



HAJJ

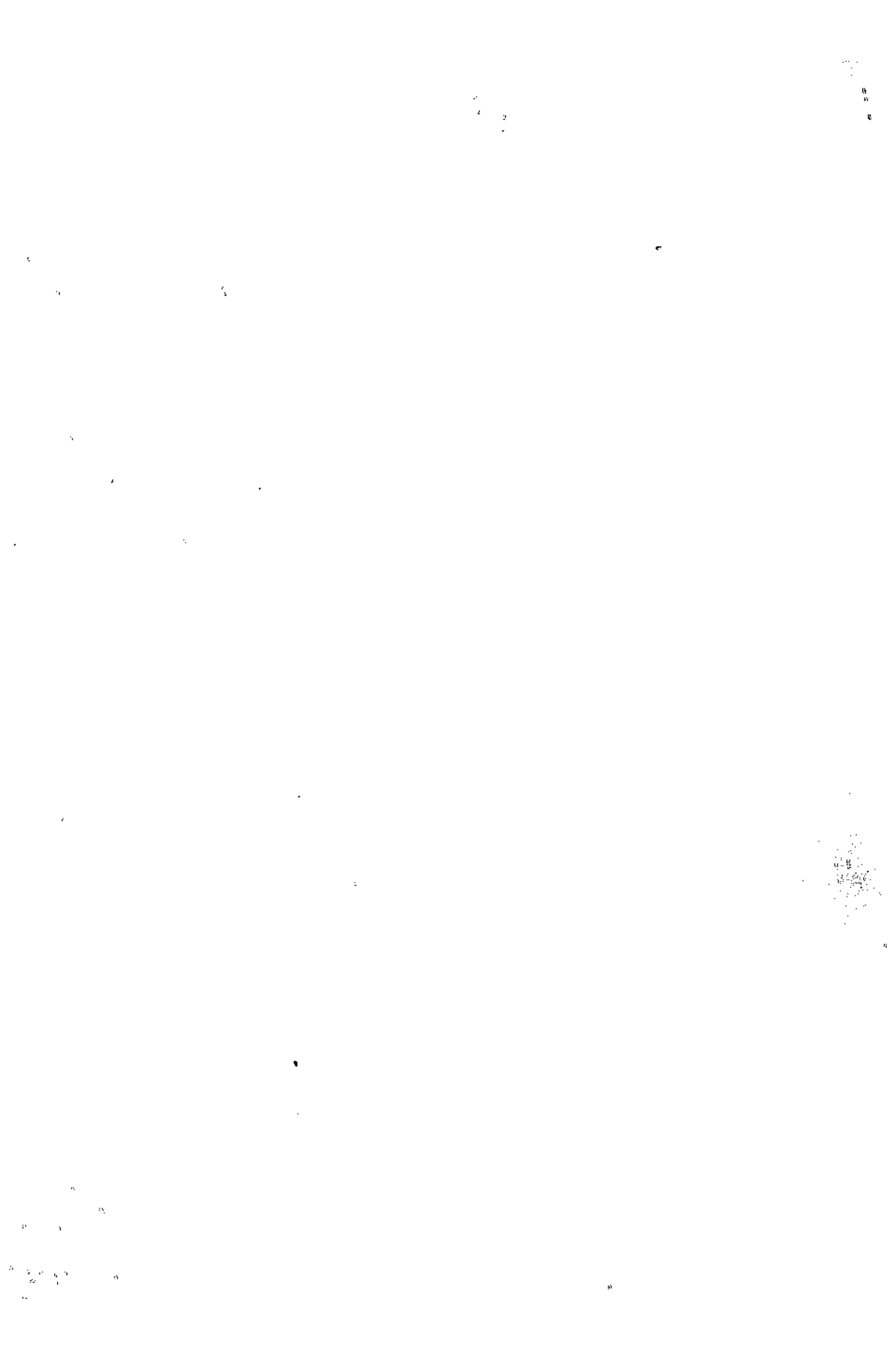
PILGRIMAGE

FORM & ESSENCE

Dr. HASSAN HATHOUT

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name Of God,

The Compassionate, The Merciful

**“ Hajj To The House Is A Duty To
Allah For All Who Can Afford it. ”**

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INTRODUCTION ... BUT TO BE READ

It is the habit of many readers to skip the introduction and plunge directly into the book. Well, it is not for the sake of tradition or formality that I have written this introduction, and I am therefore keen that you read it as carefully as the rest of the book, of which I consider to be an integral part, otherwise I would not have included it.

I am a medical doctor and not a specialist on Islamic theology; but I am a Moslem who have gone through the experience of Hajj. As Moslem, doctor and pilgrim I have always felt I have something to say to those of my fellow Moslems who are about to embark on their pilgrimage, and here I do. I have seen many fellow-pilgrims suffering much unnecessary confusion about the procedure of pilgrimage ... Arabs not spared, but especially those brothers without knowledge of spoken or written Arabic. It is mainly for these brethren that this work is intended. I assume that the experience is new to them, and that they are not resident in Mecca but converge thereupon from various parts of the world.

In the part describing the rites of Hajj, I reviewed several standard references. My main source — how-

ever — was my three previous experiences in Hajj. I just imagined I was going along to my first pilgrimage, and gave the account of the various rites in the style and order I should have liked to have been presented to me. I have experienced the difficulty of wading through lengthy pages without quenching my thirst, and I have decided to spare the reader such inconvenience. But the duties of a pilgriming Moslem go beyond the mere fulfillment of the rituals of pilgrimage ... and the horizon of worship is much wider. Many pilgrims inadvertently err against Islam. Others inflict harm upon others or upon themselves, and commit offenses quite contradictory to the spirit and object of their holy journey. Everybody is — of course — well intentioned, but this is not sufficient to absolve some of us from giving advice ... and others from accepting it.

Let it not be thought that this book is a voice of guidance to the uneducated. Far from it ! Even the highly sophisticated have their share of the problem, and are often strained and perturbed.

I sincerely hope that this humble work will provide the answer to many questions : some often asked ... others often not.

Hassan M. Hathout.

Kuwait, 1391.

1972

PART I

THE WHAT

- 1 Umrah
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CHAPTER ONE

THE “ UMRAH ”

The “ Umrah » is a worship that is not only confined to the pilgrimage or the pilgrimage season. Because they do not reside in Mecca pilgrims usually start off by carrying out the “ Umrah », to complete the pilgrimage rituals later on in due course. We will therefore discuss the Umrah at this stage. Umrah is mainly a visit to the Holy House (the Kaaba) in a special manner, comprising (1) Ihram, (2) Tawaf and (3) Saay. Each will be discussed.

1. IHRAM

What ? :—

You will take off your ordinary tailored clothes and put on your “ Ihram ” garments. You should remain bare-headed. Foot wear — if any — should be slippers or sandals not reaching as high up as the two boney prominences over the heels. Women should wear their usual clothing covering the whole body excepting the face and hands to the wrist, which should not be covered. Before Ihram you may take a bath, dress your hair and clip your nails if you wish.

What Not ? :—

Marriage and sexual relations (major or minor), hair cutting, nail clipping and perfume should be avoided : as well as covering the head or wearing the ordinary sewn clothing. Hunting and cutting off green cultivation are also prohibited. A soap and water body wash is permissible, as well as the shade of an umbrella or a tent.

Any breakage of these criteria makes a “ Fedia ” necessary (usually sacrifice of a sheep).

Where ? :—

As you approach Mecca from any direction, you will come to a special landmark called the “ Miquat ” (plural : Mawaqueet) beyond which you should not proceed unless you are in “ Ihram ”. It is there that you should fulfill the afore-mentioned criteria, make your Niyya (intention : for example whether you are doing your “ Ihram ” for the sake of “ Umrah ”, “ pilgrimage ” or “ both ”) and make a prayer of two “ rakaas ”.

People residing in Mecca need not travel as far as the known “ Mawaqueet ” to start their “ Ihram ”. Their Miquat is Mecca itself. It suffices for them to reach just outside the Haram zone (i.e. where hunting

is permissible) to the nearest boundary of the extra-Haram area.

Having done this, the Mohrem (person in Ihram) proceeds to Mecca, hailing God and glorifying His Name.

When ? :—

Ihram for pilgrimage (or umrah and pilgrimage) can be done any time between the first day of the month of Shawwal to the dawn of the Bairam day (tenth of Zul Hijja) : but not before or after. For Umrah, alone, it can be done any time.

2. TAWAF

Arriving in Mecca you enter the Haram (mosque) for “ Tawaf ”. “ Tawaf ” means going around the “ Kaaba ” in a circle for seven times. You start at the corner containing the “ black stone ”. You will recognise it by the silver frame and probably by the crowd of people trying to touch or kiss the “ black stone ”. You declare your intention to do your “ Tawaf ”, and circle the “ Kaaba ” (together with the half circle named “ Hijir Ismail ”) until you are at the “ black stone ” again. The “ Kaaba ” will be on your left hand side all the time. Each time you face the “ black stone ” you

make a gesture by raising your arm towards it saying : “ Bismillahi Allahu Akbar ” (in the name of God ... God is the Great) . If possible, you may kiss it or touch it. During your march around the “ Kaaba ” you may keep silent or say whatever prayer you wish. It is not necessary to recite a special form : especially if you do not know its meaning. Along the last side of the “ Kaa-ba ”, before reaching the “ black stone ” you may recite the verse of the Holy Koran which reads : “ Our Lord : award us good in this world, and good in hereafter, and protect us from the torture of Hell ”.

If you flex a finger every time you cover a circle, you will keep the number correct but of course it is up to you to find your own way. During the first three circles you may expose your right upper limb (shoulder and arm) and simulate a gait of “ trotting ” (not actually running but making your body shake a bit as if you are trotting) . Women do not trot.

Concluding your “ Tawaf ”, go to “ Maquam Ibrahim ” for a prayer of two “ rakaas ” ... reading “ Quul Whoa Allahu Ahad ... ” in the first and “ Quul ya ayyohal Kafiroon ... la aabudu ma taabudoon ... ” in the second if you know these Suras ... if not, any will do. You may then visit Zamzam well and it is a sunna to drink some of it. By now you are ready for the final part : “ Saay ”. Leave the “ Haram ” to the “ Masaa ”

(the path for Saay), preferably through the “ Safa ” gate.

3. SAAY

Starting at “ Safa ”, aware of (or declaring) your intention to do the “ Saay ”, you walk the path between “ Safa ” and “ Marwa ” seven times, during which you may recite from the Koran or say whatever prayers which may occur to you (not necessarily the traditional forms). For a certain indicated distance along the path, your march may take the form of hurrying up (this is named the “ hurry ” or “ Harwala ”. You will thus walk the “ Masaa ” to and fro three and a half times, your seventh time ending at the “ Marwa ” : and thus you have concluded the steps of your “ Umrah ”. At this stage comes the question of breaking (ending) your “ Ihram ”.

Breaking Your “ Ihram ”:—

This is done usually by a hair cut (total or partial or even a few hairs). After which you are exempted from the previously mentioned criteria of “ Ihram ” and you can wear your usual clothes and lead your ordinary life. But whether to do this at this stage or not is subject to the following :—

1 — If it is only an “ Umrah ” that you had intended to do, you conclude it by breaking “ Ihram ” just as described.

2 — But if you come for pilgrimage (Hajj) as well : then you must have intended either one or the other of two schemes at the outset of your “ Ihram ” :—

a. that your “ Ihram ” is intended for (to last) both “ Umrah ” and Hajj (pilgrimage). In this case you should remain in “ Ihram ” through the subsequent steps of pilgrimage up to the stage when you go to the town of “ Mena ” and perform the first “ pebble-throwing ” ritual (Aquaba al Kubra) as will be detailed later on.

The performance of “ Umrah ” and “ Hajj ” both with one and the same “ Ihram ” is called “ Quiran ” which means “ joining ” or “ conjoining ” (or putting together ... hence in one usage the word “ Quiran ” signifies marriage).

b. that you made your “ Ihram ” for the sake of performing “ Umrah ” only ... in which case you break your “ Ihram ” upon concluding your “ Saay ” by a symbolic hair cut and the wearing of your ordinary clothing etc...

Subsequently on starting the “ Hajj ” you will do another “ Ihram ” for the purpose of “ Hajj ”. This separation between “ Umrah ” and “ Hajj ”

is called "enjoying" or "enjoyment". For this "enjoyment" the pilgrim, will have to sacrifice a sheep any time during "Mena" days (according to Imam Al Shafaie it is permissible to offer this sacrifice before going to Arafat). If he cannot afford a sheep the pilgrim may — instead — fast three days before the "Bairam" (first day in "Mena" as well as seven days after he has concluded all the "Hajj" procedures.

It is now obvious that although Hajj starts with "Ihram", it need not always be preceded with "Umrah". People resident in Mecca usually make their Hajj's "Ihram" in Mecca. Some pilgrims coming from afar may not wish to do an "Umrah" at all. Of course they have to start "Ihram for Hajj" at the "Miqat", and when they arrive in Mecca they do "Tawaf" as a "sunna" (tradition after the Prophet but not obligatory) for the purpose of paying homage to the "Holy House" (Tawaf al Quodoom or Tawaf of Arrival), but they need not do the "Saay", and they remain in "Ihram" for pilgrimage.

For pilgrims intending both "Umrah" and "Hajj", the "Tawaf" of the "Umrah" is enough (replacing the traditional "Tawaf of Arrival").

CHAPTER TWO

HAJJ ... THE HOLY PILGRIMAGE

This chapter will deal with the technical aspects of Hajj, leaving the academic side to follow later.

The basic components of Hajj are four :—

- (1) “ Ihram ”
- (2) “ Standing ” in “ Arafat ”
- (3) “ Tawaf ” (called Tawaf of the Ifadha ... meaning the “ flow ” back to “ Mecca ”)
- (4) “ Saay ” between “ Safa ” and “ Marwa ”.

According to Imam Abu Hanifa, the basic components are only two : “ presence ” in “ Arafat ” and the major part of “ Tawaf al Ifadha ”. Imam al Shafaie makes them six : these four plus (5) cutting of at least three hairs or a part thereof, as well as (6) keeping the exact order of the rituals.

For the sake of clarity we will give you a step by step account of the whole procedure. We take it that you have read the preceding chapter on “ Umrah ”.

- (1) “ Ihram ” : If you are “ joining ” or “ conjoining ”

“ Umrah ” and “ Hajj ” as already “ intended ” at the “ Miquat ” on your way to Mécça, then you are already in “ Ihram ”.

If you are an “ enjoyer ” ... that is made “ Ihram ” at the “ Miquat ” with the “ intention ” (niyya) of “ Umrah ” only, you would have finished your “ Umrah ” and broken your “ Ihram ”. You should therefore start a fresh “ Ihram ” for the purpose of “ Hajj ” and so state your “ Intention ” (My God ... I am proposing to go on Hajj and for this I start “ Ihram ”). If at the outset — at the “ Miquat ” your “ niyya ” was Hajj only, without “ Umrah ”, you are by now still in “ Ihram ” and have done the “ sunna ” of “ Tawaf of Arrival ”. If you are a Mecca citizen, or reside anywhere inside the “ Mawaqueet ”, you will make your “ Ihram for Hajj ” wherever you live.

Having “ intended ” “ Hajj ” and started “ Ihram ”, make a prayer of two “ rakaas ”.

(2) “ Arafat ” : The time span extends from the day of ninth of Zul Hijja until dawn of the tenth. It is better to combine part day and part night by witnessing sunset. Part of the night (after sunset) is essential. You may spend the previous night in “ Mena ”, or go directly to “ Arafat ” on the eighth or ninth day of Zul Hijja.

The ritual of “ Arafat ” is your mere presence : but of course you may meditate, pray and recite the

Koran. It is a " sunna ", on your way to " Arafat " on the day of the ninth, to pray the " Zuhr " and " Asr " prayers in the mosque of " Nimra ", with " advancement-coupling and brevity " (that is Zuhr and Asr, each in two rakaas instead of four — technically called " quasr " — and both in sequence before the current time for Asr is due, which is called " jamou taqudim "). " Arafat " is the most important part of Hajj, for the Prophet says " the Hajj is Arafat ".

(3) " Mozdalifah " : This is the pilgrim's station on their way to " Mena ", having started to " flow " from " Arafat " any time after sunset : hailing God, praying to him and glorifying His Name : repeating " Labbaik... Allahumma Labbaik ". It is " sunna " to say the " Maghreb " and " Esha " prayers in Mozdalifah, postponing Maghreb to be " coupled " with " Esha " ... " Maghreb in three " rakaas " and " Esha " in two. It is better to stay the night in " Mozdalifah ", this meaning your presence there for any period of time after midnight. It is not essential to pick your " pebbles " from " Mozdalifah " on your way to " Mena " though it is a " sunna " to do.

(4) " Mena " : You arrive in Mena on the tenth day of Zul Hijja (the " Bairam " or " day of sacrifice "). Any time from sunrise to noon (Shafie and Ibn Hanbal allow it from midnight onwards to the end of the Bairam

days) you do the throwing of " Jamratul Aquaba ". Collect seven pebbles and throw them at " Jamratul Aquaba " (the largest of the three " jimar "). There you cease to voice the Talbia (i.e. Labbaik Allahumma Labbaik). As you throw your pebbles, aiming at the pillar as best you can so as to hit it, you say " Allahu Akbar " (God is the Great) every time you throw a pebble, until you have thrown all seven. Any pebbles will do but not from the heap of already thrown pebbles or from the Haram mosque. You need not wash them unless you think they are soiled dirty (najis).

