

ENGLISH

FREE
BOOK

Haji

The Islamic

Hajj

The Islamic
Pilgrimage

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

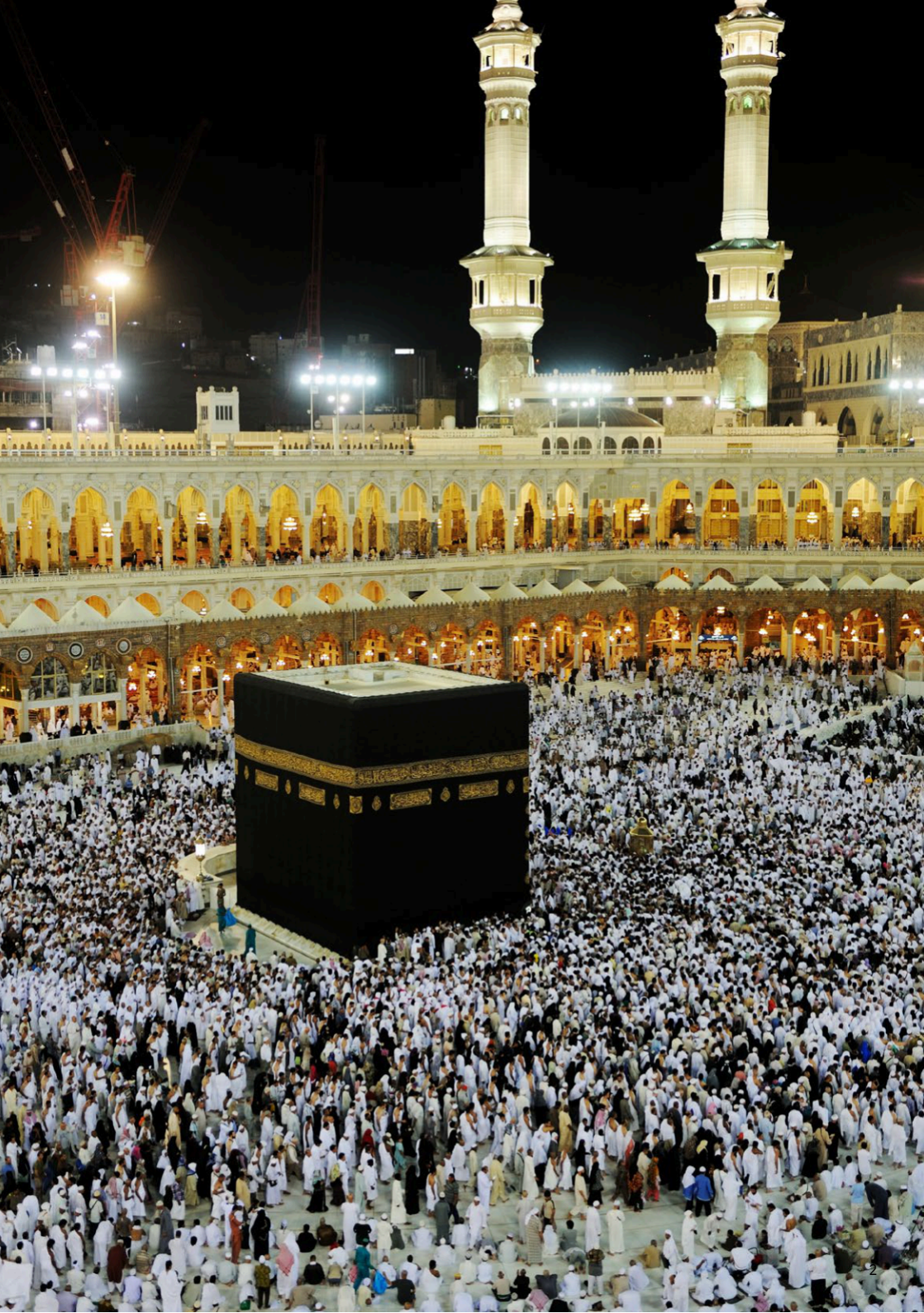
One out of every four people on Earth, or some 1.9 billion, identify as being Muslim. Around 77 percent of whom live outside the Middle East.

One quarter of humanity share a single aspiration; to complete, at least once in their lifetime, the journey called *Hajj*. If a Muslim has the physical and financial ability, Allah has made the pilgrimage to Makkah obligatory, once in his or her life.

Hajj is the 5th and final pillar of Islam, after the declaration of faith, the prayer, fasting and giving alms, and gives rise to more than 2 million Muslims visiting the holy city each year to complete this obligation.

Hajj is a spiritual journey towards Allah, in which Muslims leave behind everything related to material life and change the habits that they have become accustomed to. During the five-day Hajj, believers seek to become closer to Allah, ask forgiveness for their sins, and renew their spiritual commitment.







How did it start?

The history of Prophet *Ibrahim* (Abraham) is detailed within Islamic literature; the challenges and difficulties he faced from his youth, his discussions with his father the idol-maker, his prophethood, and his individual tests of patience are all clearly conveyed to us.

The Noble Qur'an tells us that the Prophet Ibrahim was given the task of leading mankind:

