C:/ITOOLS/WMS/CUP-NEW/6651872/WORKINGFOLDER/HAJJ/9781107030510C11.3D 215 [213–230] 8.9.2015 11:53AM

11

Performing the Pilgrimage*

Shawkat M. Toorawa

PROOF

INTRODUCTION

Performing the pilgrimage, circumstances permitting, is one of the so-called pillars of Islam, acts required of all Muslims.[1] As the following canonical hadith illustrates, it has a very special status:[2]

> God's Emissary was asked, "What is the best deed?" "To believe in God," he replied, "and in His Emissary."
> The questioner then asked, "What is next best?"
> "To struggle in God's cause."
> The questioner again asked, "And what is next?"
> "To perform an accepted/blessed pilgrimage," he replied.

The significance of the pilgrimage being accepted/blessed (*ḥajj mabrūr*) is echoed in a standard Hajj supplication, "God, bless/accept my pilgrimage, forgive my sins, and reward my efforts."[3] And the prophet Muhammad is reported to have said, "One ʿUmra after another is an expiation for what comes between them, and there is no reward but Paradise for an accepted Hajj."[4] Even the ʿUmra, the non-obligatory, so-called minor pilgrimage, has considerable value. The reward is nothing short of Paradise. No

* This article is affectionately dedicated to Firoz H. Toorawa.

[1] See S. M. Toorawa, "Pillars," in G. Böwering (ed.), *Princeton Encyclopedia of Islamic Political Thought* (Princeton University Press, 2013), 418–420.

[2] Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol. 1, bk. 2, no. 26, reported by Abū Hurayra.

[3] See, e.g., Anonymous, *Manāsik al-ḥajj wa-l-umra ʿalā l-madhāhib al-arbaʿa wa-adʿiyat ziyārat al-madīna al-munawwara* (Medina: Maktabat Ṭayyiba lil-Nashr wa-l-Tawzīʿ, n.d.), 11. On the phrase, see See *EI2* s.v. "Radjm."

[4] Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol. 3, bk. 27, no. 1, reported by Abū Hurayra.

C:/ITOOLS/WMS/CUP-NEW/6651872/WORKINGFOLDER/HAJJ/9781107030510C11.3D 216 [213–230] 8.9.2015 11:53AM

surprise then that pilgrimage to Mecca and its precincts continues to be one of the most prestigious activities in which a Muslim can engage.

Pilgrimage to Mecca, whether the Hajj or the ʿUmra, is transformative. Even for the (probably small) percentage of pilgrims who regard the Hajj as nothing more than an obligation, and who remain spiritually unmoved by it, it is still a ritually exacting, physically demanding, and avowedly communal experience, like little else in a person's life. I can attest to this personally: I have performed the Hajj three times. I went on my first Hajj from France in 1972 at the age of nine, in the company of my parents and most of my immediate paternal relatives. Because I had not yet reached puberty in 1972, that Hajj did not discharge my obligation, did not "count" as it were, so I went again from Mauritius in 1994 at the age of thirty, with friends of the family and acquaintances. My most recent Hajj was in 2008. My wife and our two daughters (then aged eleven and fourteen) and myself, as their designated male travel companion (*maḥram*), set out from the United States. As I had already performed the Hajj in 1994, I elected to perform this one on behalf of someone else who was unable to travel: performing the Hajj is the one ritual obligation that can be proxied. I have also performed the ʿUmra several times. By virtue of being quick – it can be completed in a few hours, ʿUmra can leave less of a mark, but it is still moving. In pre-modern times, for most Muslims, performing the Hajj or ʿUmra necessitated an overland or sea journey that could last several months, sometimes even years. In modern times, the time commitment is typically only one week or several, but still involves travel to a faraway place in an otherwise rarely visited country in the company of millions of fellow Muslims.

In 2012, 3.16 million pilgrims performed the Hajj.[5] This represents a mere 0.002 percent of the world Muslim population.[6] If we exclude pilgrims based in Saudi Arabia (for whom the trip is of course much easier), the figure almost halves to 1.75 million (including repeat pilgrims[7]), or 0.001 percent of Muslims worldwide.[8] As for pilgrims performing the ʿUmra the

[5] See www.saudiembassy.net/latest_news/news10271201.aspx (accessed March 15, 2014).

[6] Using the Pew 2010 figure of 1.61 billion for the number of Muslims worldwide: www.pewforum.org/2011/01/27/the-future-of-the-global-muslim-population/ (accessed March 15, 2014).

[7] When I went on Hajj in 1994, of the eighteen people in my group, eight had performed the Hajj before.

[8] The exact figures are 1,408,641 pilgrims (from 188 countries), and 1,752,932 from Saudi Arabia: www.saudiembassy.net/latest_news/news10271201.aspx (accessed March 15, 2014).

PROOF

C:/ITOOLS/WMS/CUP-NEW/6651872/WORKINGFOLDER/HAJJ/9781107030510C11.3D 217 [213–230] 8.9.2015 11:53AM

rest of the year, they number 11 million, 1 million of whom choose to do so in Ramadan.[9] The numbers are growing – 2013 saw a reduction by one million because of health concerns, as Valeska Huber discusses in Chapter 9 in this volume – but the overall percentage of worldwide Muslims remains tiny. These figures are often cited as a reflection of the uniqueness of the Hajj, but figures for Hindu pilgrimage sites, for instance, far exceed Hajj ones.[10] Indeed, even Karbala – the site of the martyrdom of the prophet Muhammad's grandson, Husayn – attracts up to two million pilgrims on a single day.[11] Such visits are properly not a pilgrimage but a "visit" (*ziyāra*).[12]

Many Muslims are unable to go on pilgrimage because of factors beyond their control, such as the quotas assigned to each country by the Saudi Hajj authorities (currently set at a maximum of 1,000 pilgrims per 1 million), the selection procedures of national Hajj committees, and of course capacity, notably infrastructure.[13] I mention attendance figures to draw attention to the following little-considered fact: the rituals of the Hajj (*manāsik*) are experienced first-hand by a very small percentage, and very small number, of Muslims (something that was no doubt truer still in pre-modern times).[14] This means that the majority of Muslims will learn about the rituals from teachers, hear about them in the mosque,

[9] Even from relatively wealthy Western countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom, only 12,000 and 25,000 pilgrims performed the Hajj, respectively: www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/11/09/12000-american-muslims-to_n_781230.html; www.theguardian.com/world/2010/nov/15/hajj-british-pilgrims-muslims (accessed March 15, 2014).

[10] http://www.arcworld.org/projects.asp?projectID=500 (accessed March 15, 2014).

[11] http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7197473.stm (accessed March 15, 2014).

[12] These include visits to Muhammad's grave in Medina, to those of his relatives and companions, buried in the Arabian Peninsula and elsewhere; to the tomb sites of biblical and Qur'anic prophets; and to the shrines and tomb complexes of revered Muslims all over the world. Jerusalem, as one of the three sacred precincts (together with Mecca and Medina), is also a ziyara destination. See *EI2*, s.v. Ziyāra; for a medieval guide, see, e.g., al-Harawī, *A Lonely Wayfarer's Guide to Pilgrimage*, tr. J. W. Meri (Princeton, NJ: Darwin Press, 2004).

[13] See R. R. Bianchi, *Guests of God: Pilgrimage and Politics in the Islamic World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

[14] As I have noted elsewhere, "most Muslims' actual experience of the Ḥajj is only through national discourses; sponsorship, regulation, and subsidy by governments politicizes those discourses and, in turn, the Ḥajj itself. The fact that Saudi Arabia has been in charge of the Ḥajj for the past century has meant that it, in particular, has wielded considerable political leverage." See S. M. Toorawa, "Pilgrimage," in Böwering (ed.), *Princeton Encyclopedia of Islamic Political Thought*, 417. See also Bianchi, *Guests of God*.

C:/ITOOLS/WMS/CUP-NEW/6651872/WORKINGFOLDER/HAJJ/9781107030510C11.3D 218 [213–230] 8.9.2015 11:53AM

or listen to returning pilgrims describe them; as of several years ago, they can watch them live on television.[15]

The rituals and ceremonies that take place before the pilgrims depart on the Hajj and after they return, on the other hand, have been experienced by almost every Muslim; this is because they come from every country, every community, every town, every village, as the Qurʾan seems to have anticipated:[16]

> We showed Abraham the site of the House, saying, 'Do not assign partners to Me. Purify My House for those who circle around it, those who stand to pray, and those who bow and prostrate themselves. Proclaim the pilgrimage to all people. They will come to you on foot and on every kind of swift mount, emerging from every deep mountain pass . . .' (Q Ḥajj 22:26–27)

Indeed, one would be very hard pressed to find a Muslim anywhere who does not know another who has gone on the Hajj, although this is no doubt more true in some (more affluent) parts of the world than others.

In many societies, neighbors and relatives will invite pilgrims for a meal, before departure and/or after return. Doing so before provides the hosts with an occasion to ask the pilgrims to pray on their behalf; doing so after honors the pilgrims, confers social prestige on the inviter, and gives the pilgrims the opportunity to give gifts acquired in Mecca and Medina. Pilgrims often bring back prayer rugs and rosaries (typically imported to Mecca, Turkey, and Central Asia), water from the Well of Zamzam in Mecca,[17] natural perfume oils from the region, and dates from Medina. The Zamzam water is highly prized and believed by many to have curative properties. Some people will keep dried dates till the following Ramadan and use them to break the daily fast. Pieces of the *kiswa* (the ornate black brocade covering on the Kaʿba), though of no religious or spiritual value, are also treasured. The kiswa is changed every year during the Hajj, when it is temporarily garbed (some say "veiled") in a plain white covering.[18]

[15] Broadcast at www. sauditv2.tv allows for "participation" in a way that was unthinkable as recently as twenty-five years ago.

[16] Qurʾan translations from *The Qur'an*, tr. M. A. S. Abdel Haleem (Oxford University Press, 2008).

[17] *EI2*, s.v. "Zamzam."

