

## Core Curriculum

### 3 Foundations of Islam - Obligatory Acts

#### 3.8 **The Hajj Pilgrimage**

##### INTRODUCTION

Bismillāhir Rahmānir Rahīm, As-salāmu ‘Alaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuh. Peace be upon you brothers and sisters.

Welcome back to the Muslim Converts Channel! Today we will discuss the third element the furū‘ al-dīn, the Hajj pilgrimage. In this lesson, we will take a brief look at the ritual details of the Hajj in Islamic law, its history and origins and the its wider significance for the Muslim community.

##### BODY OF TEXT

And proclaim to the people the Hajj [pilgrimage]; they will come to you on foot and on every lean camel; they will come from every distant pass. That they may witness benefits for themselves and mention the name of Allah on known days over what He has provided for them of [sacrificial] animals. So eat of them and feed the miserable and poor. Then let them end their untidiness and fulfill their vows and circumambulate around the ancient House." (Chapter 22, verses 27-29 of the Holy Qur'an)

The word Hajj literally means "pilgrimage". The Hajj season begins in the last month of the Islamic calendar. This month is called Dhū al-Hijjah and the Hajj begins on the 8th of the month and ends on the 12th. The ninth day of the month is called the Day of Arafah. This is the central day of the Hajj and is the day where everyone must perform the Hajj rituals.

Arafah means "to be acquainted." As a day of love, it is said that the Day of Arafah is the day where one reacquaints oneself with God once more after having been distanced from Him for so long.

The Hajj is the largest annual gathering of people on earth. During the week of Hajj, Muslims perform a series of rituals. Among these rituals, Muslims walk counter-clockwise around the Ka'ba seven times.

The Ka'ba is a building in the shape of a cube and it is the point which Muslims direct their salāt towards. The circumambulation that they perform is called the tawāf. The tawāf is the most popular and distinguishing act of the Hajj rituals. It's the first thing you will notice when you see it on TV!

Muslims then proceed to pacing between two hills call al-Safa and al-Marwa, drink from the Zamzam well and then stand vigil at Mount Arafat. After this, Muslims spend the night a plain called Muzdalifa and perform a symbolic stoning of Satan by throwing stones at three pillars. Finally, pilgrims shave their heads, sacrifice an animal and celebrate the end of the Hajj under Eid al-Adha which means festival of the sacrifice.

Muslims may perform these rituals at other times during the year. This pilgrimage is called Umrah, but unlike the Hajj, it is not obligatory to perform. The Hajj is obligatory on whoever is physically, financially and legally able to do so at least once in their lifetime.

The Hajj pilgrimage was made obligatory upon Muslims during the lifetime of the Messenger of Allah (s) and his Ahl al-Bayt (as). The pilgrimage itself, however, goes back as far as the time of the Prophet Abraham (Ibrāhīm) (as). In Islamic history, God wanted to create a new center for His community of believers in an ancient location called Mecca.

Abraham or Ibrāhīm as he is called in Arabic, was ordered to leave his wife Hajar and son Ismā'īl (as) alone in the a desert location called Mecca. As baby Ismā'īl (as) was dying of thirst, his mother desperately

ran between the two hills of Safa and Marwah but was not able to find water. Ismā'īl, as he was kicking the ground, opened up a well where a fountain of water sprang up from beneath his feet.

The well came to be known as Zamzam, and it became the reason through which this desert point grew into a vibrant city, thanks to its water.

When Ismā'īl (as) grew up, his father joined him and under the command of Allah, they built what is known today as the Ka'ba. People were henceforth invited to perform the pilgrimage there circumambulating around it seven times, counter-clock wise. The rituals that Muslims perform today are an enactment of the tradition established by Abraham, as well as the desperate pacing of Hājar.

During the Hajj, Muslims must take off clothes that distinguish them. They must wear a two-piece white robe (at least the males do). The Hajj, aside its ritual significance, is meant to absolve Muslims from their sins and renew the human soul and spirit.

In addition to this, it is meant to establish a universal brotherhood and sisterhood of equality among all Muslims. It is meant to bring people together united as Muslims irrespective of their cultural, tribal or national loyalties.

In this sense, the Hajj is meant to challenge and break ethnic, cultural, tribal and geographic boundaries. Historically speaking, this was indeed the case. No matter where a Muslim was from, he or she could join his or her brethren in Mecca as equals regardless of wealth, class, status or political privilege.

The Hajj was also a center of intellectual flourishing. At a time where there was no telecommunications or printing, books were spread far and wide in a relatively short amount of time. This is because Muslims would share the books they had written during the Hajj pilgrimage. Over there, books would be copied and quickly spread across the world. Hajj became not only a symbol of unity and equality for Muslims, but also intellectual

sharing and growth.

Until Next Time, Thank you for watching. As-salāmu ‘Alaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuh