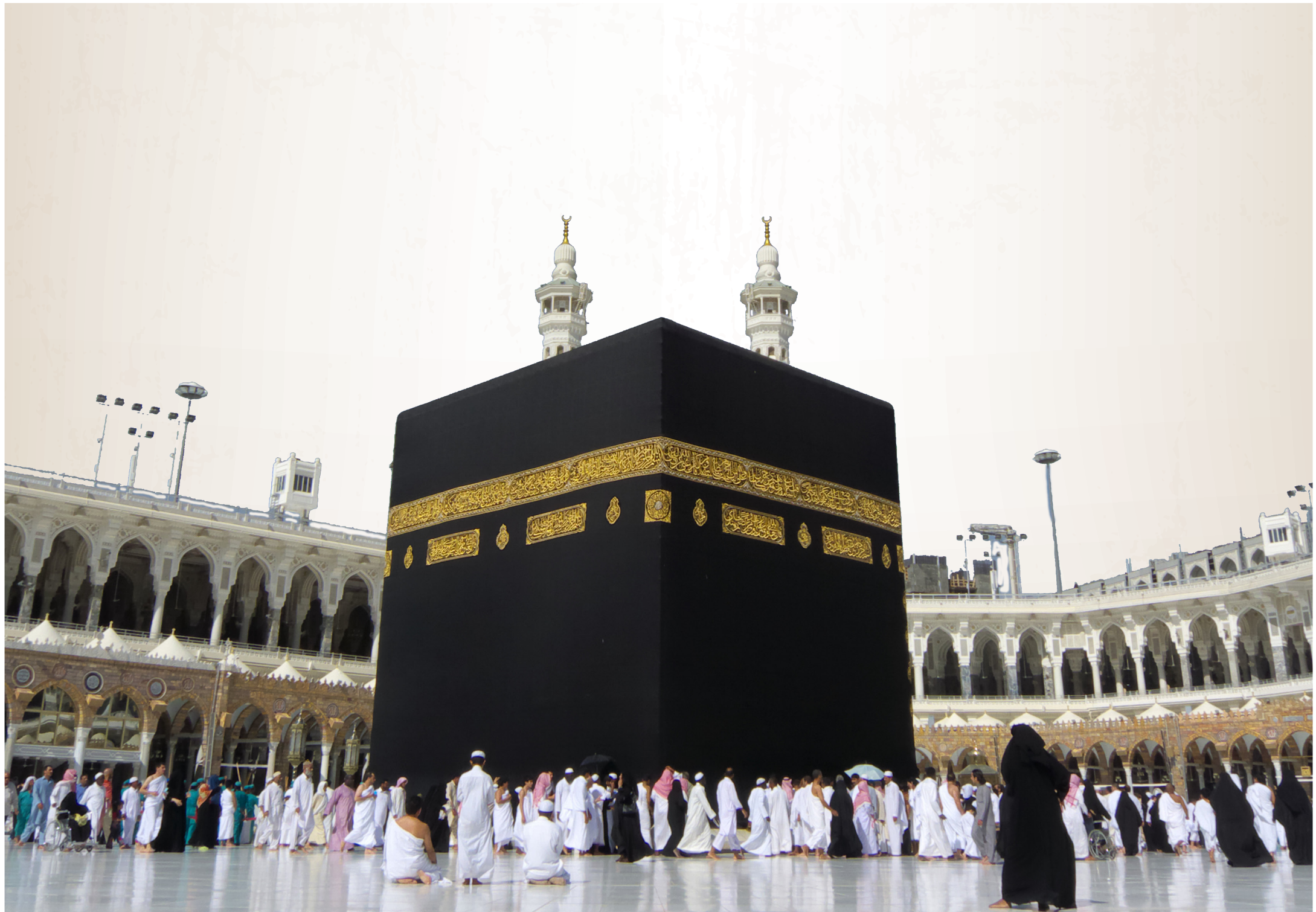
# Introduction

Every year millions of Muslims from around the world pour into Makkah on the lifetime spiritual journey of Hajj, where one meets Allah in the context of matchless diverse and multicultural meetings.

It is a great favor Allah (glory be to Him) has bestowed upon His Servants so that they can draw closer to Him and have their sins forgiven. Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) indicated:

“He who performs Hajj without speaking or committing indecencies will return as free of sins as he was on the day when his mother gave birth to him.” (Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

This ebook will hopefully help you understand and get prepared, both spiritually and physically, for the enlightening journey of Hajj; its meaning, purpose, rituals and requirements.



## Meaning of Hajj

Technically, Hajj means to make pilgrimage to Makkah and the surrounding area, performing certain rituals in that places. Just as other acts of worship, in Hajj the soul, mind and body all participate in worshipping Allah.

Hajj is the fifth pillar of Islam as the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

“Islam is built upon five pillars: testifying that there is no true god except Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, performing prayer, paying the zakah, making the pilgrimage to the Sacred House (Hajj), and fasting the month of Ramadan.” (Al-Bukhari)

Thus, Hajj is a duty incumbent on every Muslim, male or female, provided that they have the financial and physical ability to perform it at least once in a lifetime.

***Pilgrimage thereto is a duty men owe to Allah,- those who can afford the journey; but if any deny faith, Allah stands not in need of any of His creatures.*** (Aal `Imran 3:97)

Hajj is all about leaving the concerns and trappings of this world behind to get closer to Allah in a unique environment where one exercises the high principles, values and objectives Islam.





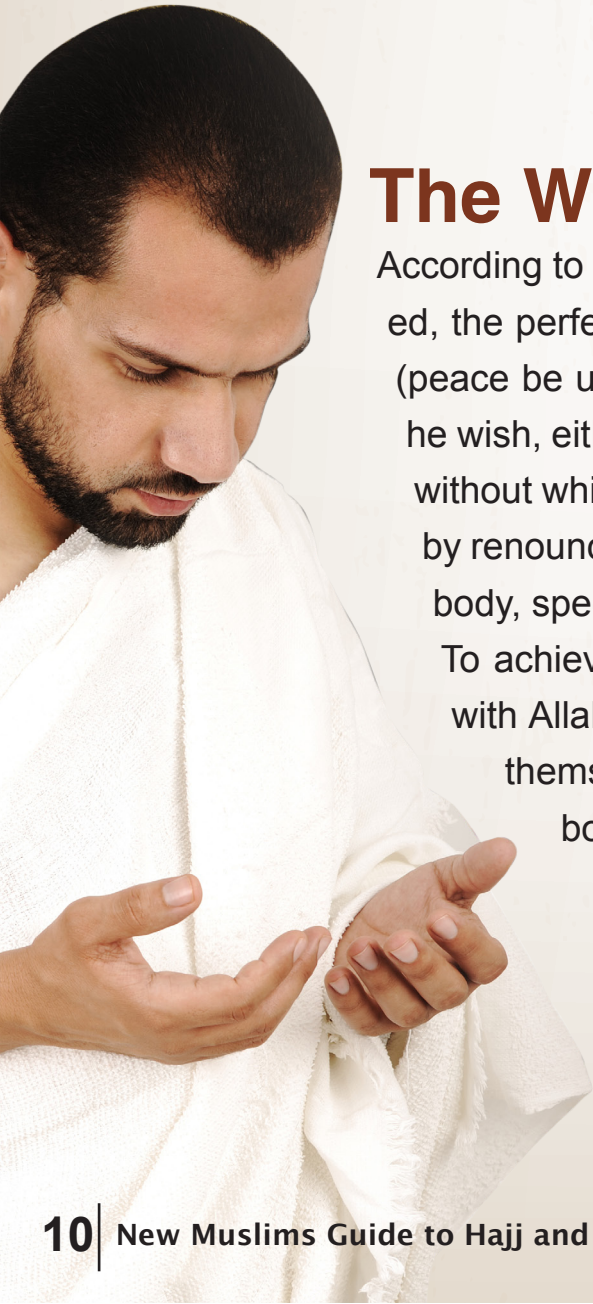
## What's in a Worship!

Pilgrimage is unlike any other journey. Here one's thoughts are concentrated on Allah, and with intense devotion. When one reaches the holy place, one finds the atmosphere filled with piety and godliness. One visits places that bear testify to the glory of Islam, and all this leaves an indelible impression on one's soul.

There are, as in other acts of worship, many benefits that Muslims can derive from this journey. Makkah is the center towards which Muslims must converge once a year, meet and discuss topics of common interest, and in general create and refresh in themselves the faith that all Muslims are equal and deserve the love and sympathy of others, irrespective of their geographical or cultural origin. Thus, pilgrimage unites the Muslims of the world into one international fraternity.





A man with a beard, wearing white ihram clothing, is shown in profile, looking down with his hands held out in a prayer gesture. The background is a light, textured wall.

## The Wisdom behind Hajj

According to Imam Al-Ghazali Hajj is the act of worship of a lifetime, the seal of all that is commanded, the perfection of Islam and the completion of religion. Concerning it, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, “Whoever dies without, having performed the Pilgrimage let him die, if he wish, either a Jew or a Christian.” (Al-Tirmidhi) It is quite obvious that Hajj has an exalted status without which religion is lacking in perfection. Thus, a person will never truly know his Lord except by renouncing worldly and sensual pleasures and by exercising restraint with respect to actions of body, speech and mind, as well as by devoting himself entirely to the worship of Allah.

To achieve this, the monks of previous creeds withdrew from their societies, seeking intimacy with Allah. They renounced the pleasures of this world for the sake of Allah and obliged upon themselves difficulties, in the hope of success in the Hereafter. Allah praised them in His book and said:

***Among these are men devoted to learning, and men who have renounced the world, and they are not arrogant.*** (Al-Ma'idah 5:82)

So when people were (once again) drawn to their desires and ceased to devote themselves to the worship of Allah, Prophet Muhammad was sent to revive the



path to the Hereafter and renew the way of the prophets and their conduct. Allah prescribed Hajj as a journey wherein people devote themselves to Him (Most High).

This journey also includes self-refinement and discipline. It was narrated that a man asked the permission of Allah's Messenger to travel and he replied, "Verily, the travel of my community is to strive in the path of Allah".

## **1- Hajj: A Kind of Jihad**

The Prophet said, "Umrah and Hajj are the jihad for the old, the young, the weak and women." It was also narrated that the Prophet said, "Hajj is jihad and Umrah is a voluntary act."

A man once approached the Prophet and said: "I want to make jihad for the sake of Allah." The Prophet replied, "Shall I guide you to a kind of jihad that will cause you no harm?" "Yes," the man replied. The Prophet said, "Perform Hajj".

Allah has bestowed His blessings upon this community by prescribing Hajj as a kind of monasticism. He has honored the Ka`bah by linking it to Himself, calling it the House of Allah, making it a destination for His worship, and awarding it reverence by consecrating the area around it. He, likewise, made Arafat an overflowing stream pouring into His basin, the Sacred Precinct.

Allah confirmed the sanctity of this location by prohibiting hunting its animals and cutting down its trees. Hajj is

comparable to seeking court with a monarch; people come to it from every deep mountain pass and distant places, all disheveled and covered in dust, humbling themselves before the Lord of the Ka'bah seeking to declare their humility, servitude and loyalty to their Lord, all acknowledging His transcendence beyond place and location, accentuating their worship and perfecting their submissiveness.