[18] See S. M. Toorawa, "Every Robe He Dons Becomes Him: Images of Clothing in the Islamic Tradition," *Parabola*, 19, 3 (1994): 23; W. C. Young, "The Kaba, Gender, and the Rites of Pilgrimage," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 25 (1993): 285–300.

PROOF

C:/ITOOLS/WMS/CUP-NEW/6651872/WORKINGFOLDER/HAJJ/9781107030510C11.3D 219 [213–230] 8.9.2015 11:53AM

RITUALS

Descriptions of the rites and rituals abound:[19] in legal and juridical texts,[20] pilgrimage manuals,[21] travel writing[22] (a genre, recent examples of which Michael Wolfe analyzes in Chapter 13 in this volume), in pious and spiritual reflections,[23] in autobiographical accounts,[24] and in scholarly literature.[25] Such works have been produced for well over a thousand years; and with the advent of the Internet, a formidable array of online resources is now also available, as Gary Bunt describes in Chapter 12 in this volume. I shall therefore confine my remarks here to an overview, and limit my use of Arabic terminology – in any case, the often intricate differences based on school of legal thought, rite, and custom preclude anything but a simplified account.

Preparation

When a person intends to go on the Hajj, she will start reciting the *talbiya*, the phrase "*Labbayk-Allahumma Labbayk*" ("At your service, God, we are here"), which she will intone repeatedly. She will start the lengthy application process. She must apply for a Hajj visa from the Saudi Arabian embassy, or for inclusion on a list administered by a national

[19] For a recent and beautifully illustrated account, see M. A. S. Abdel Haleem, "The Importance of Hajj: Spirit and Rituals," in V. Porter, with M. A. S. Abdel Haleem et al., *Hajj: Journey to the Heart of Islam* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 26–67.

[20] E.g. al-Shāfiʿī, *The Epistle on Legal Theory*, ed. and tr. Joseph E. Lowry (New York University Press, 2013), 295–297.

[21] E.g., Anonymous, *Manāsik al-ḥajj wa-l-ʿumra*; Saleh Ibn Fouzan Al-Fouzan [Ṣāliḥ Āl Fawzān], *How to Perform Hajj and Umrah*, tr. M. S. Al-Muharib (Kuwait: Islamic Translation Centre, 1992); R. al-Sirjānī, *al-Ḥajj wa-l-ʿumra: aḥkām wa-khibarāt* (Cairo: Sharikat Aqlām li-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzīʿ wa-l-Tarjamah, 2012).

[22] See, e.g., M. Wolfe, *One Thousand Roads to Mecca: Ten Centuries of Travelers Writing about the Muslim Pilgrimage* (New York: Grove Press, 2015). For a dated account, but with excellent photographs, charts, and maps, see M. L. al-Batanūnī, *al-Risāla al-Ḥijāziyya li-Walī al-Niʿam al-Ḥājj ʿAbbās Ḥilmī Bāshā al-Thānī Khadīw Miṣr*, 2nd ed. (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat al-Jamāliyya, 1329/1911).

[23] E.g., A. Shariati, *Hajj: Reflections on Its Rituals*, tr. L. Bakhtiar (Albuquerque, NM: ABJAD, 1992).

[24] E.g., K. Ellison, *My Country 'Tis of Thee: My Faith, My Family, Our Future* (New York: Gallery Books/Karen Hunter Publishing, 2014).

[25] Although dated, the following are still important: M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *Le pèlerinage à la Mekke* (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1923); M. Hamidullah, "Le Pèlerinage à la Mecque," in *Sources Orientales III: Les Pèlerinages* (Paris: Seuil, 1960), 89–138. The relevant articles in the *Encyclopedia of Islam* are indispensable, especially "Ḥadjdj" and "ʿUmra" in *EI*2. (See also D. F. Eickelman and J. Piscatori (eds.), *Muslim Travellers: Pilgrimage, Migration and the Religious Imagination* (London: Routledge, 1990).

C:/ITOOLS/WMS/CUP-NEW/6651872/WORKINGFOLDER/HAJJ/9781107030510C11.3D 220 [213–230] 8.9.2015 11:53AM

Hajj committee; equally important are the required vaccinations.[26] Year-round, ʿUmra pilgrims traveling by air take regularly scheduled flights to Jeddah or Medina, either directly or through other cities. In the Hajj season, the only Jeddah-bound option is flights operated by one's national carrier, all of which land at the impressive Hajj Terminal. Once the Hajj authorities have issued the visa, the pilgrim will again call or call on friends and relatives, this time to ask for forgiveness for any past offences. She will also settle any outstanding debts. The idea is to set out for Mecca having acquitted oneself of outstanding obligations and of any wrongdoing.

The Hajj can be costly. The 2014 price of a budget package offered by the US Hajj tour operator my family used in 2008 is $6,450 per person[27] – excluding standard per person transportation fees (*tanazzul*) for within Saudi Arabia, which are reimbursable if unused. Often this means one cannot afford to take one's children along. Tradition has it that parents should not worry about their children while they are away as God sends angels to look after them; the obligation on a person to perform the Hajj does not "activate" until puberty. If children do travel, schools have to be alerted: we did as much in 2008, since our daughters were going to miss school. If one is employed, one needs to request time off.