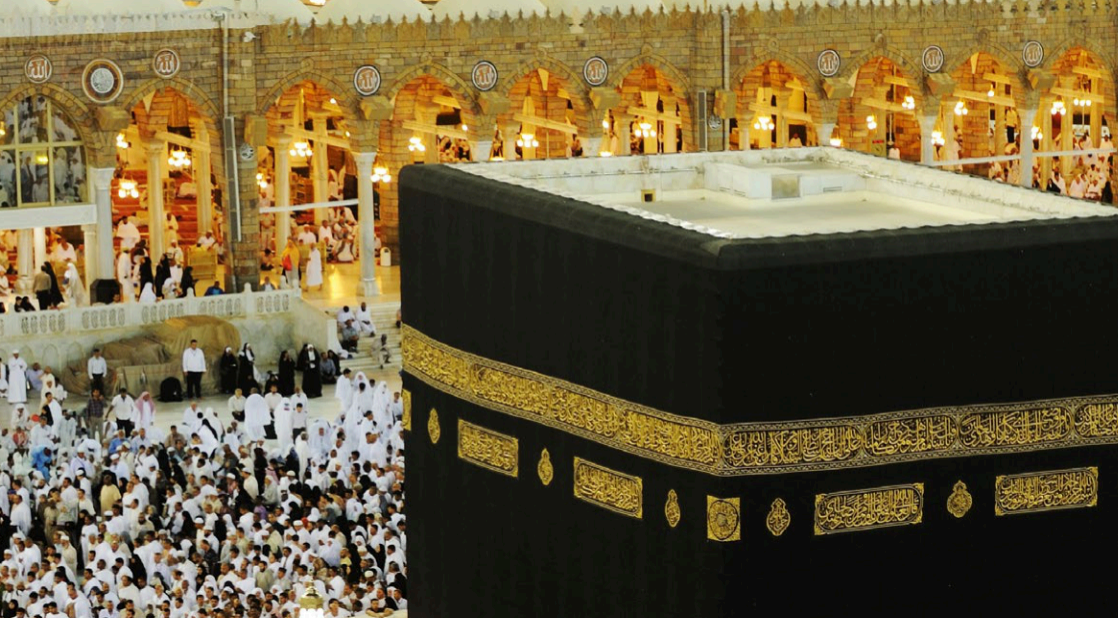
"And (remember) when the Lord of Ibrahim [Allah] tried him with (certain) commands, which he fulfilled. He (Allah) said (to him), 'Verily, I am going to make you an Imam (a leader) for mankind (to follow you)'"

(Qur'an 2:124)



*The Noble
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Ibrahim and Sarah were unable to have any children, so he married *Haajar* (Hagar), who bore him *Ismail* (Ishmael). This part of the life of Ibrahim and what follows it has become central to the Hajj. Ibrahim was commanded by Allah to leave Haajar and Ismail in the valley of Makkah, a place without shade, sustenance or people. Understanding the nature of the test, both Ibrahim and Haajar bore out the days with patience.



Haajar and Ismail

When Ismail was a baby, Prophet Ibrahim was ordered to go to Makkah. When he reached Makkah, he was commanded by Allah to leave his wife, Haajar, and his first-born son Ismail, in this barren, rocky, uninhabited valley.

Soon Haajar's meager provisions of dates and water were exhausted and both mother and child became thirsty. Seeing the suffering of her son, Haajar became desperate to find water. She ran to the hill of a mountain called *Safa* but found nothing. She then ran to the hill of *Marwah*, but again she was disappointed. Seven times she ran between the two hills. Suddenly, close to where Ismail lay, water sprang from the earth by the command of Allah.

This source of water was to become known as the well of *Zamzam*, and has flowed almost continuously to this day.

A tribe that was passing by the area came to Haajar and, upon understanding her situation, offered to stay in the location and give her company and security, in exchange for use of the water. The tribe was called the *Jurhum* tribe and was Arabic speaking. When Haajar agreed to their request they became the first settlers to the area and spread the language of Arabic throughout the region.



Zamzam: past and present

According to Arab historians, the well of Zamzam (except for a few periods when it was buried under sand) has been in use for around 4000 years.

The area around the spring, which was later converted to a well, became a resting place for caravans, and eventually grew into the trading city of Makkah, the birthplace of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

Millions of Muslims visit Makkah to perform *Umrah* and *Hajj* throughout the year (the lesser and greater pilgrimages); the peak season being the month of *Ramadan* and *Dhul-Hijjah*. Visitors cherish drinking Zamzam water during their visit and carry it back home to distribute to family and friends.

Electric pumps are now used to draw water from the well, replacing the ropes and buckets of the olden days. Zamzam water is filtered through a series of sand filters

and cartridge filters, and then sterilised by ultraviolet (UV) irradiation at these treatment plants before distribution to consumers.

The Zamzam Studies and Research Center (Z.S.R.C.), at the Saudi Geological Survey, has a duty to monitor water quality. Every week water samples are collected from the Zamzam well and the various outlets, including thermoses and water taps, and analysed, for chemical and microbial components, thus ensuring safety for the millions of people who drink the water each month.

The Story Behind the Dream

After many years, Ibrahim had a dream regarding his son Ismail. He came to Ismail and said:

"O my son! I have seen in a dream that I am slaughtering you as a sacrifice to Allah, so what do you think?"

They both realised that this was an order from Allah, and Ismail said without hesitation:

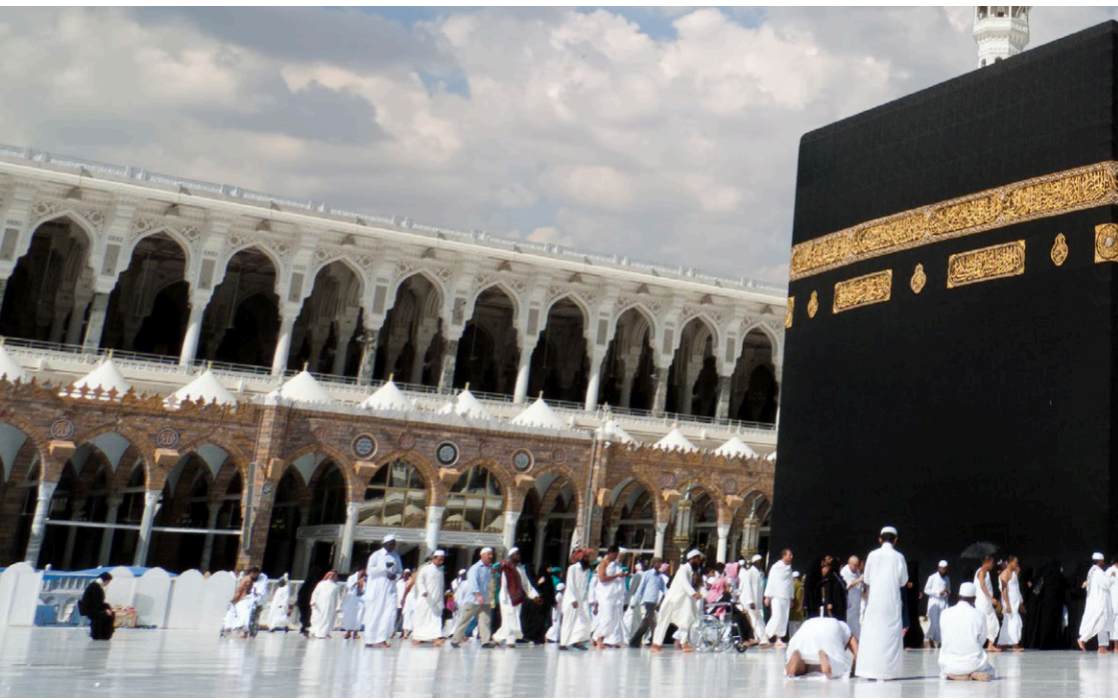
"Do what you are commanded, you shall find me very patient in-sha-Allah."

They had both submitted to the will of Allah. Ibrahim laid his son prostrate and put his forehead on the ground. At this very moment, Allah called him:

"O Ibrahim! You have fulfilled the dream! Thus do We reward the good doers!"

(taken from Qur'an 37:102-107)

It is said that a big sheep was sent down from heaven to be slaughtered instead of Ismail, which Ibrahim did.



THE SACRIFICE

This event is remembered every year by all Muslims, those performing Hajj and those at home celebrating *Eid al-Adha* (the Festival of the Sacrifice); it is common practice at this time for Muslims to slaughter a sacrificial animal in commemoration.

This rite is an attempt to achieve God-consciousness and as a reminder of Ibrahim's readiness to sacrifice his son in accordance with the wishes of Allah. It symbolises the Muslim's willingness to part with what is precious to him and to share worldly goods with those who are less fortunate.

It also serves as an offering of thanks to Allah.



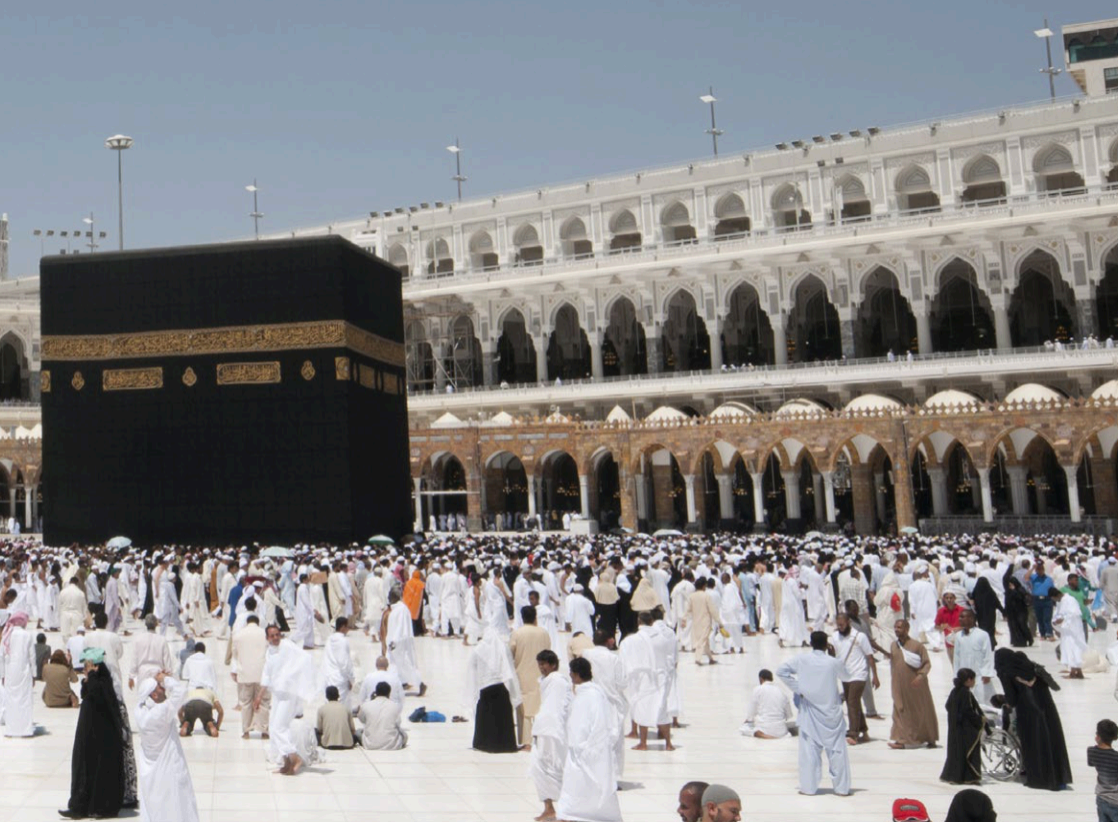


What is the *Ka'bah*?

In purely physical terms, the *Ka'bah* is a stone structure about 50 feet high, roughly cubical in shape, which sits in the middle of the vast courtyard of Makkah's Sacred Mosque, its four corners more or less aligned with the cardinal points of the compass.

In spiritual terms, the *Ka'bah* is neither a temple nor a shrine. It is rather the physical axis of the Muslim world, a focal point towards which Muslims all over the world direct themselves in prayer five times a day and around which pilgrims to Makkah must perform the circumambulation (*Tawaf*).

One of the elements seen in a typical mosque is the *mihrab*. It is a niche in the wall of a mosque that indicates the *qiblah*; that is, the direction of the *Ka'bah* in Makkah and hence the direction that Muslims must face when praying.



HOW THE KA'BAH WAS BUILT

Ibrahim and Ismail called people to worship Allah. At that time there was no place built for the worship of Allah. Ibrahim wished there could be such a place where people would be in peace, and concentrate solely for the worship of Allah. His wish was answered when Allah ordered him to build the Sacred House, the Ka'bah. Ibrahim said to Ismail:

"O Ismail, Allah has given me an order, will you help me execute it?" "Yes I will," Ismail said. "Allah has ordered me to build a house here", he said, pointing to a hillock higher than the land surrounding it. They went towards the place and started raising the foundations of the Ka'bah.

(Reported by Bukhari)

Ibrahim built the Ka'bah with stones, laid one upon the other, without mortar or plaster. He did not make a roof to it, nor did he make a door to it. He only left a space for the door at the eastern wall to indicate the face of the Ka'bah. Ibrahim was building while his son Ismail was handing the stones to him. Both of them went on building and going around the Ka'bah, saying:

"O our Lord accept this service from us."

(Qur'an 2:127)

THE BLACK STONE

At the south-east corner of the Ka'bah, about five feet above the ground, there is an oval black enclosure about 18 cm in diameter fixed in the wall. It is encased within a silver frame and is known as *Al-Hajar al-Aswad* or the Black Stone.

The Black Stone was sent down by Allah to this earth from Paradise and is believed to be the only original part of the Ka'bah still extant.

It was narrated that Ibn 'Abbaas said: The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said:

"The Black Stone came down from Paradise"

(Reported by at-Tirmidhi).

Just as the Ka'bah is an object to be respected but not worshipped, so too is the Black Stone. It is loved as the only remnant of Abraham's original building, and because the lips of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) touched it on his Farewell Pilgrimage; many pilgrims have done the same ever since. Kissing the Stone is a ritual that is performed only because the Prophet (peace be upon him) did it and not because any powers or symbolism are attached to the stone per se.

The misunderstanding that the Black Stone is an object of worship is not new. In the year 929CE the Carmathians, a sect based in eastern Arabia, ransacked Makkah and carried the Stone off with them in the hope of attracting pilgrims to their region rather than Makkah. Although they held the Stone more than 20 years the attempt failed, as Muslims attached little significance to the Black Stone itself.



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THE DOOR OF THE KA'BAH

On the eastern side, 222 cm from the ground, with a height of 318 cm, a width of 171 cm and a depth of 50 cm, a beautiful golden door can be found. It is unknown when a door was first installed to the Ka'bah, however there have been many doors throughout history, either made of gold, silver or wood, all including intricate carvings. The current door was a gift from King Khaled in 1979 and includes 280 kilogrammes of pure gold.

MAQAAM IBRAHIM

In order to complete the upper part of the walls of the Ka'bah, Ibrahim stood upon a large stone block that he moved along when each section was completed. When the Ka'bah was finished, the large stone block was left outside the Ka'bah, close to the eastern wall of the sanctuary. It became known as the Maqaam Ibrahim (the Station of Ibrahim).

Today, the Maqaam Ibrahim, with the stone shielded within the enclosure, is located across from the door of the Ka'bah. The boulder is about 2 x 3 feet. After completing the last circuit (in tawaf) of the Ka'bah, the pilgrims go to Maqaam Ibrahim and pray behind it.

THE KISWAH, THE COVER FOR THE KA'BAH

After the rise of Islam, it became customary to cover the Ka'bah with a cloth, the colour of which varied with the colour of the banner of the reigning caliph. Now it is draped with a black cloth, known as the *Kiswah* on which are embroidered verses from the Qur'an in thread made of pure gold. Renewed each year, the Kiswah was formerly made in Egypt and sent to Makkah with the annual Egyptian caravan. However, it is now woven in a special factory in Makkah.



The Shaibah family has been holding the position of the Ka'bah key-keeper since pre-Islamic times.

Over 80 craftsmen weave the more than 2,500 feet of material required on handlooms and embroider it with verses from the Qur'an in magnificent calligraphy. The finished cloth weighs almost 5,000 pounds. Each year, the Kiswah is renewed. During this event, the Ka'bah is also cleaned (one of the two times per year) and selected people are invited to enter the interior of the Ka'bah.

T H E K E Y S T O T H E K A ' B A H

The key to the Ka'bah does not change with the change of its door. During the time of King Khaled, the door was changed but the key remained unchanged. The *Shaibah* family has been holding the position of the Ka'bah key-keeper since pre-Islamic times. During the life of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), he confirmed their position as key-holders for the Ka'bah, and this is a matter of great honour. The eldest member of the family inherits this position, and all Muslim rulers have respected the Shaibah family as being the custodians of the Holy Ka'bah and its key.



The Sacred Mosque of Makkah

The Sacred Mosque of Makkah is the enclosure that wraps itself around the Ka'bah, and is the only mosque in the world in which the direction of prayer is inward, for this mosque is the physical centre point of Islam.

Makkah's Sacred Mosque has a long history of expansion and renovation.

Development of the area surrounding the Ka'bah and the Well of Zamzam dates from within a decade of the Prophet's death. The tremendous early growth in the number of Muslims, and thus in the number of pilgrims, led the second caliph, *'Umar ibn al-Khattab*, and his successor, *'Uthman ibn 'Affan*, to clear away a number of houses around the Ka'bah and to erect the first wall to enclose the site. During the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphates, the mosque was enlarged further and roofs, columns and minarets were added.

By the 10th century, the Sacred Mosque covered an area of some 27,000 square metres. In 1955, King Sa'ud, son and successor of King 'Abdul-'Aziz, ordered the first expansion of the Sacred Mosque in more than a thousand years. The mosque's area was increased five-fold, to 152,000 square metres (37 ½ acres), which gave it a capacity of half a million worshippers.

Subsequent projects in 1959 and 1981 brought further improvements to the mosque's structure and ornamentation - a network of basements and service tunnels, a vast cooling and ventilation system and further improvements to the air conditioning system. In 1988, King Fahd laid the cornerstone for what was, at the time, the largest expansion project in the history of the Sacred Mosque. The project's most visible feature is the extension of the mosque's western gallery into an area that had previously been an open esplanade.

This latest expansion project not only allowed for more worshippers but also to make them more comfortable: Specially developed heat-resistant marble tiles now cover the floor - an important consideration when daytime temperatures in the summer

consistently top 40 degrees Celsius. A new sound system and an internal radio network enabled worshippers in all parts of the mosque to participate in the congregational prayers. Zamzam water was cooled and sterilised with ultraviolet light for drinking. In 2011, King Abdullah laid the foundation stone for the Third Saudi Expansion for the Grand Mosque and the largest. The expansion project consisted of three parts: construction of new building; expansion and development of courtyards around the mosque, including walkways, tunnels and toilets; and development of service facilities for air-conditioning, electricity and drinking water. The expansion includes 1,470,000 square meters (15.8 million sq. ft.) and will accommodate 1.85 million worshippers.



THE FIRST CALL TO HAJJ

After Prophet Ibrahim had finished the construction of the Ka'bah, he stood and made the call for Hajj. Allah conveyed his call, which is now answered by millions of Muslims each year.

"And proclaim unto mankind the pilgrimage. They will come unto thee on foot and on every lean camel; they will come from every deep ravine."

(Qur'an 22:27)

And so, Hajj began with this first call of Ibrahim and was subsequently affirmed by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him); it is an obligation that will continue until the Last Day.

THE HAJJ OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD (PEACE BE UPON HIM)

In his 23-year mission as a prophet, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) performed only one Hajj and it was remarkable as being the last big public event where he met most Muslims of that time. It was a farewell and, consequently, he left them a will.

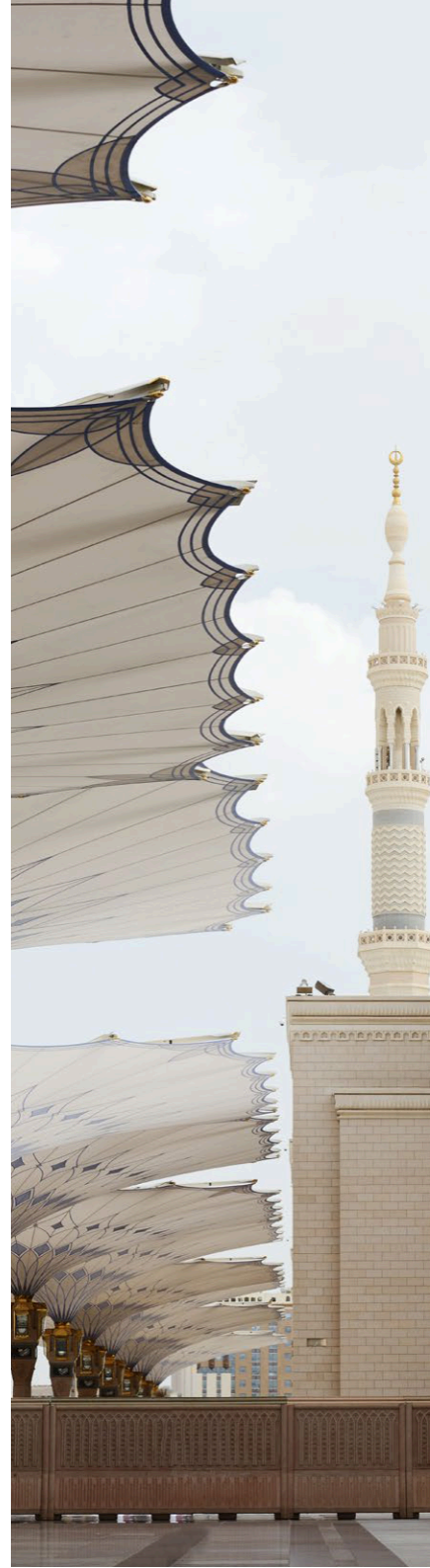
Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) knew that his mission was coming to an end and, as such, he left final words as succinct reminders for those present, and those who will come after them. Almost one hundred thousand Companions had gathered from all over to attend this remarkable event. He instructed those who were present to relay his words to those who were not, and they continue to be spread to us today.

In his 23-year mission as a prophet, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) performed only one Hajj



The Farewell Lessons

The farewell speeches delivered by the Prophet (peace be upon him) on those remarkable days covered in very simple words the most important aspects of human life and laid down the foundation for a value-based society; one where people respect the sanctity of life, ownership, lineage, and equality of others- advice that is beneficial for the whole of humanity.





He called upon husbands and wives to be God-conscious in their treatment of each other. He called upon criminals and supporters of violence to become conscious of Allah and correct themselves. Allah has made life sacred and made the taking of human life more serious than declaring a war against His sanctuary. He called upon those who took people's money by means of usury to stop and warned them against continuing. He called upon those who saw themselves as better than others due to colour, race, intelligence or any other privilege to realise that we are all made of clay, the handiwork of Allah, and it is only He Who can decide who is better.

THE DEATH OF THE PROPHET
(P E A C E B E U P O N H I M)

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) died in the city of *Madinah* a few months after completing Hajj, having left behind a clear example of how to perform Hajj, and the lessons and virtues contained within.

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The Journey to Makkah past and present

When pilgrims undertake the Hajj journey they follow in the footsteps of millions before them. In the contemporary era, more than 2 million believers arrive in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia by road, sea and air each year.

Until the 20th century most pilgrims travelled by either sea or land, converging on Makkah in three slow-moving waves: One - from the coast of East Africa and the horn of Africa, from the great triangle of the Indian subcontinent and from the East Indies - came on an armada of ships ploughing north and northwest across the blue expanse of the Indian Ocean, and on overloaded dhows sailing over the green waters of the Arabian Sea. Another - moving more slowly - came on foot, horse and camel in three great caravans; the first plodding southwards from Damascus with Hajjis from Lebanon, northern Iraq and Turkey. Another from Cairo, with the devout from Egypt and the whole North African area and, together with a unique cargo, the new covering for the Ka'bah. The third caravan crossed the Peninsula from Baghdad. This third wave, rippled eastward with painful slowness, trudging across the vast width of Central Africa, from what is now Mauritania, Senegal, Guinea and Sierra Leone through Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Chad, and the Sudan to ports on the Red Sea.



The caravans were highly organised. An official, called the *Amir al-Hajj*, was responsible for the safety of the pilgrims. The caravan was organised like a moving city, with the amir, a judge, two notaries, a secretary and an official charged with the care of the animals, another in charge of provisions, a saddler, a chef with a staff of cooks, and even an inspector of weights and measures. The caravans usually marched at night in order to avoid the heat of the sun, and pitched camp near wells where they could, posting sentries to guard against attack by bandits. Each watering place along the route was provided with a small fortress and a rest house. The pilgrims were grouped in the caravan according to their point of origin - all pilgrims from the same town travelled together - and maintained the same position in the line of march.

Beginning in 664AH/1266CE the Egyptian Caravan was accompanied by a mahmal, a glittering wooden container, magnificently decorated and holding an embellished copy of the Qur'an. The caravan carried the Kiswah destined to cover the Ka'bah.

Each wave had its particular character, but there were no hardships to compare with the sufferings of the third wave. These pilgrims traversed every sort of landscape - sandy deserts, rocky deserts, tropical jungle, fetid swamp and grassy steppe land, and could take years to arrive: One man, single when he left, arrived in Makkah with a wife and seven children. Another started out as a child and arrived as a man in his seventies. And nearly all of the poorer pilgrims had to do it in stages; setting out, stopping to work and save money, moving on stopping again.

In the 1950's all the traditional patterns of travel changed radically. Although the construction of the Hijaz Railway and the introduction of steamships and motorised transport had surpassed the camel caravan of earlier times, the big change came when someone had the idea of converting World War II bombers into passenger planes and chartering them for groups of pilgrims. The idea caught on and by the 1970's major Arab airlines were competing for contracts to fly pilgrims to and from Makkah.

There is still a fairly steady flow down the route from Damascus - because most pilgrims from Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine prefer to go by road - but from Turkey and even Damascus the majority now go by air.

The Rites of Hajj

The rites of Hajj - which are precisely those followed or approved by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) during his Pilgrimage - are few in number, simple in execution, but rich in meaning.

Before setting out, a pilgrim should redress all wrongs, pay all debts, plan to have enough funds for his own journey and for the maintenance of his family while he is away, and prepare himself for good conduct throughout Hajj.

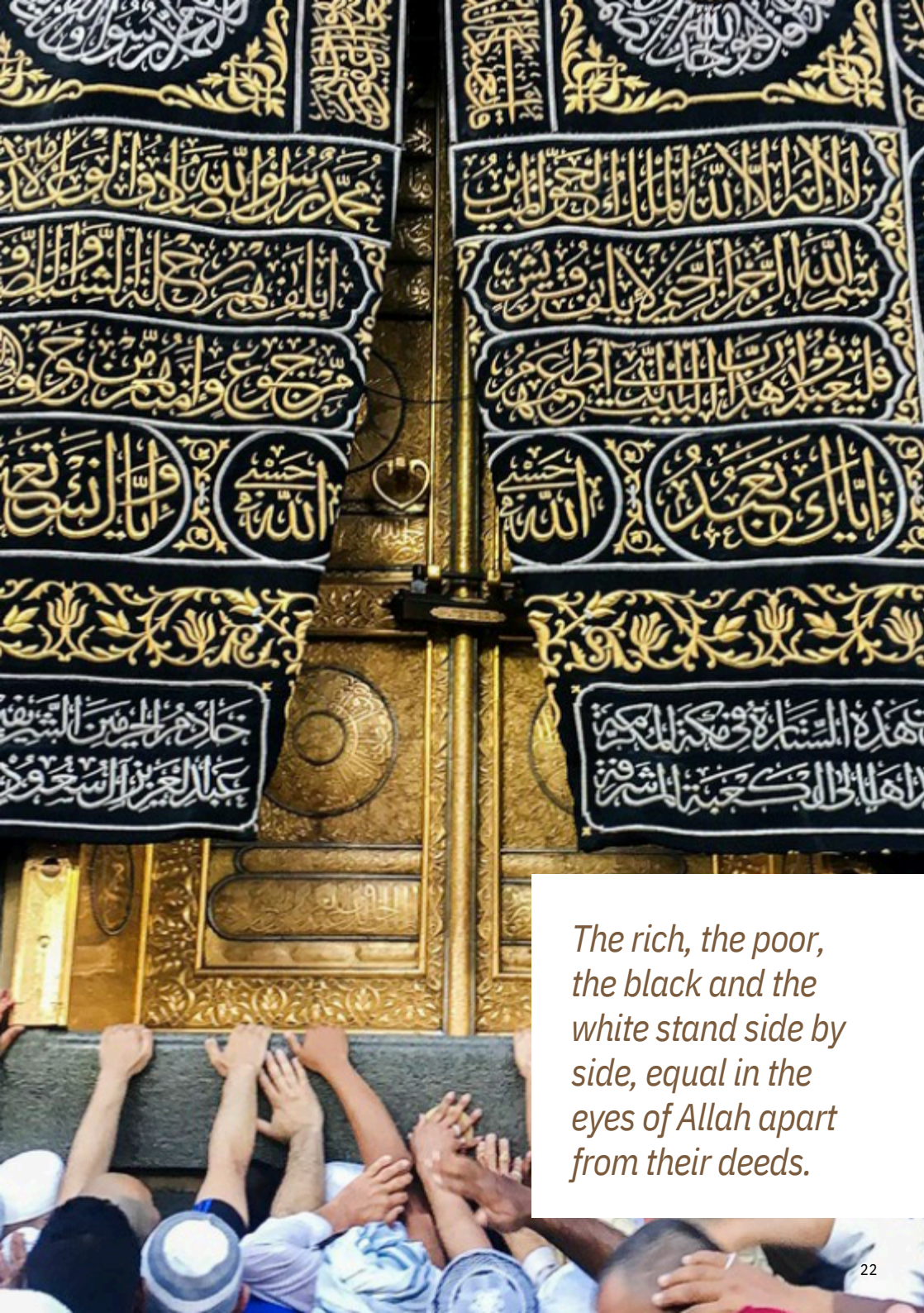
I H R A M

Hajj begins on the 8th of *Dhul-Hijjah*, the 12th month of the Islamic calendar. On this day the pilgrims enter the state of '*Ihram*' and declare their intention of performing Hajj. The men wear only two pieces of cloth, commonly white in colour, making them one people without any class or distinction. The rich, the poor, the black and the white stand side by side, equal in the eyes of Allah apart from their deeds.

The *Ihram* is not only the two pieces of cloth worn by male pilgrims, but also the state of consecration observed by the pilgrim during Hajj. The pilgrim's behaviour is modified and he is forbidden to do certain things such as hunt animals for food, cutting his hair or nails, wear perfume, quarrel, and have marital relations. This act is accompanied by the uttering of the *talbiyah*. This phrase, starting with, "*Here I am O Allah, here I am*", is a declaration of pilgrimage and is frequently repeated during the Hajj.

The melodious chants of the *talbiyah* ring out not only in Makkah but at other nearby sacred locations connected with the Hajj.





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TAWAF

“The Circling” of the Ka’bah is an act first done by Prophet Ibrahim and his son Ismail, and is followed by the Muslim community in totality. The Muslim completes seven circumambulations, praising Allah and asking for His forgiveness and help, as well as the bounties of this world and the next.

SA’Y

This walking between the two hills of *Safa* and *Marwah* re-enacts Haajar’s desperate search for water and food and reminds of her total trust in Allah throughout this trial. It commemorates the anguished love of motherhood, and is an act that we all complete in recognition of the efforts, sacrifices, and the faith of Haajar.

8

9TH OF DHUL-HIJJAH – MINA

The pilgrims congregate in the area of *Mina*, an effective encampment, used as a base from which the pilgrims will undertake their acts of worship. The pilgrims will spend the night in Mina, and the next day undertake the responsibilities of the hajj, returning to Mina on the 10th of Dhul-Hijjah.

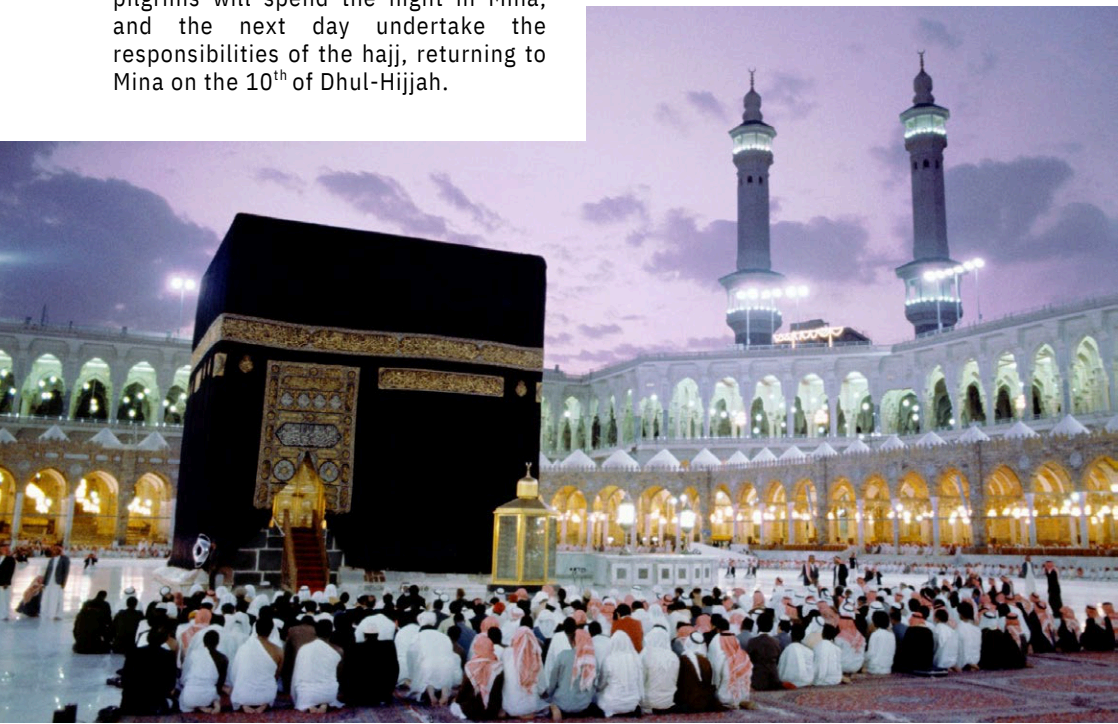
9TH OF DHUL-HIJJAH -

ASSEMBLING AT ‘ARAFAH

After sunrise on the 9th day of Dhul-Hijjah, the pilgrims leave for the plains of ‘Arafah where they spend the day until sunset in earnest supplication and devotion. Pilgrims make their supplications at the mount, where the Prophet (peace be upon him) supplicated. These are emotionally charged hours, in which the pilgrims spend their entire time in worship and supplication. Many shed tears as they ask Allah to forgive them. On this sacred spot, they reach the zenith of their religious lives as they feel the presence and closeness of the merciful God. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

“There is no day on which Allah frees people from the Fire more so than on the day of ‘Arafah “.

(Reported by Muslim)



**NIGHT OF THE 9TH OF
DHUL-HIJJAH -
MUZDALIFAH**

After sunset, the pilgrims move to Muzdalifah where they arrive and pray two prayers, and then collect pebbles for the next day. They will then rest, in preparation for the long day ahead of them. In the area of Muzdalifah there are generally no encampments and people sleep upon the hard ground; the very simple lifestyle reminding them of the homeless and needy.

**10TH DHUL-HIJJAH -
THE STONING - MINA**

On this day the pilgrims return to Mina where they start to undertake the rest of the rites. The first is to throw seven pebbles at a stone pillar which is called the *Jamarat*. This is a re-enactment of when Abraham threw stones at Satan who was trying to deter him from sacrificing his son. It symbolises a Muslim's complete trust in Allah. It also represents a symbolic rejection of evil and disobedience to God.

**10TH DHUL-HIJJAH -
THE SACRIFICE - MINA**

The pilgrims who need to and who can afford to sacrifice, buy a sheep, a goat or a share of some other sacrificial animal,

sacrifice it and give away a portion of the meat to the poor.

The sacrifice of animals, also at Mina, is in recollection of Ibrahim's willingness to sacrifice even his beloved son to fulfil God's command. It also symbolises the Muslim's preparedness to part with what is dearest to him in order to attain God's pleasure. The act of sacrifice is an encapsulation of the spirit of Islam: submission to the will of God - which is the literal meaning of the word Islam.

A meat-packing facility, completed in 1982, ensures there is no waste of the sheep and camels sacrificed each year as part of the Hajj. The meat is canned and distributed as part of the Kingdom's international emergency relief programmes.

**10TH DHUL-HIJJAH -
CUTTING THE HAIR - MINA**

Once the required rites have been completed, the pilgrim can shorten or shave the hair on their head. This indicates the removal of the state of Ihram, and the pilgrim can now return to certain activities, such as wearing normal clothes, clipping the nails and wearing perfumes.

10TH DHUL-HIJJAH - TAWAF

Following on from the 'stoning', the pilgrims make their way back to the Ka'bah to undertake the circumambulation once again. This again is conducted seven times, and the time is filled with supplications.



Eid

Muslims all over the world celebrate two festivals or Eid days every year.

The first festival, *Eid Al-Fitr* or Festival of Breaking the Fast, occurs on the first day of the tenth month of the Islamic lunar calendar, *Shawwaal*, just after the end of Ramadan. Eid Al-Fitr is a feast-day commemorating the end of Ramadan.

The second festival, *Eid Al-Adha*, or Festival of Sacrifice, falls on the tenth day of the twelfth month of the Islamic calendar, Dhul-Hijjah. This festival comes right in the middle of the Hajj.

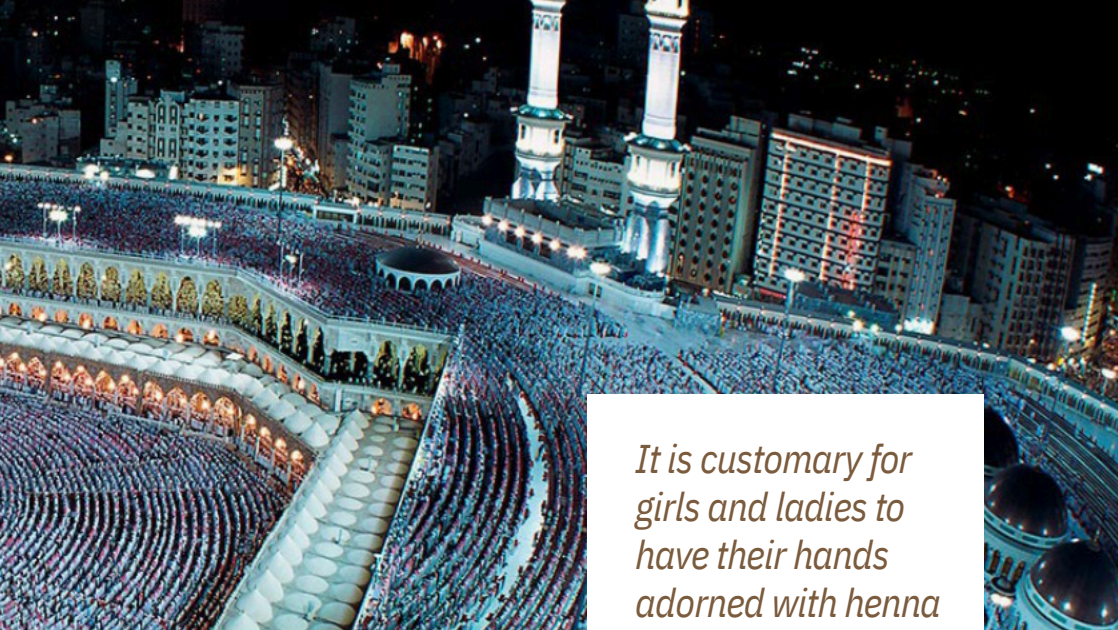
For those not undertaking the Hajj, this is the day of Eid, and throughout the world, the Muslims start the day with the Eid prayer, and then spend the rest of the day enjoying festivities with friends and family.

Muslims everywhere are, on the same

day, performing an identical sacrifice to those in Makkah - and thus vicariously sharing in the elation of the pilgrims there - the sacrifice is also an integral part of a worldwide Muslim celebration that unites those on the Hajj with those elsewhere.

E I D I N Q A T A R

There are a number of things that a typical Qatari family would do in preparation for Eid. Usually a few weeks before Eid, every member of the family will prepare his or her outfit for Eid: Men will wear traditional clothing and visit the tailor to be measured for something new, as well as buying accessories such as sandals and a *ghutra* (head scarf). Many families only go Eid shopping at the last minute, which is why



It is customary for girls and ladies to have their hands adorned with henna for any celebration (including Eid).

you often find streets crowded on the night before Eid, and many shops staying open late. Young girls dress in beautiful dresses, and they usually carry a purse for the *Eidiyya* (monetary gift). It is customary for girls and ladies to have their hands adorned with henna for any celebration (including Eid); henna takes about 24-48 hours to take its full colour, so it is usually applied a couple of days before the celebration.

On Eid day, it is customary for adults to give out monetary gifts to the children. The amount of money is usually related to the closeness of the relationship and age of the child, so parents will give more than strangers, older children will be given more than younger ones.

Most people carry change for *Eidiyya*, and many Qataris visit the bank in the days before Eid to get bundles of newly minted 1, 5 and 10 riyal notes.

E I D " D E S S E R T S P R E A D

Anywhere you go in the world, food is always part of any celebration. The dessert spread of Eid is an important thing that

is prepared in every home. This usually includes a number of traditional sweets, as well as other snacks such as nuts and chocolates. Sometimes a rivalry can be seen in trying to have the best Eid spread and so planning for the event starts early.

E I D DAY

The day starts early in the morning, after the dawn prayer and Muslims prepare themselves for the Eid prayer by bathing, wearing new clothes and using perfume (*Oud*). Many men will wear a *bisht* (a long cloak worn over the *thobe*) for the Eid prayer, which is held right after sunrise. It is a short prayer taking about 5 minutes and is followed by a sermon commonly related to the meaning and spirit of Eid.

After the Eid prayer, people greet each other in celebration of Eid: '*Eidkum mubarak*' and '*Taqabal Allah mina wa minkum*' being examples of such congratulations.

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