For this reason, Allah prescribed certain actions, the meanings of which minds cannot fathom, such as the rites of stoning and traversing as-Safa and al-Marwa several times. Such actions demonstrate the ultimate submission to the commands of Allah. Other great wisdoms behind the legislation of Hajj and 'umrah include:

## 2- Rectifying Hearts

The journey of Hajj and 'Umrah instills in a pilgrim's heart the meaning of seeking refuge in Allah and the pleasure of attaining Divine propinquity. Allah says:

***Therefore, flee to unto Allah.*** (Adh-Dhariyat 51:50)

Although the meaning is spiritual, it has physical manifestations: a pilgrim leaves behind his house, family, adornments, property, abandons desires, spends money, exerts great efforts and endures the hardships of travel and life away from home to visit the Sacred House of Allah of which Allah says:

***Whoever enters it attains security.*** (Aal 'Imran 3:97)

A pilgrim flees to the House of Allah aspiring salvation in this world and in the Hereafter from his sins and shortcom-





ings. He seeks a chance to turn over a new leaf, hoping that Allah may admit him among those who have gained His Pleasure, on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.

### 3- History and Civilization

Visiting the Sacred House of Allah asserts the bond between Muslims and their civilization, history and traversing the path of Allah's Prophets and Messengers as stated in the Qur'anic verse:

***Those were the (Prophets) who received Allah's guidance. Follow the guidance they received.*** (Al-An'am 6:90)

***The honored Ka'bah is the first house established to guide people to monotheism and the worship of Allah:***

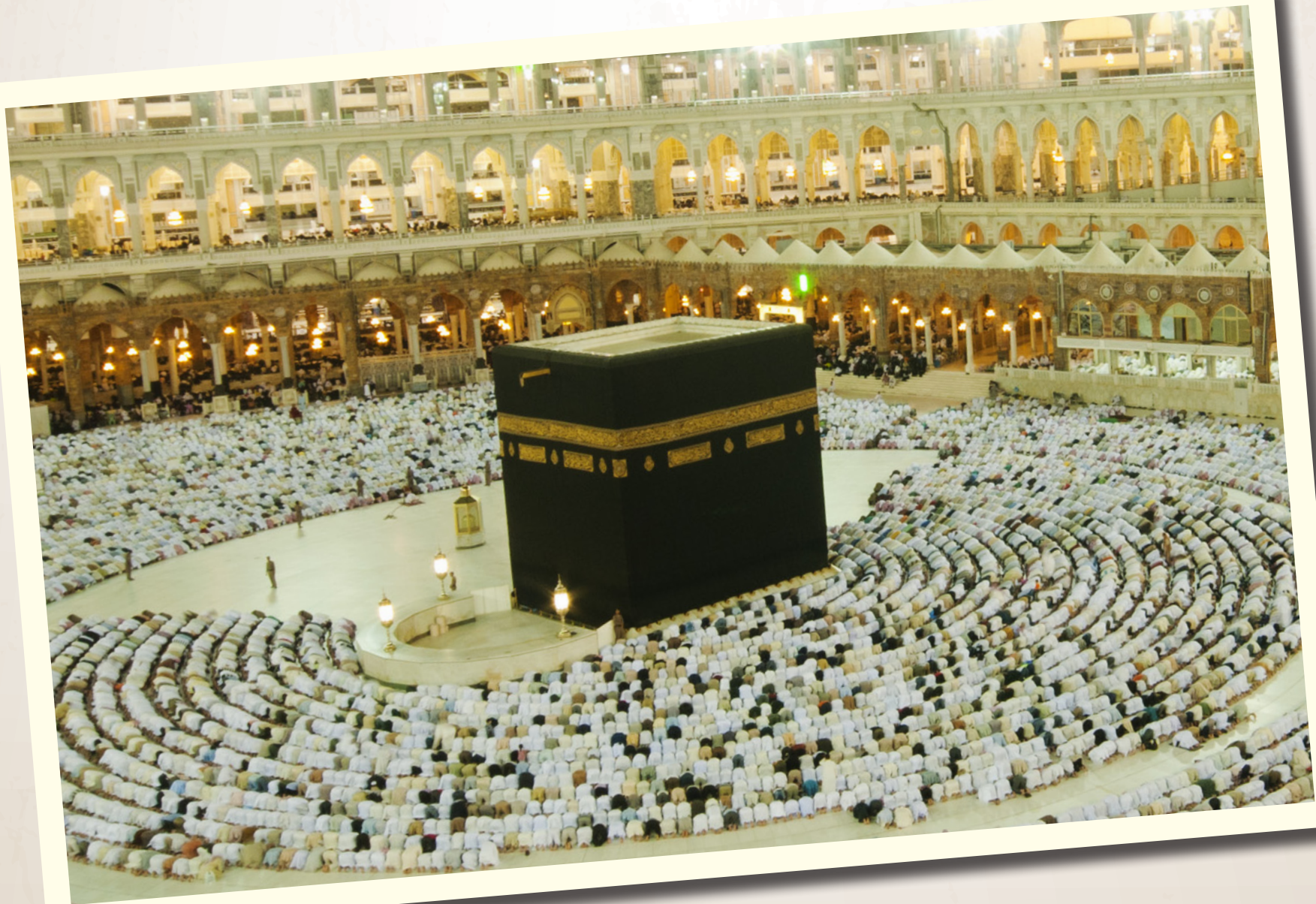
***And again circumambulate the Ancient House.*** (Al-Hajj 22:29)

The Prophets were the ones whom Allah sent to guide people to His Worship and they traveled to the places that Allah made pure and sacred:

And we covenanted with Abraham and Isma'il that they should sanctify My House for those who Compass it around, or use it as a retreat, or bow or prostrate themselves (therein in prayer). (Al-Baqarah 2:125)

Traveling to visit the Sacred House consolidates the ties between man and the Prophets, especially Prophet Muhammad, the seal of Prophets (peace be upon them all).

It was narrated that the Messenger of Allah passed by Al-Azraq valley and asked, "What valley is this?" They (the





Companions) said, “This is Al-Azraq Valley”. He said, “It is as if I can see Moses descending the mountain pass and raising his voice in talbiyah (supplication).”

The Prophet then passed by a mountain pass called Harsha and asked, “What mountain pass is this?” They (the Companions) said, “It is Harsha”. He said, “It is as if I can see Yunus (Jonah), the son of Matta, riding a red camel and wearing a woolen cloak, the reins of his camel made from fibers of date-palm, passing through this valley and chanting the talbiyah.”

It was also narrated that the Prophet said, “There passed by the rock at Al-Rawha` seventy prophets, all barefooted and clad in woolen garments, heading for the Ancient House (the Ka`bah) and among them was Allah’s Prophet, Moses (peace be upon him).”

#### **4- Brotherhood and Peace**

The blessed journey of Hajj asserts the unity of Muslims, who assemble at the same time and place to worship one God and direct themselves towards one qiblah (direction of the Ka`bah).

For people from all corners of the globe, the Sacred House represents a greater homeland that affords them security; in Makkah, “the mother of all cities” as Allah called it, all barriers created by race, countries, languages, color and cultures are removed. There is no difference between rich and poor, all are equal in their need of Allah, the Almighty.



This scene of a civilized conference of different peoples is confirmed in the words of Allah Who says:

***Verily, this Ummah (community of Muslims) of yours is a single Ummah and I am your Lord and Cherisher: therefore worship Me (and no other).*** (Al-Anbiyaa' 21:92)

At this place and during this time, peace is not restricted to humans but extends to animals, plants and inanimate objects. Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them both) narrated that the Prophet said:

“Verily, Allah has made Makkah a sanctuary. (Fighting in it) was not made lawful for anyone before me nor will it be for anyone after me. It was made lawful to me for a few hours of a day. It is unlawful to cut its grass and trees, chase its game or pick up lost items in it except by those who publicly announce having found them.’ Al-`Abbas said, ‘O Messenger of Allah! Except for al-idhkhir (a kind of grass) [for it is used] by our goldsmiths and for our graves.’ The Prophet replied, ‘Except for al-idhkhir.”

## **5- Administrating the Earth**

The command, urging Muslims to go for Hajj and `umrah, includes an explicit call to seek lawful means of provision. This is attained by working and participating in production, economic development and serving one's community. It is known that the journey of Hajj is expensive, and therefore, a Muslim needs to provide for himself during this time as well as for his dependents until he returns. Islamic law urges anyone who seeks success in the Hereafter and aspires to attain the great reward of Hajj and `Umrah, to seek lawful means of livelihood and administer his

resources so as to benefit people. It also urges him to be sincere and perfect his work.

In this manner, a Muslim can save for the expenses of the journey of Hajj and `Umrah; his success in the world is thereby the means to his success in the Hereafter.

In addition, he benefits the poor and the impoverished through the meat of his sacrifice which he distributes at the end of Hajj. Allah refers to this meaning in the following verse:

***That they may witness the benefits (provided) for them, and celebrate the name of Allah, through the days appointed, over the cattle which He has provided for them (for sacrifice): then eat thereof and feed the distressed ones in want.***

(Al-Hajj 22: 28)

## **6- Courage and Sacrifice**

Allah says:

***And proclaim the pilgrimage among people: they will come to you on foot and (mounted) on every kind of swift mount lean (on account of journeys) through deep and distant mountain highways.*** (Al-Hajj 22:27)

A Muslim who leaves his country and sets for the Sacred House is a resolute person who proves his readiness to sacrifice his life in response to the call of His Lord. In the past, the journey of Hajj was full of hardships and dangers which were often fatal; in spite of this, Muslims never ceased to visit the Sacred House.

Their longing to travel to this blessed place and their eagerness to obey and worship their Lord were sufficient





reasons to breed courage in their hearts and sacrifice their lives. Those who do not fear danger and are ready to sacrifice themselves for a noble goal are able to make fateful decisions and establish great civilizations when the means are available.

## 7- Hajj is the Lifetime Act of Worship

Allah legislated different levels of social interaction in the various acts as worship. Fasting is an individual act of worship, prayer a collective act of worship that is performed at the level of a person's neighborhood, zakat involves an entire city or village, while Hajj is a global act of worship.

Hajj completes and encompasses the essence of the five pillars of Islam. It includes a declaration of the Oneness of Allah which is the first statement of the testimony of faith **(the Act of Worship of a)**; following the footsteps of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in performing the rites of Hajj and therefore, acknowledging his message - i.e. the second part of the Shahadah (Testimony of Faith); Tawaf; du`aa' (supplication) which is the essence of prayer; giving out money and food in charity, which is the core of zakat; and self-control and refraining from immorality, transgression and dispute which represent the essence of fasting.

Thus, Hajj, which includes hardships and dangers undertaken to glorify Allah and declare His Oneness, is compared to jihad for the sake of Allah. It is indeed a great act of worship.

Owing to the tolerant nature of Islam, and its distinguishing characteristic of lifting hardship, Allah prescribed Hajj

once in a life time for those who are capable of undertaking it.

Hajj represents the perfect example of worshipping Allah, submitting to His commands, exerting all efforts to obey Him and attaining divine propinquity by all possible means. For this reason, its reward is the pinnacle of all rewards as attested to in the words of the Prophet who said: “The reward for an accepted Hajj is nothing short of Paradise.”

## Hajj: Matchless Blessings

What are the blessings of Hajj? One may describe them in great detail. But, in the Qur'an, where Allah instructs Ibrahim to invite people to come to Hajj. Allah says:

***So that they may witness things that are of benefit to them.*** (Al-Hajj 22:28)

Hence, the real blessings of Hajj can only be experienced by those who actually perform it. Imam Abu Hanifah, as narrated, was unsure which act of worship was more excellent among the various ones laid down by Islam. But once he had performed Hajj, he had no hesitation in declaring that Hajj was the most excellent of all.

Still, briefly, here's some idea of such blessings.



## The Journey

We usually think of journeys as of two kinds: those made for business and those made for pleasure. In both cases, it is to fulfill your worldly desires and benefit yourselves that you leave your homes, separate from families and spend money; all is done for your own sake. No question arises of sacrifice for any higher, sublime purpose.

But the journey of Hajj is quite different in nature. This is not meant for any personal end. It is undertaken solely for Allah and the fulfillment of the duty prescribed by Allah.

Nobody can be prepared to undertake this journey until and unless he has love of Allah in his heart, as well as fear of Him, and is convinced that Allah wants him to do what he is doing. That you are willing to bear the privations arising from separation from your family, to incur great expenses on a journey that will bring no material rewards, and to suffer any loss of business or job, all are signs of certain inner qualities: that you love and fear Allah more than anything, that you have a strong sense of duty to Him, that you are willing to respond to His summons and ready to sacrifice your material comforts in His Cause.



## Virtue and Piety

You will find that your love of Allah heightens as you start preparing for your pilgrimage journey with the sole intention of pleasing Allah. With your heart longing to reach your goal, you become purer in thought and deed. You repent for past sins, seek forgiveness from people whom you might have wronged, and try to render your due to others where necessary so as not to go to Allah's court burdened with injustices that you may have done to your fellow beings. In general, the inclination to do good intensifies, and abhorrence of doing evil increases. After leaving home, the closer you get to the House of Allah, the more intense becomes your desire to do good. You become careful so that you harm nobody while you try to render whatever service or help you can to others. You avoid abuse, indecency, dishonesty, squabbles, and bickering because you are proceeding on the path of Allah.

Thus, your entire journey constitutes an act of worship. How, then, can you do wrong? This journey, in contrast to every other, is a continuing course through which a Muslim attains a progressive purification of the self. On this journey, then, you are pilgrims to Allah.

## The Impact of Hajj

It is now easy to see that for two or three months, from the time of deciding and preparing for Hajj to the time of returning home, a tremendous impact is made on the hearts and minds of pilgrims. This process entails sacrifice of time, sacrifice of money, sacrifice of comfort, and sacrifice of many physical desires and pleasures- and all this simply for the sake of Allah, with no worldly or selfish motive.

Together with a life of sustained piety and virtuousness, the constant remembrance of Allah and the longing and love for Him in the pilgrim leave a mark on his heart which lasts for years. The pilgrim witnesses at every step the imprints left by those who sacrificed everything of theirs in submission and obedience to Allah. They fought against the whole world, suffered hardships and tortures, were condemned to banishment, but ultimately did make the word of Allah supreme and did subdue the false powers that wanted man to submit to entities other than Allah.

The lesson in courage and determination, the impetus to strive in the way of Allah, which a devotee of Allah can draw from these clear signs and inspiring examples, can hardly be available from any other source. The attach-







ment developed with the focal point of his religion by walking round the Ka`bah (Tawaf), and the training received to live a mujahid's life through the rites of Hajj (such as running from place to place and repeated departures and halts) are great blessings indeed.

Combined with the Prayer, fasting and almsgiving (zakah), and looked at as a whole, you will see that Hajj constitutes a preparation for the great task, which Islam wants Muslims to do. This is why it has been made compulsory for all who have the money and the physical fitness for the journey to the Ka`bah. This ensures that, in every age, there are Muslims who have passed through this training.



## Hajj: A Collective Worship

The great blessings of spiritual and moral regeneration, which Hajj imparts to each person, are before you. But you cannot fully appreciate the blessings of Hajj unless you keep in view the fact that Muslims do not perform it individually: hundreds of thousands perform it communally during the time fixed for it. At one stroke, Islam achieves not one or two but a thousand purposes.

The advantages of performing the Prayer singly are by no means small, but by making it conditional with congregation and by laying down the rule of imamah (leadership in the prayer) and by gathering huge congregations for the Friday and `Eid Prayers, its benefits have been increased many times.

The observance of the fasting individually is no doubt a major source of moral and spiritual training, but by prescribing that all Muslims must fast in the month of Ramadan those benefits have been greatly increased.

The almsgiving, too, has many advantages even if dispensed individually, but with the establishment of a centralized bayt al-mal (treasury of the Islamic state) for its collection and disbursement, its usefulness is increased beyond measure.

The same is true of Hajj. If everyone were to perform it singly, the effect on individual lives would still be great. But making it a collective act enhances its effectiveness to a point, which gives it a new dimension altogether.







## Historical Background of Hajj

According to the Qur'an Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) was one of the Prophets of Allah. In fact he was one of the five major Prophets of Allah (the other four being Noah, Moses, Jesus and Mohammad (peace be upon them all)).

Makkah today stands at the site of a small house, the Ka`bah, that the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) built for the worship of Allah. Allah (glory be to Him) rewarded him by calling it His own House and by making it the center towards which all must face in prayers.

According to the Qur'an, Allah (glory be to Him) promised to bless people through Abraham (peace be upon him) and to give him a great lineage of Prophets through his descendants. The first son of Prophet Abraham was Prophet Ishmael (peace be upon him) who dwelled in Arabia and from his descendants came the last of all Prophets (peace be upon them all), the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

The second son of Prophet Abraham was Isaac (peace be upon him) who dwelled in Palestine and in his descendants came all of the Israelite Prophets ending with Jesus (peace be upon him).

Abraham, among other Prophets, played a very significant role in religious history. He is regarded as the father of the callers of monotheism, i.e. Prophets and Messengers of Allah. From his descendants, the three world's major religions (Christianity, Judaism and Islam) came.





***And remember Abraham and Isma`il raised the foundations of the House (with this prayer): “Our Lord! Accept (this service) from us: For You are the All-Hearing, the All-knowing. Our Lord! Make of us Muslims, bowing to You, and of our progeny a people Muslim, bowing to You; and show us our place for the celebration of (due) rites; and turn unto us (in mercy); for You are the Oft-Returning, Most Merciful.” (Al-Baqarah 2:127, 128)***

So, building the Ka`bah, the first house on earth to be built for the worship of Allah and a monument of monotheism, by Abraham with the help of his son Ishmael (peace be upon them), also shows us that the Prophethood of Prophet Muhammad was in fact a fulfillment of the supplication made earlier by both Abraham and Ishmael for Allah to send a Prophet in that specific location and for a specific purpose; worshipping the One and Only God.

***Our Lord! send amongst them an Messenger of their own, who shall rehearse Your signs to them and instruct them in scripture and wisdom, and sanctify them: For You are the Exalted in Might, the Wise. (Al-Baqarah 2:129)***

One time when Abraham was sleeping he saw in a dream that he was sacrificing his first and only son, Ishmael. As a basic rule a vision or a dream for a Prophet is not like one for us as it is a command from Allah, the Almighty. When Abraham woke up he spoke to his son Ishmael and told him that he saw himself sacrificing Ishmael.

Ishmael showed a great deal of faith in Allah and obedience to his father, and simply responded that if Allah had ordained him to do so then he should do it. Abraham took his son Ishmael to a place which is now called Minah near Makkah and was about to execute the command of Allah when an angel came from the heavens carrying a big ram.

The angel gave the ram to Abraham and said that because he showed his obedience to Allah he should sacrifice the ram instead of his son. In the rites of the pilgrimage, there is a sacrifice offered as well. When people finish their pilgrimage they go to Minah and they slaughter rams or other animals by way of sacrifice, commemoration, and thanks giving to Allah for saving Ishmael in order for him to become the grandfather of the last of Allah's Prophets.

The Qur'an gives the whole story:

***He said: "I will go to my Lord! He will surely guide me! "O my Lord! Grant me a righteous (son)!" So We gave him the good news of a boy ready to suffer and forbear. Then, when (the son) reached (the age of) (serious) work with him, he said: "O my son! I see in vision that I offer you in sacrifice: Now see what is your view!" (The son) said: "O my father! Do as are commanded: you will find me, if Allah so wills one practicing patience and constancy!" When they had both submitted their wills (to Allah., and he had laid him prostrate on his forehead (for sacrifice), We called out to him "O Abraham! You has already fulfilled the vision! thus indeed do We reward those who do right. For this was obviously a trial. And We ransomed him with a momentous sacrifice: And We left (this blessing) for him among generations (to come) in later times: Peace and salutation to Abraham! Thus indeed do We reward those who do right. For he was one of our believing servants. And We gave him the good news of Isaac - a Prophet,- one of the righteous. We blessed him and Isaac: but of their progeny are (some) that do right, and (some) that obviously do wrong, to their own souls."*** (As-Saffat 37:99-113)

After the story of the sacrifice was finished and Abraham showed his faith in Allah and his willingness to sacrifice his only son, then Allah gave him the news that Isaac was to be born.

## `Umrah: Its Meaning and Purpose

The word “`Umrah” means visiting or attending. `Umrah is an act of worship. Allah, the Almighty, says:

***Perform the Hajj and `Umrah for Allah...*** (Al-Baqarah 2:196)

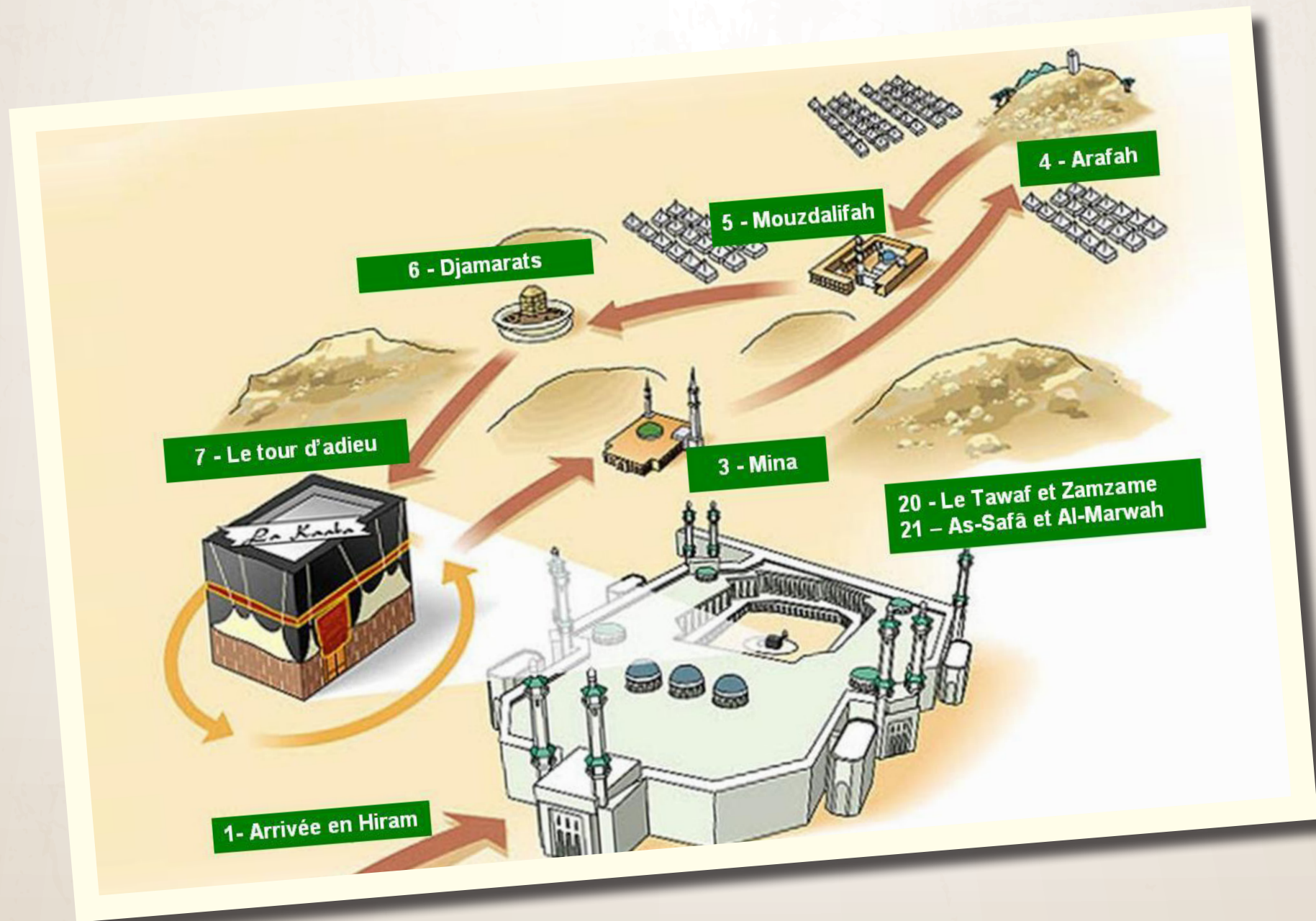
The Prophet (peace be upon him) is reported to have performed the `Umrah after the treaty of Hudaibiyah and he explained to people how to do it.

### The Difference between Hajj and `Umrah

There are a number of differences between Hajj and `Umrah; of the major differences are:

- 1- Hajj is the fifth pillar of Islam, and it is mandatory for everyone who is physically and financially able to perform it once in a lifetime. `Umrah is not a pillar of Islam and it is only recommended and not obligatory.
- 2- Hajj must be performed in the prescribed time period, namely the months of Hajj, and even more specifically, the major rites are done in the first two weeks of Dhul-Hijjah. `Umrah, however, can be done any time of the year.
- 3- `Umrah involves only the rites of Tawaf and Sa'i along with ihram; whereas Hajj involves staying in Mina, performing the rite of wuquf (standing in the plains of `Arafat), staying in Muzdalifah, and pelting the stone pillars, as well as sacrifice in some cases. `Umrah, however, does not involve any of these.





## How Is `Umrah Performed?

The way one performs `Umrah is to enter the city of Makkah with ihram with the intention of `Umrah and then to perform Tawaf (circumambulation around the Ka`bah), and running or Sa`i between the mountains of Safa and Marwa, (and finally to shave or clip of one's hair).

This was the ancient practice from the time of Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him). Its purpose is to allow Muslims to visit the city of Makkah during the year whenever possible. It is to keep the Ka`bah visited not only during the Hajj but to keep it visited throughout the year by Muslims.

According to (some) Muslim jurists, those who can afford, it is obligatory upon them to make at least one `Umrah in their life, either with or before Hajj or at any other time during the year.







# Get Prepared

Overall, a balanced approach and positive attitude will be your best friends during this trip. The ingredients of a successful Hajj are preparation before the journey, extra patience during the trip, and sincere effort towards improving yourself after the journey. As you keep the following steps in mind, remember to continuously ask Allah to help you in the journey. He can make the difficult easy and without His help we are lost.

## One: Physical Preparation

**1- Get in shape.** You will walk, walk and walk some more. Some people recommend walking regularly in the weeks before Hajj to build endurance.

**2- Boost your immunity.** Travelling from the U.S. takes a huge toll: long plane rides, layovers, and a wait anywhere from 2 – 12 hrs. at the Jeddah airport. So indulge in fruits and veggies, especially those rich in antioxidants. Stay away from sick people as best as you can during the trip. One friend started taking a teaspoon of honey regularly in her tea. A few people wore a surgeon's mask throughout the trip. Although it may seem mean, don't share your water bottles or share prayer mats. You might still get sick, but take whatever precautions you can.

**3- Pace yourself upon arrival.** Try to balance between resting and making the most of your time in Makkah and

Madinah. You don't want to wear yourself out before going to Mina, but at the same time you want to earn good deeds in the first 10 days of Dhul-Hijjah.

**4- Preventive care.** Take medicine as soon as you feel sick, but avoid taking antibiotics unless or until you have been diagnosed with a bacterial infection. Almost everyone gets the 'Hajj cough'. Use lemon, honey, orange juice, etc. Take Vitamin C supplements regularly during the trip—don't wait till you get sick to start this!

**5- Gather your supplies.** Make a list before travelling so that you don't forget anything. Make a specific list for the days of Hajj before you leave for Mina (i.e. stuff you will pack in your backpack).

**6- Take your 'worship tools' to use during the waiting time.** A lot of times people find themselves without anything to do during the long stretches. Come prepared with a Qur'an, seerah (biography of the Prophet book), or dhikr (remembrance/prayer) beads.

**7- Write down a few du`a** (supplications) for yourself that you can memorize or repeat frequently. Sometimes you will be too tired to remember so keep a small notebook on hand. Also, you can write down some notes or reflections that will help preserve the experience.

**8- Stay energized.** You need to keep hydrated; drink Zamzam (water from the well of Zamzam in Makkah) but also take snacks and energy bars. Some programs do not serve lunch so healthy snacks will help hold you till dinner. If you don't like the food at the hotel, don't complain. There are plenty of places to eat at the malls and hotels. Avoid anything that doesn't seem clean and anything that you know makes your stomach upset.

## **Two: Mental Preparation**

### **1- Know the requirements of performing Hajj**

You don't want to waste this trip by missing something important. Attend the workshops in your area and/or read a book. Then review the information before you get to Mina. As a first time Hajji it's natural to be unfamiliar with the rites, so ask scholars in the group.

### **2- Know what to expect and set the expectations**

Hajj is the journey of a lifetime; but at the same time you might face things that are upsetting. Sadly, I encountered a lot of trash and garbage thrown all over the place in Mina. The bathroom situation is another story. Expect squatter toilets and learn to use them. If used correctly it can be sanitary and easier to use than regular toilets.

### **3- Strategize**

A few tricks will help you maximize your time. For example, when going to pray at the Rawdah in the Prophet's masjid there are designated times for women. Head towards the Rawdah area towards the end of the time allotted and try to be in the last group praying. You won't feel as hassled because there is nobody coming behind you. Also, there are air-conditioned areas in the Haram (area around the Ka`bah) in Makkah on the first and second floor (enter through King Fahd entrance and stay on the left).

Plan on praying/sitting there during the hottest part of the day. Since the time between Maghrib (Sunset Prayer) and `Isha' (Night Prayer) is short, it is a good idea to stay at the Haram between those prayers. That way you



won't struggle for a spot inside. One local student gave us this awesome tip: Make sa'i (the walk between the hills of Safa and Marwa) on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor roof extension area, which is usually empty and has a wonderful view during Fajr (Dawn Prayer) time.

#### **4- Don't be cheap**

You will see a lot of the poor and the elderly. Help them as much as you can and be generous. Don't haggle with store keepers over small amounts. At the same time be cautious of theft and being ripped off by taxi drivers. As in any big city there are opportunists, so be cautious of your money and personal items. Keep your shoes in a plastic bag with you at all times. Side point: don't take a camera or camera phone into the Prophet's masjid (for women, there are female guards who will frisk you before letting you in).

#### **5- Get in the right mindset by surrendering yourself to Allah**

You are going on Hajj, which is not a vacation in a 4 star hotel. You will be tested in different ways so remind yourself to be patient and not to complain. You are invited as Allah's guests so use the correct manners that a guest should have. As a bonus, try to catch yourself before reacting negatively to a test by acknowledging that that what is making you upset is the test.

#### **6- Remember why you are here: to complete Hajj and go back home**

You are not here to change the Saudi government or fix the ignorance of the ummah (community). You are not here to argue with different people about who is right and wrong. You might need to develop a mantra or phrase

to remind yourself. A few people would remind themselves saying, “la jidaal” (No arguing), if they started to get annoyed with a spouse, family member, or random uncle in the group.

### **7- Don't compare your group to other groups**

It's very easy to get caught up in what other people ate or what their tents were like. Avoid going down that road and remind yourself that everyone's test will be different and no one has a problem-free Hajj. Focus on yourself, make incessant Talbiyah “Labbayka Allahuma labbayk” (I respond to Your call O Allah, I respond to Your call), and embody your submission to Allah.

### **8- Minimize the distractions**

This is one of the biggest struggles. There is a lot going on and sometimes it will be hard to focus. Try to set goals for yourself before the trip so you know what to work on. I saw many people complete the Qur'an in a few short weeks. Plan on getting to the Haram extra early if you want to pray inside.

### **9- Avoid getting into debates about different opinions, schools of thought**

Decide on what you are going to follow beforehand and don't get confused when people tell you that your Hajj won't be accepted. People find themselves waiting a lot and start to discuss these issues that end up creating confusion or hostility. Follow your group leader who is experienced and let others follow their leaders.

### **10- Stick together and find an experienced person to follow**

This may seem obvious but a buddy system will help prevent you from getting lost. An experienced pilgrim is full

of tips and will make some of the rites easier to perform (such as the best time to throw stones and which area is easier to start from).

### **11- Keep calm with your roommates and carry on**

If you are sharing a room with other people in Makkah or Madina take some earplugs or eye covers to help you get rest. You might be paired with a roommate that can be a test for you—just try to take things in stride and avoid getting upset or frustrated with the person. If you are annoyed, try to do nice things for the person and make du`a' for that person and yourself.

### **12- Use the full day of `Arafat for worship, not just the time after `Asr**

Many people fall into this trap and spend time sitting, eating and talking on the most important day of Hajj and only start making du`a' after `Asr (Afternoon Prayer). Separate yourself from people and focus on seeking forgiveness. The Prophet used to make du`a' the entire day and intensified the supplication after `Asr.

The same thing applies after `Arafat when people revert to their old habits and lose focus while they are still on Hajj! Continue to keep yourself busy with reading, remembrance, and extra worship. Side point: plan to avoid the bathrooms at Muzdalifah. Eat/drink accordingly and use the bathrooms in `Arafat before getting on the bus to Muzdalifah.

### **13- An experienced advice**

An experienced Hajji (pilgrim) advised



“Treat Tawaf (walking 7 times around the Ka`bah) like prayer and strive for khushoo’[concentration].” The virtue of Tawaf is well known: it is recommended to perform Tawaf in the Haram before praying 2 rak`ahs (units of prayer) as the ‘greeting’ of the masjid! One idea is to pick different du`a’ or prayers for each round, or to pick the first round for seeking forgiveness, the second round for making du`a’ for the community, etc. Performing Tawaf can be a struggle given all the distractions. Try to avoid congested areas and the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor wheelchair drivers (who go fast and end up hitting peoples’ ankles). One recommendation is to avoid the first and second floor and only make Tawaf and sa`i on the relatively un-crowded rooftop.

#### **14- Ask Allah for help**

This advice was given by an elderly woman sitting in the Prophet’s masjid. She said to always start your actions by asking Allah to help you. Allah can make anything happen—all we need to do is ask.

### **Three: Spiritual Preparation**

This important aspect tends to be ignored since many people focus on the external actions of Hajj and then focus on trying to survive the trip. If you make this a priority ahead of time by taking a few steps to prepare then the struggle can be spiritually uplifting and rewarding.

**1- Read notes and articles about Hajj rites** ahead of time to get in the proper spiritual frame of mind. Hajj is not just a physical journey but a surrendering of the heart to Allah with absolute submission. You will give up every-

day comforts (even personal hygiene) for a few short days as you purify the soul. Print the articles out and share with roommates.

**2- Evaluate yourself before leaving for Hajj.** Really take yourself to account. As one experienced Hajji stated, “Look at your personal weaknesses and flaws. Make tawbah (repentance) for all the sins you are committing and all the weaknesses you have. Do not go to Hajj with the intention of continuing on any known sin when you return. Your intention needs to be that you will discontinue it and fight it.

This is very important. Hajj is not something a person does many times, so make sure you receive the full reward for completing it. Do not risk an unaccepted Hajj.” She also emphasized, “Don’t let the spirit of the group affect your spirit. If people on the bus are talking and socializing and you feel like doing the Talbiyah then go ahead and start instead of wondering why others aren’t.”

**3- Keep good companionship during the trip.** I was blessed to have good friends as roommates during my journey. You might observe different types of people in your group: the complainers, the chit-chatters, the Debby-downers, etc. If you feel distracted then keep to yourself since you don’t want the negativity to rub off and affect your experience.

Make a pact with yourself that you will come back from Hajj and keep the complaints to yourself. There might be things that you don’t like but you will hold those complaints in your heart and share constructive criticism with the group organizer. Good friends will remind you and support you in this goal. Optimism is contagious!

## How, Where, and When Do I Start Hajj?

Now after putting on the clothing of ihram, you are ready to start your pilgrimage by making the intention of starting Hajj or `Umrah. It is recommended to make the intention after performing one of the obligatory prayers or after praying two rak`ahs. You express this intention by saying, in the case of `Umrah, “Labbayka, Allahuma, `Umrah” (O Allah, I answer Your call by performing `Umrah). As for Hajj, the intention varies according to the mode of Hajj you choose:

1- In Ifrad Hajj, you are going to perform only Hajj and therefore you make the intention of Hajj saying “Labbayka, Allahuma, Hajjan” (O Allah, I answer Your call by performing Hajj).

2- In Tamatu` Hajj, you are going to perform a full `Umrah followed by a break and then a full Hajj. Therefore, you make the intention of `Umrah saying “Labbayk, Allahuma, `Umrah” (O Allah, I answer Your call by performing `Umrah). On Dhul-Hijjah 8, you start Hajj so you make then the intention of Hajj saying “Labbayk, Allahuma, Hajjan” (O Allah, I answer Your call by performing Hajj).

3- In Qiran Hajj, you are going to combine `Umrah with Hajj, so you make the intention of both `Umrah and Hajj saying “Labbayk, Allahuma, `Umratan wa Hajjan” (O Allah, I answer Your call by performing `Umrah and Hajj).

There are certain places at which you should make your intention. These places are called mawaqit (plural of Miqat). You should not pass your fixed Miqat without putting on the cloth of ihram and making the intention of ihram. These are five places:





**1- Dhul-Hulaifah**, a place southwest of Madinah and 18 km from its mosque. It is the Miqat for the people coming from Madinah and beyond.

**2- Dhat-`Iraq**, a place 94 km to the northeast of Makkah. It is the Miqat for the people coming from Iraq and beyond.

**3- Al-Juhfah**, a place 187 km to the northwest of Makkah. This was the Miqat for the people coming from or passing through Syria and Egypt. It was on the eastern coast of the Red Sea, but it has completely disappeared and Rabigh (to the north of Al-Juhfah) is used as this Miqat now.

**4- Qarn Al-Manazil**, 94 km to the east of Makkah. It is the Miqat for the people of Najd and the pilgrims who pass by it.

**5- Yalamlam**, 54 km to the south of Makkah. It is the Miqat for those coming from Yemen and the pilgrims who pass by it.

If you are traveling by land, it is easy to stop at the Miqat and make the intention. People traveling by air are usually notified when reaching the Miqat or a short time before so that they can make the intention. In such a case you are supposed to be ready, having put on your ihram clothing in advance.

As there is a prescribed time for Hajj: the months of Shawwal, Dhul-Qi`dah and Dhul-Hijjah, making the intention of Hajj should take place in the period from Shawwal 1 to Dhul-Hijjah 9. It is not possible to start Hajj on Dhul-Hijjah 10 or afterwards because this means missing the ritual of staying in `Arafat on the day or night of Dhul-Hijjah 9, which is one of the pillars of Hajj.

## Hajj Rites

The pilgrimage takes place each year between the 8<sup>th</sup> and the 13<sup>th</sup> days of Dhul-Hijjah, the 12<sup>th</sup> month of the Muslim lunar calendar. Its first rite is the wearing ihram (the two pieces of cloth worn by male pilgrims).

The ihram is a white seamless garment made up of two pieces of cloth or toweling; one covers the body from waist down past the knees, and the other is thrown over the shoulder. This garb was worn by both Abraham and Muhammad. Women dress as they usually do. Men's heads must be uncovered; both men and women may use an umbrella.

The ihram is a symbol of purity and of the renunciation of evil and mundane matters. It also indicates the equality of all people in the eyes of Allah. When the pilgrim wears his white apparel, he or she enters into a state of purity that prohibits quarreling, committing violence to man or animal and having conjugal relations. Once he puts on his Hajj clothes the pilgrim cannot shave, cut his nails or wear any perfume, and he will keep his unsown garment on till he completes the pilgrimage.

A pilgrim who is already in Makkah starts his Hajj from the moment he puts on the ihram. Some pilgrims coming from a distance may have entered Makkah earlier with their ihram on and may still be wearing it. The donning of the ihram is accompanied by the primary invocation of the Hajj, the Talbiyah:

“Here I am, O Allah, at Your Command! Here I am at Thy Command!



You are without associate; here I am at Your Command!

To You are praise and grace and dominion!

You are without associate.”

The thunderous, melodious chants of the Talbiyah ring out not only in Makkah but also at other nearby sacred locations connected with Hajj.

On the first day of Hajj, pilgrims sweep out of Makkah toward Mina, a small uninhabited village east of the city. As their throngs spread through Mina, the pilgrims generally spend their time meditating and praying, as the Prophet did on his pilgrimage.

During the second day, the 9<sup>th</sup> of Dhul-Hijjah, pilgrims leave Mina for the plain of `Arafat where they rest. This is the central rite of the Hajj. As they congregate there, the pilgrims' stance and gathering reminds them of the Day of Judgment. Some of them gather at `Arafat (also known as the Mount of Mercy), where the Prophet delivered his unforgettable Farewell Sermon, enunciating far-reaching religious, economic, social and political reforms.

These are emotionally charged hours, which the pilgrims spend in worship and supplication. Many shed tears asking Allah to forgive them. On this sacred spot, they reach the culmination of their religious lives as they feel the presence and closeness of a merciful God.



## Rituals & Rulings

Religious pilgrimages usually derive their importance from their connection to the birth or death or burial of a Prophet or a saint. There is indeed a general misunderstanding among people that Hajj gets its importance from Makkah being the birth place of Prophet Muhammad. However, the facts tell us a different story:

The Ka`bah in Makkah is the first house built on earth for the worship of the One and Only God of the universe.

The Last Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was born in the same place where the Ka`bah stands, in answer to the prayer of the grand patriarch, Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him).

Indeed, the rituals of Hajj -such as the circumambulation of the House, running between the two mounts Safa and Marwah, and animal sacrifice- owe more to the life and example of Prophet Abraham, his wife Hajar and his son Ishmael, than to Prophet Muhammad.

In Hajj, the pilgrims try to emulate Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) and his family by re-enacting some of their acts of obedience and sacrifice. Every time during the five times' ritual prayer, Muslims far and near turn towards the Sacred House at Makkah where the Ka`bah stands. And once every year during Hajj, pilgrims coming from the far corners of the planet cross the seas and deserts to congregate towards that center.

Once they reach there, the first thing they do is to go in a circle whose center is the Ka`bah, which performs "an essential existential function by providing orientation in an otherwise disoriented world" (Robinson).



Muslims consider the Ka`bah as the center of the whole earth as it symbolizes the Oneness of Allah Almighty -the Only God deserving of worship and unconditional obedience.

Islam is unique in that as it does not allow the worship of any creation of God, whether human, animal or material. According to Mircea Eliade, the well-known religious philosopher, religious man needs to found his world by finding in it a fixed center. Indeed, he calls such a center, “the Centre of the World” and “the Navel of the Earth”, expressions he might have borrowed from the Muslim tradition of Hajj.

In fact, Tawaf (the circumambulation of the House) has great mystic significance. It is a practical demonstration of the Muslim belief in the Oneness of Allah (tawheed).

For the believers, the Ka`bah exerts a strong spiritual pull on them, which urges them to move towards it and become a part of the never-ending circles of humanity slowly moving around it. After the circumambulation, and the prayer at Maqam Abraham, the pilgrims move to Zamzam.

The origin of Zamzam water is well-known: As the infant Ishmael cried out in thirst, his mother Hajar ran repeatedly back and forth between the hills of Safa and Marwah in the hope of finding water. As the baby cried, his feet rubbed the sand where miraculously, a spring bubbled out. Thus, it was that the well of Zamzam was created.

This well has never run dry, and its water has always maintained a distinctive taste. After drinking from Zamzam water, the pilgrims move towards the mounts of Safa and Marwah to retrace the steps of Hajar in search of water. On Dhul-Hijjah 8, people gather in a place called Mina and prepare to move to the Mount of Arafat the next day. Prophet Muhammad has equated Hajj with `Arafat, meaning that the essence of Hajj is standing on the Mount of

Arafat on the 9th of Dhul-Hijjah, Indeed, there is no other center of pilgrimage that unites at one place, so many humans of so many different races, nationalities and languages to participate in the same religious rites.

The Hajj, in which all marks of social distinction are wiped out, presents the unity of humanity; Malcolm X, the charismatic African-American Muslim leader wrote:

“America needs to understand Islam, because this is the one religion that erases from its society the race problem....I have never before seen sincere and true brotherhood practiced by all colors together, irrespective of their colors. You may be shocked by these words coming from me. But on this pilgrimage, what I have seen, and experienced, has forced me to re-arrange much of thought-patterns previously held, and to toss aside some of my previous conclusions.” (Haley 340)

Certainly the culmination of the Hajj is on the day of Arafah. That is the “standing” in the valley of `Arafat on Dhul-Hijjah 9. At `Arafat, the believer has the higher spiritual experience of standing in divine presence. Here between the earth and sky, there is nothing to make him feel that he is away from his Creator.

Standing in the midst of a sea of humanity eagerly “desiring the Face of Allah”, the pilgrim feels completely transformed by the experience of Divine Presence. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: “There is no day on which Allah frees more of His slaves from Fire than the Day of `Arafat, and He verily draws near, then boasts of them before the angels, saying: “What do they seek?” (Muslim)

After `Arafat, pilgrims move towards a place called Muzdalifah which is between Mina and `Arafat and stay there

for the night. From there, the pilgrims move to Mina valley to throw stones at the three Jamrahs. After the stoning of the Jamarat, the slaughter of animals and the circumambulation of Hajj around the Kabah should be done. And thereafter the pilgrims stay in Mina for three days, called the Days of Tashreeq.

Hajj is a unique occasion when Allah is specially merciful to His servants. He answers the prayers of all those who undertake the pilgrimage with sincere faith. The pilgrims should rely wholeheartedly on Allah's forgiveness and mercy and pray to Him with sincerity and devotion. Hajj is an occasion that clearly demonstrates the power of invocation at the sacred places, felt by His servants.

It has been made clear by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) that the supplications of the Hajj pilgrims will be accepted: The soldier in the path of Allah and the one who performs Hajj and the one who performs `Umrah, all are the delegation of Allah! He called them and they answered. And they asked Him, and He shall grant them (what they ask for)! (Ibn Majah).

Once the pilgrimage is over, the pilgrims (who performed the rites of Hajj with faith and expectation of rewards from Allah) return home with the satisfaction that their sins have been forgiven and their prayers answered.



## Women In Hajj: Any Difference?

As far as most of the rituals and regulations of Hajj are concerned, there are basically no major differences between males and females.

The spirit of Hajj is turning to Allah wholeheartedly in humble and passionate yearning and ardent love and devotion. This spirit should rule the hearts of all pilgrims at all times, regardless of gender differences.

Men and women during Hajj also share equally in the various taboos and restrictions. Both must refrain from all forms of intimate sexual contacts with spouses, including foreplay, kissing, and lustful touching. They also must shun all vain talks, wrangling and quarrels.

Likewise, both males and females must absolutely avoid using any kind of perfumes or scents, clipping nails, removing, plucking, trimming or shaving of hair, etc.

It is, however, permissible for both males and females during ihram to bathe or take showers, or wash.

Likewise, they are permitted to use ordinary shampoos, soaps or creams, lotions, etc. so long as these are not scented.

Specific issues or regulations that concern women exclusively during Hajj can be listed as follows:

1- Unlike men, women are allowed to wear their normal clothes or attires regardless of whether they are sewn or not. There are no restrictions whatsoever on the kind of clothes they can wear during ihram so long as they



are not dyed in saffron or scented. Thus, it is permissible for them to wear even clothes with colors or designs; although women pilgrims may do well in keeping it simple and avoid attractive designs and colors. After all, it should be noted, the hallmark of Hajj is simplicity and humility before the Creator of all beings.

2- Women, again as opposed to men, are also allowed to wear shoes, slippers or sandals as they choose.

3- Women, however, are not allowed to wear either face-veils or hand-gloves during ihram; they must not cover their faces while in a state of ihram.

4- Women who are menstruating should assume ihram after a bath and recite Talbiyah and engage in Dhikr and du`aa'. However, they must not offer Prayer.

5- Menstruating women can practice all of the rituals of Hajj with the sole exception of Tawaf (going around the Ka`bah). As far as performing Tawaf is concerned, they should postpone it until such time that they are free of menses and have purified themselves through Ghusl (bathing).

6- If, however, because of special circumstances beyond their control, they find themselves unable to stay in Makkah (for instance, they have no choice but to leave with the group because of inability to change or reschedule travel plans), then they are allowed to perform Tawaf while still menstruating after cleaning themselves and wearing pads, etc.

The above ruling is given by Imam Ibn Taymiyyah. It has been based on a valid principle of Islamic jurisprudence which states that any condition -upon which the validity of a certain act of worship is dependent- can be waived if



a person cannot fulfill the same; and the act of worship thus performed will be considered as valid without it. An example for this is covering oneself during Prayer.

Thus, if a person finds himself unable to cover his `awrah (what must be covered) because he could not find anything to wear, then he must still pray without covering himself and his Prayer will still be considered as valid, although in ordinary circumstances such a Prayer will be considered as null and void. The same rule applies to a menstruating woman who must leave Makkah because of special circumstances beyond her control. The normal condition of purification from menses for the validity of Tawaf is be waived in her case, and her Hajj will be considered as perfectly valid.

7- Finally, rules for women are relatively more relaxed in regards to throwing pebbles at the stone pillars. Thus women, as well as those who are weak and elderly, are allowed to leave Muzdalifah early before Fajr in order to perform the rite of throwing pebbles at the stone pillar before the crowd arrives in Mina.

## Can a Woman Go to Hajj without Mahram?

The principle in Shari`ah is that a woman is not to travel by herself; rather, it is obligatory upon her to have as her companion her husband or a Mahram. This ruling is founded on what was reported by Al-Bukhari and others from Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet said: “A woman is not to travel except with a Mahram, and a man is not to enter upon her except if she has a Mahram.”

Also Abu Hurairah related, on behalf of the Prophet, that, “It is not permissible for a woman who believes in Allah and the Last Day to travel a distance of one day and night except with a Mahram.”

Abu Sa`id narrated that the Prophet said: “A woman is not to travel a distance of two days without her husband or Mahram with her.”

And Ibn `Umar narrated that: “A woman is not to travel for three nights, except if she has a Mahram.” Apparently the differences in narrations are because of the different questioners and the questions posed. Abu Hanifah preferred the last hadith of Ibn `Umar and was of the opinion that a Mahram is not needed except in travels in which prayers are shortened. (Also reported by Ahmad)

These hadiths include all types of travel, whether or not it is necessary, like visiting, trading, seeking knowledge, or anything else.

The basis for this ruling is not an evil assumption about the woman and her manners, as some people unrea-





sonably think, but it is to take care of her reputation and dignity. It is to protect her from the desires of those who have diseased hearts, from the assault of a rapist or a thief. And this is even more so in places that the traveler must pass through, like deadly deserts, in a time when there is no sense of security, and where the places are unpopulated.

But what is the ruling on a woman, who does not find a Mahram to accompany her in a legitimate travel? What is the ruling if she is going with a group of protective men, or trustworthy faithful women, and the roads are safe?

The jurists have researched this topic whenever they discussed the obligation of Hajj upon women, and they kept in mind the Prophet's injunction prohibiting a woman from traveling without a Mahram. Their thoughtful opinions include the following:

- 1- Among them are those who hold on to what is apparent from the mentioned hadiths. They prohibit traveling without a Mahram, even for the obligation of Hajj. And there is no exception to this rule.
- 2- There are those who make an exception for older women who have passed the age of being subject to temptation, as has been transmitted from Al-Qadi ibn Al-Walid Al-Yaji, from the Maliki Juristic school. It is especially for women in general if we look at the meaning as was said by Ibn Daqiq Al-`Eid.
- 3- Some of them make the exception that as long as the woman is with trustworthy and faithful women, then the travel is permissible. Furthermore, some conclude that it is enough for just one free trustworthy and faithful Muslim woman.

4. And some concluded that the roadway must be safe. This is the opinion that was chosen by, Sheikh Al-Islam, Ibn Taymiyyah. He mentioned that Ibn Muflih in Al-Faru` said:

“Every woman can perform Hajj without a Mahram as long as she will be safe.” And he said: “This is directed towards every travel in obedience... Al-Karabisi transmitted this from Ash-Shafi`i pertaining to the supererogatory Hajj. And some of his companions also said this about supererogatory Hajj and about every travel that is not obligatory, like visiting and trading.”

Al-Artham transmitted from Imam Ahmad: “A Mahram is not a condition in the obligatory Hajj.” His justification for this is his saying: “Because she goes out with women, and with all those whom she is safe with.”

Ibn Sirin even said: “With a Muslim it is okay.” Al-Awzai said: “With a just people.” Malik said: “With a group of women.” Ash-Shafi`i said: “With a trustworthy faithful Muslim woman.” And his companions said: “By herself if there is safety.”

Al-Hafidh Ibn Hajar said: “What is well-known with the Shafi`is is that it is conditional that there be a husband, Mahram, or trustworthy faithful women.” And in another saying: “It is enough for just one trustworthy faithful woman.” In a saying transmitted by Al-Karabisi, authenticated in Al-Muhadhab, is that she can travel by herself if the roads are safe. If this is what was said about traveling for Hajj and `Umrah, then this ruling should be uniform concerning all types of travel, as some scholars have agreed.

The purpose here is to safeguard the woman and protect her, which is fulfilled by knowing that the roadway is

safe and that trustworthy faithful men and women are present.

The proof of the permissibility of a woman traveling without a Mahram is incumbent upon there being security and the presence of trustworthy faithful people. What was reported by Al-Bukhari is that during the final Hajj of `Umar ibn Al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him), he gave permission to the wives of the Prophet to perform Hajj. So, he sent with them `Uthman ibn `Affan and `Abdur-Rahman.

This act is considered to be a consensus, for all of them, `Umar, `Uthman, `Abdur-Rahman Ibn `Awf and the wives of the Prophet (peace be upon him) agreed to it, without any objection.

Second is what was reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim on the authority of `Ada Ibn Hatim that the Prophet told him about the future of Islam and how its light will be spread throughout the earth. Among what he mentioned is: “The day is near when a young woman will travel from Al-Hira (a city in Iraq), going to the Sacred House with no husband accompanying her. She will fear none but Allah.” This information does not only prove that this will happen, but proves its permissibility, because it was mentioned in a phrase praising the spread of Islam along with its sense of security.

Here I will state two additionally important precepts:

The first is that the basis of rulings on acts of dealings is to focus on their meanings and purposes. This is the opposite of rulings on acts of worship, whose main focus is on showing full compliance to Allah’s Order, before focusing on their meanings and purposes, as was firmly established by Imam Ash-Shatibi, who clarified this and



verified it with proofs.

The second is that prohibited things are not permitted except if there is a dire need. And things that are prohibited so that they can be an obstruction to evil are permitted during times of need. And there is no doubt that the prohibition of a woman traveling without a Mahram stems on the necessity of blocking channels to evil.

It is incumbent upon us to look at traveling in our time. It is not like how traveling was in the past. It is no more filled with the dangers of the arid deserts, or awe of being encountered with thieves, highway robbers, etc. Now traveling is by various modern means of transportation that usually gather large amounts of people at a time, like ships, airplanes, buses, or cars that travel in caravans. Thus, this provides plenty of confidence and reliability, removing feelings of fear for the woman, because she will not be by herself in any place.

Thus, in the light of the above, I see no objection to woman performing Hajj within such safe environment, which provides all the necessary security and contentment.

## Tawaf: Meaning and Significance

As for Tawaf (the circumambulation of the Ka`bah), realize that it is a ritual prayer. You should fill your heart with reverence, fear, hope, and love. Know that in your circumambulation, you resemble the angels near the Divine Presence, who ring the Throne and circle around it.

Do not suppose the purpose to be your bodily circumambulation of the House. Rather, the true purpose is the circling of your heart in remembrance of the Lord of the House (the Ka`bah), till remembering begins with Him alone and ends with Him alone, just as the circumambulation starts from the House and ends at the Ka`bah.

Know that the noble circumambulation is the circling of the heart in the divine presence, and that the Ka`bah is the external symbol in the visible world for the unseen Divine court which lies in the invisible universe.

For those to whom Allah opens the door, the realm of earthly power and sense experience is but the threshold of the invisible, angelic universe. This parallel is suggested by the correspondence between the House inhabited in the heavens and the Ka`bah. The heavenly circling of the angels is like the human circumambulation of this Ka`bah.





## How to Perform Tawaf, What to Say?

One must begin Tawaf (circumambulation) with one's right shoulder uncovered, (for men only) and the Ka`bah on one's left side, while facing the Black Stone, which you should kiss, if possible, or touch with one's hand, or point in its direction, saying: "Bismillah wallahau akbar Allahumma imanan bika wa tasdiqan bikitabika wa wafa'an bi `ahdika wa ittiba'an li sunnati nabbiyyi sallallahu `alaihi wa sallam" (In the Name of Allah. Allah is the Greatest. O Allah! (I begin this Tawaf) believing in You, affirming the truth of Your Book, fulfilling my covenant with You, and following the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him)). It is encouraged to jog slowly through the first three rounds around the Ka`bah. One should walk quickly, keeping close to the Ka`bah as much as possible, while taking short steps. During the next four rounds, one should walk at a normal pace. If one is unable to jog or get close to Ka`bah, because of the area being overcrowded, one may perform one's Tawaf in any way possible.

Touching Ar-Rukn Al-Yemeni (the Yemeni corner) is encouraged, and so is kissing or touching the Black Stone in each of the seven rounds of Tawaf, if possible. Remembering Allah and supplicating to Him as much as possible is also encouraged. For this purpose, one may choose any supplications that one feels comfortable with, without restricting oneself to any particular supplications or repeating what others may be saying. There are no set supplications prescribed for this purpose. The supplications that some people consider to be prescribed for various rounds of Tawaf are not authentic. There are no such supplications reported from the Prophet. One should pray for oneself, for one's family and for the Muslims for anything that is good in this life or in the hereafter.

## Sa`i: Going Between the Safa and Marwah

For Sa`i to be valid and acceptable, it must meet the following conditions:

- 1- It should be performed after Tawaf.
- 2- It must be performed in seven rounds.
- 3- It must begin from Safa and end at Marwah.
- 4- It must be performed in the Mas`a, the path between Safa and Marwah, because the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) did so, and moreover, he explicitly told us: **“Take your (religious) rites from me.”**

## Standing at `Arafat

As for standing on Mount `Arafat, when you behold the thronging crowds, hear the loud voices speaking in many tongues, and see the various groups following their leaders through the ritual observances, matching their actions to theirs, recall the site of the Day of Resurrection, the gathering of the communities with their prophets and leaders, each community following its prophet, aspiring after his intercession, all wavering with equal uncertainty between rejection and acceptance.

The standing-place is never devoid of a generation of the saintly and pious, nor of a generation of the righteous and magnanimous. When their aspirations are joined, their hearts devoted exclusively to humble supplication and entreaty, their hands raised to Allah, their necks outstretched and their eyes turned heavenward, as they aspire of one accord in quest of mercy, do not suppose that He will disappoint their hopes, frustrate their endeavor, or begrudge them an overwhelming mercy.

That is why it is said that it is a most grievous sin to be present at `Arafat and to imagine that Allah (Exalted is He) does not forgive one.

It would seem that the conjunction of aspirations, and the strength derived from contiguity with the saintly and pious people assembled from all quarters of the earth, constitutes the secret of the greater pilgrimage and its ultimate purpose. For there is no way to obtain the mercy of Allah (Glorified is He) in such abundance as by the conjunction of aspiration and the simultaneous mutual support of all hearts.





## Throwing the Pebbles: Its Wisdom & Timing

After leaving `Arafat the pilgrims go to a place called Muzdalifah which is a simple plane where they spend the night in vigil while relaxing a little. At dawn they make the morning prayers. Then after sunrise they go to a place called Mina where they collect small pebbles and throw it at a stone pillar which symbolizes victory over Satan and evil prompting from within ourselves.

It is reported on the authority of Ibn `Abbas that the Prophet said: “When prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) wanted to perform the Hajj rites, Satan blocked his way near `Aqabah. Ibrahim threw seven pebbles at him whereupon Satan sank into the ground. Again Satan appeared to him near the second Jamarah (pebble). Ibrahim threw seven pebbles at him and he again sank into the ground. Once again Satan approached him near the third Jamarat, and again Ibrahim threw seven pebbles at him and once again the Satan sank into the ground.” Ibn `Abbas added, “You throw pebbles at Satan, and (in doing so) you follow the path of your (great) forefather Ibrahim (peace and blessings be upon him).”

Sheikh Sayyed Sabiq states in his well-known book “Fiqh As-Sunnah”:

In his “Ihya’ `Ulum Ad-Deen”, Al-Ghazali says: “As to the throwing of the pebbles, it is an expression of the pilgrim’s intention to obey Allah’s commandment, and a demonstration of his humility and servitude to Him. It signifies compliance with the divine commandment without any trace therein of any selfish pleasure; sensuous or







intellectual.”

By throwing pebbles, one emulates Ibrahim when Satan blocked his way at that place in order to cast doubts in his heart or tempt him and divert him away from his Lord, so Allah commanded Ibrahim to drive the Satan away by throwing pebbles at him.

### **When Should We Throw the Pebbles?**

The best time to throw the pebbles is before noon on Dhul-Hijjah 10 as that is when the Prophet (peace be upon him) threw them.

But the throwing of the pebbles can be divided between three and four days: the 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of Dhul-Hijjah or these three and the 13<sup>th</sup> of Dhul-Hijjah. Allah says in the Qur'an:

***Celebrate the praises of Allah during the appointed days. But if any one hastens to leave in two days there is no blame on him, and if anyone stays on there is no blame on him, if his aim is to do right.*** (Al-Baqarah 2:203)

Ibn `Abbas said that the Prophet permitted the old and weak people of his family to throw first. Then he said, “Do not throw pebbles at the first Jamrat Al-`Aqabah before the sunrise” (At-Tirmidhi). Delaying the throwing to the end of the day is, however, permissible.

## Animal Sacrifice in Islam

After throwing the pebbles one should cut a little bit of their hair to symbolize the end of most of the restrictions of Ihram. After this they go to a place which is half way between Makkah and `Arafat where they sacrifice an animal. Slaughtering an udhiyah (sacrificial animal) is the most recommended deed a Muslim can do on the day of `Eid Al-Adha, for that is part of Islam's rituals and a mode of seeking Allah's Pleasure, as Allah said,

***So pray unto thy Lord, and sacrifice...*** (Al-Kawthar 108:2)

So why are all Muslims highly encouraged to make udhiyah on the days of `Eid?

Allah says:

***In them you have benefits for a term appointed: In the end their place of sacrifice is near the Ancient House.***

(Al-Hajj 22:33)

The word "In them" refers to cattle or animals offered for sacrifice. It is quite true that they are useful in many ways to humans, e.g., camels in desert countries are useful as mounts or for carrying burdens or for giving milk, and so, for horses and oxen; and camels and oxen are also good for meat, and camel's hair can be woven into cloth; goats and sheep also yield milk and meat, and hair or wool.

But if they are used for sacrifice, they become symbols by which people show that they are willing to give up some of their own benefits for the sake of satisfying the needs of their poorer brethren.

Allah also says:

***To every people did We appoint rites (of sacrifice) that they might celebrate the name of Allah over the sustenance He gave them from animals (fit for food). But your Allah is One God: Submit then your wills to Him (In Islam): and give thou the good news to those who humble themselves.*** (Al-Hajj 22:34)

This is the true end of sacrifice, not propitiation of higher powers, for Allah is One, and He does not delight in flesh and blood, but a symbol of thanksgiving to Allah by sharing meat with fellow humans. The solemn pronouncement of Allah's name over the sacrifice is an essential part of the rite."

Allah says further:

***It is not their meat nor their blood, that reaches Allah: it is your piety that reaches Him: He has thus made them subject to you, that ye may glorify Allah for His guidance to you: And proclaim the Good News to all who do right.*** (Al-Hajj 22:37)

Thus, no one should suppose that meat or blood is acceptable to the One True God. It was a pagan fancy that Allah could be appeased by blood sacrifice. But Allah does accept the offering of our hearts, and as a symbol of such offer, some visible institution is necessary.

He has given us power over the brute creation, and permitted us to eat meat, but only if we pronounce His name at the solemn act of taking life, for without this solemn invocation, we are apt to forget the sacredness of life. By this invocation, we are reminded that wanton cruelty is not in our thoughts, but only the need for food.





It is quite clear from the Qur'anic passages above that the issue of animal sacrifice is in relation to the role animals played in Arabian society at that place and time (as well as other societies with similar climates and culture), in that humans are commanded to give thanks to Allah and praise Allah for the sustenance He has given them and that they should sacrifice something of value to themselves to demonstrate their appreciation for what they have been given (which in their case was the very animals on which their survival was based).



## `Eid Al-Adha

On the ninth day of Dhul-Hijjah, pilgrims proceed to the plains of the Mount of `Arafat, outside Makkah and they spend their time totally in worship. This is the core of the worship of Hajj, without which no Hajj is said to have been performed. On that evening, pilgrims proceed from `Arafat to Muzdalifah.

The 10<sup>th</sup> day of Dhul-Hijjah in the Muslim calendar is the day of Hajj - `Eid Al-Adha or Yawm An-Nahr, when the pilgrims in Makkah sacrifice halal animals following one of the oldest traditions of mankind, dating back to the time of Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) as mentioned before..

Early in the morning of the 10<sup>th</sup> day of Dhul-Hijjah, the pilgrims having offered their prayers at Muzdalifah, proceed to throw the seven pebbles at the symbols of Satan.

Then, pilgrims return to Mina, with a pure slate of mind and heart, where they perform the sacrifice of animals. For those who did not go to Hajj it is celebrated as a feast. We begin with the prayers of `Eid, following which, sacrifices of animals are made and the meat is shared with the poor.

It is a pity that over scores of years, the act of sacrifice has lost its meaning. It has become a mere ritualistic performance among Muslims who sometimes slaughter goats, sheep and cows annually and mechanically, without understanding the underlying significance.

There is a difference between mere charity and sacrifice. Charity is a regular all-time practice of helping the needy and no particular day is fixed for it. This is while sacrifice is an annual ritual, which is to be performed on the prescribed days commencing with `Eid Al-Adha.



## Visiting the Prophet's Mosque

To visit Madinah is not a rite of Hajj or `Umrah, but the unique merits of the Prophet's city, his mosque, and his sacred tomb attract every pilgrim to visit it. One may choose whether or not to visit Madinah, and whether to do so before or after the Hajj or `Umrah. There is no ihram or talbiyah for the visit to Madinah or AL-Masjid An-Nabawi (the Prophet's Mosque).

### Merits of the Prophet's Mosque

The Prophet himself participated in the construction of this mosque, called it "My Mosque" and led prayers in it for years. He also said that a Prayer performed in the Prophet's Mosque is better than a thousand prayers in any other place except the Sacred Mosque in Makkah.

According to Anas, the Prophet also said: "The person who offers 40 prayers consecutively in my mosque, without missing a prayer in between, will secure immunity from the fire of Hell and other torments and also from hypocrisy." (Ahmad)

In his book, Al-Hajj, the prominent scholar El-Bahay El-Kholi states:

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) highly recommended the visit to three mosques, namely the Sacred House (the Ka`bah) in Makkah, his own in Madinah, and the Masjid al-Aqsa in Jerusalem.

On completing the rites of the Hajj, the pilgrim would do well to set out towards the Mosque of the Prophet at Ma-

dinah with its five minarets and the green dome of the grave of the Prophet.

The moment he steps into this Mosque, he has to call to mind all that he knows of the glorious deeds of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and of his spiritual guidance. He is to remember that in it the Prophet taught Muslims about the tenets of their faith and inculcated in them the principles of brotherhood, justice and equality.

On entering the mosque, the pilgrim must pray two rak'ahs, then proceed to the grave of the Prophet at which he says these words in greeting: "Peace be upon you, O Messenger of Allah. I testify that there is no god but Allah, and that you are his Messenger".

It is desirable that the visitor turn eastwards a little to salute the tomb of the Caliph Abu Bakr, and then the tomb of the Caliph `Umar Ibn al-Khattab.

With the visit the pilgrim's sense of devotion is enhanced by recalling the memories of the glory of Islam. In this sense, this mosque serves as another fount of inspiration to Muslims throughout the world.

## Visiting Al-Baqi`

Al-Baqi` is the principal cemetery of the people of Al-Madinah and has been so since the time of Prophet Muhammad. Of all of the historic places in Madinah, it is the closest to Al-Masjid An-Nabawi (the Prophet's Mosque). It is located opposite the southeastern section of the wall of the masjid. Recently, some contiguous property was added to it to increase the land area available for burials.

An imposing new, high marble-clad wall has been erected around the entire perimeter of Al-Baqi`, so that the old and new areas have been united. Its total area presently amounts to 56,000 square meters (13.8 acres). Al-Baqi` contains the mortal remains of thousands upon thousands of Muslims.

This cemetery has been the final resting place of the residents of Madinah, as well as those of nearby neighboring areas and of visitors, since the time of Hijrah. It was the preferred final resting place of the noble Companions (may Allah be pleased with them all). This is evidenced by the fact that about ten thousand of the noble Companions are buried within.

Among the notable Muslims interred there are the Mothers of the Believers (the Prophet's wives), with the exclusion of Khadijah and Maymunah (may Allah be pleased with them all). Also buried there are the Prophet's daughters, the Prophet's son Ibrahim, the Prophet's uncle `Abbas, the Prophet's aunt Safiyyah, and the Prophet's grandson Al-Hasan ibn `Ali (may Allah be pleased with them all).





There are many, many other respected Muslims from throughout the history of Islam buried here who are too numerous to mention.

Several hadiths of the Prophet mention that visiting Al-Baqi` is both virtuous and meritorious. The Prophet visited it at the end of the night and prayed for those who were buried there, saying:

“Peace be upon you, abode of a people who are believers. What you were promised would come to you tomorrow, you receiving it after some delay; and Allah willing we shall join you. O Allah, grant forgiveness to the inhabitants of Baqi` Al-Gharqad.”

Thus, it is recommended to visit Al-Baqi` and supplicate Allah for those buried in its noble earth.

## Lessons from Hajj

Hajj contains many lessons that Muslims should learn. It assures the fact that all Muslims are one Ummah (nation) and inculcates in the pilgrims the unique values of Islam.

In the Qur'an, Allah says:

*By the Break of Day; By the Ten Nights; By the Even and Odd (contrasted); And by the Night when it passes away; Is there (not) in these an adjuration (or evidence) for those who understand?* (Al-Fajr 89:1-5)

*And proclaim the Pilgrimage among people; they will come to thee on foot and (mounted) on every kind of camel, lean on account of journeys through deep and distant mountain highways. That they may witness the benefits (provided) for them, and celebrate the name of Allah, through the Days Appointed, over the cattle which He has provided for them (for sacrifice). So eat you thereof and feed the distressed ones in want. Then let them complete the rites prescribed for them, perform their vows, and (again) circumambulate the Ancient House.* (Al-Hajj 22:27-29)

*The first House (of worship) appointed for people, was that at Bakkah; full of blessing and of guidance for all beings. In it are Signs manifest; the Station of Abraham; whoever enters it attains security; pilgrimage thereto is a duty men owe to Allah, those who can afford the journey; but if any deny faith, Allah stands not in need of any of His creatures.* (Aal `Imran 3:96, 97)

The first ten days of Dhul-Hijjah are the most sacred days of the year. They are mentioned as special days in



Surat Al-Fajr. These are the days of special blessings. Muslims are urged to do more dhikr (remembering Allah), charity and good deeds during this time. Fasting in these days is prescribed as nafl (supererogatory act of worship) from the first to the ninth day of Dhul-Hijjah.

The Prophet said: “There are no days in which righteous deeds are more beloved to Allah than these ten days.” The people asked, “Not even jihad for the sake of Allah?” He said, “Not even jihad for the sake of Allah, except in the case of a man who went out to fight, giving himself and his wealth up for the cause, and came back with nothing.” (At-Tirmidhi)

At this time millions of Muslims are gathering in and around the sacred city of Makkah. They are coming from every corner of the globe to perform the sacred rites of Hajj. We pray to Allah to bless all Muslims and accept their Hajj and devotions.

Hajj is an important pillar of Islam. It has many benefits. It is a command of Allah. It is obligatory once in life on every adult Muslim, male or female, who can afford it physically and financially. Muslims perform Hajj every year in millions in number. They go there with great love and devotion.

Hajj has a form and a spirit. Its form is to have ihram, perform Tawaf (circumambulation of the Ka`bah) and Sa`i (walking between the two hills), go to Mina, `Arafat, Muzdalifah, do the Rami Al-Jamarat (throwing pebbles) at the Jamarat and make sacrifice of a sheep, goat or camel. There are detailed rules that Pilgrims learn. Here at this time, however, I want to discuss a few points about the spirit of Hajj for our benefit and let us think about it in these days. This will help us here also.





## **1- A Ceremony of Love and Devotion to Allah**

A Muslim's relation with Allah is that of deep love, devotion and obedience. We love Allah because He loves us:.

He loves them and they love Him... (Al-Ma'idah 5:54)

Prophet Ibrahim loved Allah and Allah took him as a friend (khalil):

"Allah took Ibrahim as a friend." (An-Nisa' 4:125)

Hajj is deeply associated with Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) and his life-story. Hajj gives us a sense of history. Our faith is deep-rooted in history. This is the religion of Allah given to us by His many Prophets: Adam, Nuh, Ibrahim, Isma'il and finally Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon them all). These were the people who loved Allah, and Allah loved them and made them the guides of humanity.

## **2- Hajj and the Universal Spirit of Islam**

People of all races, colors and nationalities go there. They become one people without any class or distinction.

They look alike and do the same things. The spirit of Hajj is to foster unity and universal brotherhood and sisterhood among the believers.

## **3- Hajj Gives Us a Focus, Center and Orientation**

We have one qiblah and that is our direction for worship. But we should not have only one qiblah for worship; we should also have unity of purpose and mission in our life.

Muslims should be the people of a focus and direction, not a confused people or a people without any orientation



and direction. Our focus of life is Allah and the House of Allah, the Ka`bah, on this earth. We have with us Allah's Book that we must hold fast together:

“And hold fast all together Allah's rope and be not divided...” (Aal `Imran 3:103)

#### **4- The Ceremony of Peace and Harmony**

The pilgrims come in peace and spend their time together in the most peaceful and respectful manner. They respect every person and everything. They do not harm anyone or anything. This is also the spirit of Islam. Islam is a total commitment to care, compassion and kindness. Hajj is the symbol of this commitment and it must be manifest in our daily life.

#### **5- Hajj: A movement, Action and Sacrifice**

The pilgrim keeps on moving all the time, with Tawaf, Sa`i, going to Mina, `Arafat, Muzdalifah, Mina again, around the Jamarat and other places. It is a dynamic ceremony and this is the way a Muslim's life should be. Motion, action, and sacrifice –these things bring success in this life and salvation in the Hereafter.

I hope those who have gone to Hajj will learn good lessons from this journey, and we here also should keep these lessons in our minds and lives.

## Pick up the Blessings, Be Thankful

Allah says in a hadith qudsi: “My slave-worshipper doesn’t draw nearer to me with something more beloved to me than what I’ve made obligatory on him...”

Hajj is first and foremost one of the most beloved worships to Allah that unites the Muslims in His Servitude, and reconnects the Ummah with its pure, monotheistic foundations established by Ibrahim.

In addition to remembering and reliving the experiences of our spiritual forefather and his blessed family, Allah has also designed the Hajj to yield numerous and multifaceted benefits: it strips you of the worldly distractions so you can focus on remembering Allah and purifying your heart; it provides you with intensive moral, social, and physical training and discipline; it repeatedly foreshadows situations of the Hereafter so you can remember its reality and prepare for it; it dissolves superficial distinctions between you and fellow Muslims and gives you the chance to develop new, long-lasting relationships and bonds with them; and it reminds you of the age-old enemy who you’ll continue battling against with your rejuvenated iman when you return home.

When you go through this worship solely for Allah, and adorn it with His remembrance, righteous deeds, kindness, gentleness and beautiful character with your fellow Muslims, then, in sha’ Allah, that is the Hajj mabrur (the one accepted by Allah) which earns you the reward of none other than Paradise, and sends you back home sinless as your mother bore you.





Now, isn't it a blessing that Allah made Hajj obligatory (for whoever has the means)? It's out of Allah's mercy that He wants His servants to be showered with these countless gifts when they travel to His sacred House as His guests. But Allah also wants you to do one last thing before leaving. You know how the Arabs of pre-Islamic Arabia would gather in Mina after completing the rites of Hajj and boast about their forefathers to boost their reputation amongst other Arabs?

Allah now tells the believers:

***And when you have completed your rites, remember Allah like your (previous) remembrance of your fathers or with (much) greater remembrance.*** (Al-Baqarah 2:200)

After just finishing a series of rites that train you to constantly remember Allah, He wants you to keep it up even more! That way, when you go back home, you're hooked on Allah's dhikr.

After all, how could you forget Him when He's the One Who guided you, blessed you and chose you from amongst millions of Muslims to visit His sacred house and follow the footsteps of Ibrahim, Isma'il, Hajar and Muhammad like countless believers who walked this earth before you?

***And whoever obeys Allah and the Messenger - those will be with the ones upon whom Allah has bestowed favor of the Prophets, the steadfast affirmers of truth, the martyrs and the righteous; and what excellent companions these are.***

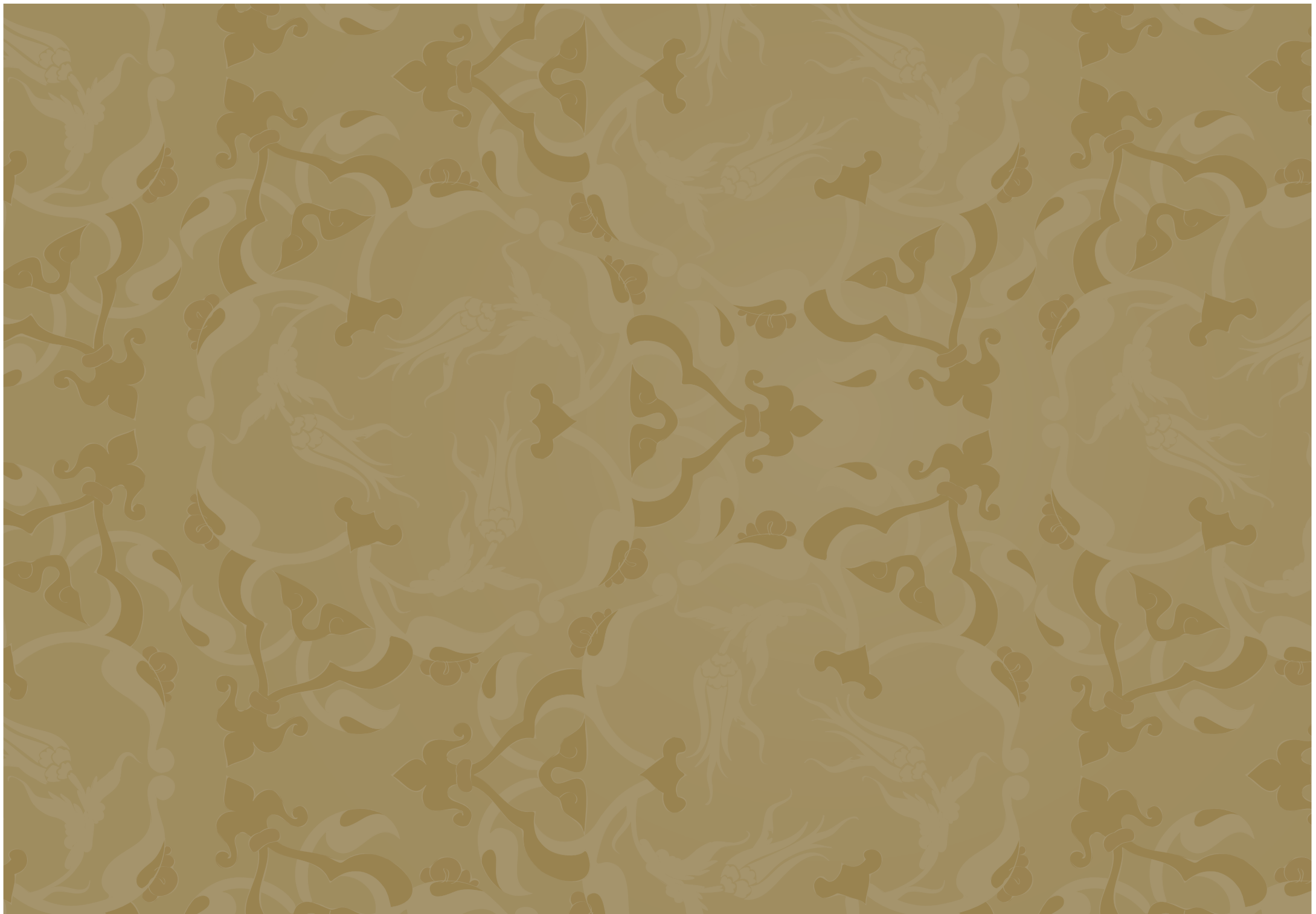
(An-Nisaa' 4:69)



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