Before all these admittedly important logistics are attended to, one has to have made the intention to go on Hajj. It may be objected that one would not apply for a visa unless one intended to go. But many – lay folk and religious scholars alike – would insist that one make the *niyya*, that is, state (aloud or in one's heart) one's genuine desire to go on pilgrimage.[28] This differs from, say, applying for a visa in case one later decides to go. The prophet Muhammad is reported to have said, "Surely actions are judged by their intentions."[29] And as Amina Steinfels observes:[30]

> At their most basic, rituals are pure actions without any function beyond their definition as obligatory acts of worship. Intention (*niyya*) plays the role of demarcating and categorizing the performance of such actions as the fulfillment of a specific ritual requirement. *Niyya* also signifies the performer's conscious attention

[26] See Chapter 9 in this volume.
[27] www.caravanhajj.com/hajj-packages/ (accessed March 15, 2014)
[28] See P. R. Powers, *Intent in Islamic Law: Motive and Meaning in Medieval Sunnī* Fiqh (Leiden: Brill, 2006), chs. 2 and 3.
[29] Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol. 1, bk. 2, no. 52, reported by ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb.
[30] A. Steinfels, "Ritual," in J. Elias (ed.), *Key Themes for the Study of Islam* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2010), 308.

C:/ITOOLS/WMS/CUP-NEW/6651872/WORKINGFOLDER/HAJJ/9781107030510C11.3D 221 [213–230] 8.9.2015 11:53AM

on ritual at hand. Without such an accompanying *niyya* no performance of the basic rituals counts, that is the Muslim's obligation has not been met."

The pilgrim can therefore be thought of as being "on the Hajj" the moment he has articulated the intention. If an aspiring pilgrim dies even before leaving his home, the Hajj "counts" because of the intention, of which God is inevitably aware.[31] Ritually speaking,[32] however, the pilgrim is on the Hajj from the moment she performs the ritual washing and ritual prayer that immediately precede the putting on/entering of the Hajj clothing, puts on that clothing, and ritually recites the talbiya. Women may wear anything simple and loose fitting that covers the whole body, including the hair, but not the hands and feet, nor the face, covering which is disallowed during the five days of the Hajj. Men put on two pieces of unsewn cloth and slippers (also unsewn, usually plastic slippers). One piece is wrapped around the lower torso often held in place with an unsewn belt, the other covers the upper torso. This garb – both the women's and the men's – is known as the *iḥrām*, although many mistakenly think only the men's clothing is so-called. The confusion arises from the fact that the ritual state bears the same name as the ritual garb. Ihram is a verbal noun, meaning "making sacred/forbidden," or "sacralization." When the pilgrim is described as being "in ihram" (called in Arabic a *muḥrim*) reference is being made to this state of sacralization.[33]

Performance

The pilgrim must be in ihram before she crosses certain prescribed points, known as a *mīqāt* ("appointed place"), strategically located along seventh-century pilgrimage routes. The prophet Muhammad reportedly set five of these points; a sixth was added later.[34] When the trip to Mecca is made by sea or over land, respecting the miqat is easy. One arrives at the designated point, halts, performs the ritual prayer of sacralization, and puts on/enters ihram. Air travel has complicated matters. Most pilgrims will be able to put on/enter ihram in Jeddah, where all Hajj flights land

[31] Islamic law stipulates "awareness and intention as a necessary component for the valid performance of a ritual. This validity cannot be judged by an external human audience but is only known to the actor and to God." Steinfels, "Ritual," 308.

[32] I do not take up the question of what constitutes a ritual. See E. Zeusse, "Ritual," in L. Jones (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed. (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), vol. 11, 7833–7848.

[33] *EI2*, s.v. "Iḥrām."

[34] *EI2*, s.v. "Mīqāt."

PROOF

C:/ITOOLS/WMS/CUP-NEW/6651872/WORKINGFOLDER/HAJJ/9781107030510C11.3D 222 [213–230] 8.9.2015 11:53AM

(except for those routed through Medina first[35]). But some will cross the miqat in the air (at 800 kmh) because of their flight path: those pilgrims will put on/enter ihram when they leave their homes for the airport, while still thousands of miles away. When this is the case, the pilgrims' first leg of the Hajj is sometimes in a procession of family, friends, and well wishers, all accompanying them to the airport. In 1994, because my Jeddah-bound Air Mauritius Hajj flight was going to cross the miqat designated for pilgrims coming from the south, we put on/entered ihram at home. In 2004, because our Hajj group was going to Medina (via Amman) before Mecca, we did not put on/enter ihram until our bus crossed the designated miqat for pilgrims journeying from Medina to Mecca.

Being in ihram is demanding, not only because for men it can be quite uncomfortable but because of the strict regulations: no cutting of nails or removal of hair, no use of perfume or scented products, no sexual activity, no arguing, no hunting (i.e., no killing of any living thing). Violation of any of these must be followed by expiation, through animal sacrifice, called *dam* ("lit. blood"). The pilgrim must also be exceptionally attentive to the regular Islamic prescriptions and proscriptions: performing the ritual prayers on time, avoiding reprehensible behavior, engaging only in licit activities, eating only licit food, and so on.

There are juridical differences that govern the precise way in which one commences one's performance of the Hajj. Suffice here to say that if a pilgrim arrives in Mecca several days before the Hajj, she is likely to perform the ʿUmra (which takes a few hours), revert to a non-sacralized state, and then don the ihram again for the Hajj proper. The ʿUmra consists of (1) donning/entering ihram, (2) circumambulating the Kaʿba seven times (*ṭawāf*),[36] (3) briskly walking between the two hillocks of al-Ṣafā and al-Marwa (*saʿy*),[37] and (4) desacralizing by cutting the hair (*ḥalq*). This all takes place within the walls of the Grand Mosque or *Ḥaram*. The Hajj includes all those rituals but also involves travel away from Mecca. The Hajj always takes five days, from the eighth through the twelfth of Dhū al-Ḥijja (literally, "the (month of the) pilgrimage"). If the pilgrim arrives on the seventh or eighth, she will perform the ʿUmra and remain in the same ihram for the Hajj (see the Chart below).

On the eighth of Dhū al-Ḥijja, pilgrims recite the talbiya and set out for the town of Mina, five miles from Mecca, which they must reach before

[35] For infrastructural reasons, half the pilgrims visit Medina before Mecca.
[36] *EI2*, s.v. "Ṭawāf," *EI3*, s.v. "Circumambulation."
[37] *EI2*, s.v. "Saʿy."

C:/ITOOLS/WMS/CUP-NEW/6651872/WORKINGFOLDER/HAJJ/9781107030510C11.3D 223 [213–230] 8.9.2015 11:53AM

Ritual	ʻUmra	Ḥajj	Dhu'l Hijjah date
Sacralization point (*mīqāt*)			
Enter state and garb of sacralization (*iḥrām*)	√	√	
→ ***Mecca***			
Circumambulation of the Kaʻba (*ṭawāf*)	√		
Walk between mounts of al-Ṣafā and Marwa (*saʻy*)	√		
	N/A	√	→ ***Mina*** *for the night* *8*
	N/A	√	→ "Standing" on the ***Plain of ʻArafāt*** (*wuqūf ʻArafa*) *9*
	N/A	√	→ "Halting" at ***Muzdalifa*** (*wuqūf Muzdalifa*)
	N/A	√	→ ***Minā for 3 days*** *10* Cast stones (*ramy*)
	N/A	√	Sacrificing an animal (*ḍaḥiyya*)
Cutting hair	√	√	
		√	→ ***Mecca*** Circumambulation (*ṭawāf al-ifāḍa*)
		√	Walk al-Ṣafā to al-Marwa (*saʻy*)
		√	→ ***Mina*** *11* Cast stones (*ramy*)
	N/A	√	→ ***Mecca*** *12* Circumambulation of the Kaʻba (*ṭawāf al-widāʻ*)

The Rituals of the Hajj and the ʻUmra

the post-zenith prayer and where they will spend the night. When I performed the Hajj in 1994, we were eighteen adults in a medium-sized, ill-kept rented apartment with only one bathroom, but many hundreds of thousands were either in makeshift tents or out in the open. By the time we went in 2008, the Hajj authorities had transformed Mina entirely into a city of tents. The only buildings were administrative (Hajj offices, information booths, police posts), medical (pharmacies, clinics, hospitals), restaurants, and facilities (toilets, bathrooms). Much is made of the fact that the Hajj generally is an "equalizer": everyone, irrespective of wealth or status or piousness, wears the same outfit – but this is only true of men, as women dress differently depending on their place of origin. And it is only true during the five days of the Hajj; the remaining time in Mecca and

PROOF

C:/ITOOLS/WMS/CUP-NEW/6651872/WORKINGFOLDER/HAJJ/9781107030510C11.3D 224 [213–230] 8.9.2015 11:53AM

Medina, wealth and status is evident in different ways. For example, in Mina, now consisting exclusively of accommodation in "national" tents, the American and European tents are air-conditioned and closest to facilities, whereas African and South Asian ones are distant. The placement is determined by the Hajj authorities, but is evidently a function of what money can buy. This is not to deny the fact that there is a profoundly egalitarian feeling that arises from being in austere clothing, engaging in the same rituals as everyone else, pilgrims from all over the world sharing a common purpose; this is what so struck Malcolm X.[38]

The next day, the ninth of Dhū al-Ḥijja, all pilgrims depart for the Plain of ʿArafat (or ʿArafa) after sunrise.[39] A few hundred thousand will choose to walk the nine miles, just as they walked the five miles from Mecca to Mina, and will continue to walk for the remainder to the Hajj. Men may not cover their heads when in ihram, but they may be beneath cover, such as a parasol or a covered walkway. One must arrive at ʿArafat in the daytime, remain within its prescribed boundaries (all clearly marked), and not leave till after sunset. The prophet Muhammad is reported to have said, "The ten days of the month of Dhū al-Ḥijja are the best days in the sight of God." When someone asked if they are better than ten days of pious struggle, he replied that they are and that "there is no better day in the sight of God than the Day of ʿArafa." He continued:[40]

> On this day God, the Almighty and Exalted, descends to the nearest heaven, proud of His worshippers on Earth, and says to those in Heaven, "Look at My servants. They have come from far and near, hair disheveled and faces covered in dust, to seek My mercy, even though they have not seen My punishment." Far more people are freed from Hellfire on the Day of ʿArafat than on any other day.

Consequently (and even though three days of ritual remain), pilgrims are at their most fervent at ʿArafat, without a doubt the point regarded as the apotheosis of the Hajj. Indeed, if there is one stretch during the entire Hajj when everyone is on equal footing, it is at ʿArafat and Muzdalifa. In both places, there is very little that distinguishes the different groups of pilgrims. At ʿArafat, pilgrims supplicate to God for forgiveness from all prior sins and transgressions and for the ultimate and promised reward, Paradise. It is said that an "accepted" Hajj (by God, that is) means that one leaves Mecca as sinless as a newborn child. Supplication for forgiveness for oneself and

[38] Malcolm X, with the assistance of A. Haley, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (New York: Grove Press, 1965), ch. 17.
[39] *EI2*, s.v. "ʿArafa," *EI3*, s.v. "ʿArafāt."
[40] *Fiqh al-Sunna*, vol. 5, Fiqh 5.094A.

C:/ITOOLS/WMS/CUP-NEW/6651872/WORKINGFOLDER/HAJJ/9781107030510C11.3D 225 [213–230] 8.9.2015 11:53AM

others is enjoined throughout the pilgrimage. Every place and every stage has one or more set or recommended supplications or prayers to be recited by the pilgrim.[41] The pilgrim may consult these in Hajj manuals or, for the texts that need to be recited in crowded circumstances, the pilgrim can repeat the phrases shouted out by the Hajj group leader or his appointee.[42]

At ʿArafat, pilgrims combine the post-zenith and afternoon ritual prayers, rather than performing them at discrete times. At Muzdalifa, where they will head next, the sunset and nighttime prayers will be combined too. These features of the Hajj are all based on Muhammad's example. It is he who established how the ʿUmra and Hajj are to be performed, and this has evidently continued unchanged since. The Qurʾan is not silent on the rituals, but it is not very specific. Here is the Qurʾanic passage in which ʿArafat and Muzdalifa are mentioned:

> The pilgrimage takes place during the prescribed months. There should be no indecent speech, misbehavior, or quarreling for anyone undertaking the pilgrimage – whatever good you do, God is well aware of it. Provide well for yourselves: the best provision is to be mindful of God – always be mindful of Me, you who have understanding – but it is no offence to seek some bounty from your Lord. When you surge down from ʿArafāt, remember God at the sacred place [*al-mashʿar al-ḥarām*]. (Q Baqara 2:198)

The interpretation of "sacred place" as Muzdalifa is based entirely on Muhammad's practice. Like ʿArafat, it is within certain prescribed boundaries that may not be breached. At Muzdalifa, pilgrims comb the area for pebble-sized stones. Each will need forty-nine pebbles, seven to cast upon arrival in Mina, and then twenty-one each of the next two days. They leave Muzdalifa after performing the pre-dawn prayer, and before sunrise. Those who came by bus typically continue by bus, but this can be more strenuous and uncomfortable than walking. In 1994, we were delayed leaving ʿArafat because one member of our group was unwell. It took us six hours to drive five miles; and it took us fourteen hours to go the next five miles. With that memory still vivid in 2008, I suggested to my family that we walk from Muzdalifa to Mina; we did so along with a quarter of a million other pilgrims. It only took us two and a half hours. Paradoxically, this can take less time and be less tiring than going by bus.

Upon return to Mina on the tenth of Dhū al-Ḥijja, pilgrims may first regain their tents and then proceed to cast stones at the last of the three columns, or proceed directly to the stoning (*ramy*). This is the first of four

[41] Anonymous, *Manāsik al-ḥajj wa-l-ʿumra*.
[42] *EI2*, s.v. "Muṭawwif."

PROOF

C:/ITOOLS/WMS/CUP-NEW/6651872/WORKINGFOLDER/HAJJ/9781107030510C11.3D 226 [213–230] 8.9.2015 11:53AM

FIGURE 14 Jamarat (pillars representing Satan) in Mina, ca. 1911

FIGURE 15 Aerial view of the new Jamarat, 2009

C:/ITOOLS/WMS/CUP-NEW/6651872/WORKINGFOLDER/HAJJ/9781107030510C11.3D 227 [213–230] 8.9.2015 11:53AM

rituals of de-sacralization. The pilgrim will also sacrifice an animal and cut or shave his or her hair in Mina. The casting of stones and the sacrificing of an animal can be – and often is – done by proxy, in both cases because of the crush of people. The sacrifice of the animal is also done the same day by Muslims all over the world on the tenth of Dhū al-Ḥijja, observed by non-pilgrims as the *ʿĪd al-Aḍḥā*, or the Feast of Sacrifice. Once the hair has been cut, the prohibitions of the ihram are lifted, except for sexual intercourse: that is only permitted after the pilgrim has performed the circumambulation (*ṭawāf*) of the Kaʿba and the brisk walk between the two hillocks of al-Ṣafā and al-Marwa (*saʿy*), that very same day, after having showered and put on regular clothing. The talbiya may now no longer be recited. This circumambulation of the Kaʿba as part of the Hajj ritual is therefore not done in ihram, unlike in the ʿUmra (see the preceding chart). In both cases, one must begin in line with the Black Stone, and walk counter clockwise seven times. Men are supposed to do the first three rounds at a brisk pace and the next four at a leisurely pace. Because of the crowd, the distance covered can vary between several hundred meters if one is close to the Kaʿba and ten kilometers if one is circumambulating in the outer "ring." The physically impaired used to be carried on palanquins; now they use wheelchairs. I have seen adult men carry their infirm parents on their backs; and parents routinely carry their children.

The pilgrim then does the brisk walk back and forth between al-Ṣafā, where one starts, and al-Marwa, where one ends up on the seventh crossing, a total distance of just under three kilometers. It is a straight line between the two, so here the infirm have the option of accomplishing it in wheelchairs. The entrance to the Well of Zamzam is nearby, and pilgrims flock to visit it. In 1972, I went down wide a staircase and was able to open a tap that was visibly piped into the well; in 1994, the well was behind glass, and the water was being mixed with plain water and pumped to taps located on the outside walls of the mosque. Because of the oppressive heat, the Hajj authorities also place large containers of water mixed with Zamzam every hundred feet or so in the Mosque. In 2008, access to the Well was blocked, but the mixed water was widely available throughout the mosque.

The pilgrims then return to Mina, where they stay two more days, casting stones at all three columns, seven on each, thus twenty-one on the eleventh of Dhū al-Ḥijja and twenty-one on the twelfth. Then, before sunset on the twelfth, they return to Mecca for the Farewell Circumambulation. Those who were in Medina before Mecca next go to Jeddah where they will wait for their flights in the Hajj Terminal; that wait can last up to 24 hours.

PROOF

C:/ITOOLS/WMS/CUP-NEW/6651872/WORKINGFOLDER/HAJJ/9781107030510C11.3D 228 [213–230] 8.9.2015 11:53AM

The others will go to Medina to pay respects at the tomb of the Prophet Muhammad. A ziyara to Medina is not part of the Hajj proper, but it forms an inseparable part of almost everyone's journey. Some stay a short time, others several days. Some are attracted by the possibility of visits to historical sites, including battlefields, cemeteries, and early mosques; others try to perform forty consecutive ritual prayers in Medina, said by some to guarantee Paradise, something also guaranteed to those who are able to set foot in a particular part of the mosque designated "a piece of Paradise." Because outbound Hajj flights from Jeddah all carry people back home, very few pilgrims can go elsewhere; in fact, it is disapproved to do so. One should intend to go from one's home to Mecca and return to one's home, with no side trips along the way, Medina being the one exception.

Pilgrims acquire considerable social standing upon their return home. In most communities and societies, they also acquire a special designation, *ḥājj* for men and *ḥājja* for women (or other equivalent local terms meaning "pilgrim"). In some communities, the distinction is on public display: men, clean-shaven prior to the Hajj, will afterward sport beards; women, head uncovered or face unveiled, will adopt the head covering or face veil. In some places, hajjis will now (be expected to) stand in the first row of worshippers when offering congregational prayers in the mosque.

MEANING

The Qurʾan may enjoin able believers to perform the Hajj, but it provides very little guidance about how to accomplish it, confining itself to general regulations about movement and sacralization. For the rituals, Muslims have relied on Muhammad's one Hajj in 632 CE. Because the majority of the rituals that now form part of the Islamic pilgrimage were part of earlier pagan pilgrimage, modern scholars have typically tended to focus on continuity/adaptation and have ignored what these rituals might mean to Muslims.[43] One can show, for example, that circumambulating the Kaʿba is a vestige of a similar pre-Islamic practice, when the structure housed personal and tribal idols. Pilgrims care little about this. They focus instead on the fact that it is the "House of God," first built by the Prophet Adam, then periodically rebuilt as a shrine to the one true God. The Qurʾan makes much of Abraham and his son Ishmael rebuilding the structure. Indeed, if anything the pre-Islamic and pagan backdrop is

[43] Cf. Shariati, *Hajj*, 158: "You must know what you are doing and why. Do not become lost in the external forms of these rituals. Do not neglect meaning. These are all allusions."

C:/ITOOLS/WMS/CUP-NEW/6651872/WORKINGFOLDER/HAJJ/9781107030510C11.3D 229 [213–230] 8.9.2015 11:53AM

integral to the larger narrative.[44] And the history stretches back further, as the earthly Kaʿba is said to be located directly beneath an equivalent celestial one, circumambulated by angels before Earth was created.

Modern scholarly analyses of the rituals of the Hajj are very few in number,[45] part of a larger inattention to study of ritual and rituals in Islamic Studies generally,[46] and the view that the rituals have limited intrinsic meaning prevails. Marion Katz has faulted William Graham, for instance, for characterizing the Hajj as "an exercise in pure obedience to God devoid of any concept of ritual efficacy or mythic reenactment," as epitomizing semantic sparseness and exhibiting a resolutely "antimagical" quality, and for suggesting that it is nothing more than a "commemorative" ritual.[47] As Amina Steinfels puts it:[48]

> Muslims may often not perform their prayers, or fast, or go on pilgrimage; they may question, debate, replace, or modify these obligations; they may mock those who perform them assiduously; they may spend much more energy on alternative ritual activities. But, in general, *Muslims have been in agreement that these are Islamic practices with enormous symbolic value for the definition of what it means to be Muslim*. [emphasis added][49]

For me, a meaningful way – in both senses of the expression – of thinking about the Hajj (and ʿUmra) is "return."[50] Tradition has it that Adam and Eve were reunited, returned to one another, at ʿArafat. Muslims associate the Mount of Mercy on the Plain of ʿArafat with God forgiving Adam and Eve, but they also associate it with the Prophet Muhammad's return there to give his last sermon. And many Muslims hold – although there is little textual support – that Judgment Day will

[44] "The Abrahamic vision of the Kaʿba created a means of discerning an orthodox origin buried in the midst of pagan malpractices." *EI2*, s.v. Kaʿba.

[45] But see B. Wheeler, *Mecca and Eden: Ritual, Relics and Territory in Islam* (University of Chicago Press, 2006); M. H. Katz, "The Hajj and the Study of Islamic Ritual," *Studia Islamica*, 98/99 (2004): 95–129; J. E. Campo, "Authority, Ritual and Spatial Order in Islam: The Pilgrimage to Mecca," *Journal of Ritual Studies*, 5 (1991): 65–91.

[46] On this, see especially Steinfels, "Ritual," and Katz, "The Hajj."

[47] Katz, "The Hajj"; W. Graham, "Islam in the Mirror of Ritual," in R. G. Hovanissian and S. Vryonis, Jr. (eds.), *Islam's Understanding of Itself* (Malibu: Undena Publications, 1983), 53–71.

[48] Steinfels, "Ritual," 305.

[49] Cf. Powers, who argues that "actions governed by Islamic ritual law are presented as valuable and moral in and of themselves, not (just) as symbolic surfaces, signifiers, or metaphors." P. R. Powers, "Interiors, Intentions and the 'Spirituality' of Islamic Ritual Practice," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 72, 2 (2004): 454.

[50] See S. M. Toorawa, "Eid and the Imagery of Return," *Le Mauricien*, September 19, 2009, 7.

C:/ITOOLS/WMS/CUP-NEW/6651872/WORKINGFOLDER/HAJJ/9781107030510C11.3D 230 [213–230] 8.9.2015 11:53AM

take place at ʿArafat, that the "standing" during the Hajj, in unsewn white cloth, just like the plain white cloth in which dead bodies are wrapped, is a rehearsal of what is to come. ʿArafat thus represents both the beginning of the end, and the advent of return. As the Qurʾan has believers say, "We belong to God and to Him we shall return" (Q Baqara 2:156).

In the context of Abraham, return is critical. His is the return of Prophecy to the site of divine attention, Mecca. He builds the Kaʿba as a monument to the One God and another return is reenacted. When he is asked to sacrifice his son, Satan is said to have come first to him, then to Hagar, and then to Ishmael, and to have tried to deter them. Three times he tried and three times he was cast away. For pilgrims they are returning to the same spot to reenact that earlier rejection of Satan. When Abraham carries through, his son is returned to him. When pilgrims sacrifice the animals in Mina, they do not have in mind pre-Islamic, pagan rituals of sacrifice – they are thinking of Abraham.[51] The sacrificial animals assume an active role in the eschatological drama of salvation.[52] The key, however, is always Muhammad. Every ritual reenactment is ultimately the reenactment of a ritual in which Muhammad engaged, whatever its origin(s) may be, whatever its meaning(s) may be. He performed one Hajj, so Muslims must perform one Hajj. He did so in a state of ihram, so Muslims do so too. He abided by regulations, limits, and boundaries, so Muslims must too. He traveled on a set route, at set times, so Muslims do too. One need not look any further than Muhammad, who returned to Mecca to destroy the idols housed in the Kaʿba, thus returning it to right religion. He left Mecca after his one and only Hajj, never to return, but having ensured that every believer would try to return, or commemorate the return on the Feast of Sacrifice:

> Complete the pilgrimages, major and minor, for the sake of God. If you are prevented [from doing so], then [send] whatever offering for sacrifice you can afford. (Q Baqara 2:196)

[51] For a discussion of Abrahamic and Adamic paradigms, see Katz, "The Hajj," 199 ff. Cf. Shariati, *Hajj*, 184: "[God] accepts the slaughter of a sheep as a sacrifice from you. The slaughtering of a sheep instead of Ishmael is a sacrifice. The slaughter of a sheep as a sheep is butchery."

[52] Katz, "The Hajj," 102.

PROOF