If you have " conjoined " " Umrah " and " Hajj " or had " enjoyed " breaking " Ihram " after " Umrah " and making a new " Ihram " for " Hajj ", your next step is to go to attend the slaying of the " Had'y " (usually a sheep). This done, you have a hair cut (at least cut some of your head hairs).

At this stage you can " break Ihram " except concerning marital relations. This is called the " first absolvment ". You can put on your ordinary clothing.

(5) ".Tawaf " (of the " Ifadha " or " flow "). This can follow immediately if you can go to " Mecca ". You do the " Tawaf " as previously described ... your intention declared before God would be : "My God ... I am proposing to do the " Tawaf " of " Ifadha " ".

If you had already done your " Saay " after your " Tawaf " of arrival to Mecca ", you need not repeat the " Saay ". If not, you do the " Saay " after " Tawaf ". Having finished " Tawaf ", you are now in " total absolvment " from " Ihram ", and you enjoy normal (and marital) life.

You should — however — return to " Mena " to spend the night there (meaning to be present any time after midnight) so as to complete the ensuing " throwing of the jimar ". If you cannot guarantee your return to " Mena ", then you should remain in " Mena " until this is complete, thus postponing the " Tawaf ".

(6) On the eleventh day of " Zul Hijja " you will collect twenty-one pebbles (small stones) to throw at the three " Jimar ". You start with the " small " then the " middle " and last with the " largest " (" Jamratul Aquaba "), seven stones at each, with reasonably accurate aiming, and saying " Allahu Akbar " every time. This is done anytime between noon and sunset.

(7) On the twelfth day you do the same again. You may leave from " Mena " for good this day provided you do so before sunset, or else you should stay the night ... in which case you repeat throwing the " Jims " on the thirteenth day, which then may be done even before noon. Thus, some pilgrims do " Tawaf of

Ifadha ” on the tenth day and do the “ throwing of the three Jimars ” later on, others finish the “ throwing of the Jimars ” before “ Tawaf of Ifadha ”.

N.B. : Upon a genuine excuse for age or health reasons, you may ask another person to do the “ throwing ” on your behalf. In this case he should do the “ throwing ” for himself first, then for you.

By now you have concluded your “ Hajj ”. May God graciously accept it from you. Before leaving “ Mecca ” for home, do the “ Farewell Tawaf ”, thanking God for enabling you to carry out your “ Hajj ”, and asking Him to make it possible for you to visit His “ Holy House ” again.

SOME POINTS OF JURISPRUDENCE

“ Hajj ” is one of the five pillars of “ Islam ”, as denoted by the saying (hadith) of the Prophet (peace be upon Him) : “ Islam is founded on five (pillars) : witnessing that there is no god but Allah and that Mo-hammad is the Messenger of Allah, keeping prayer, alms-giving, fasting Ramadan and doing “ Hajj ” if able to”.

It is a “ Fareedhah ” (must once in a life time upon fulfillment of the following pre-requisites : Islam, adulthood, sanity, freedom and ability (physical and financial) .

A woman pilgrim should be in the company of a “ mah-ram ” (eg. husband, brother, etc...) or other women of good integrity. Hajj during childhood is charitable but does not exempt the child from Hajj in adulthood. “ Hajj ” was decreed in the ninth (some say sixth) year after “ Hijra ”.

Your mistakes during Hajj — The “Fediah” :

If you were unable to be present in “ Arafat ” in “ Ih-

ram " before the dawn of the tenth day of Zul Hijja it means no " Hajj " for you. Complete the procedure of " Umrah " (Tawaf, Saay and breaking Ihram). You should do Hajj the following year, after a blood sacrifice (" Fediah " : such as a sheep).

If you have omitted a basic component other than " Arafat ", such as " Tawaf of Ifadha ", you may carry it out any time in the future (according to Imam Malik a blood sacrifice is due if not done within Zul Hijja). If Saa'y was omitted you can do it later on if you reside in or near Mecca ... but if you have left for good, a blood sacrifice is to be offered in Mecca, and you need not come back to do the " Saay ".

If you failed to keep any of the other duties, or contradicted " Ihram " (except by sexual intercourse before the " first absolvment "), your Hajj is valid but you have to sacrifice a sheep or feed six needy persons or fast for three days.

Sexual intercourse before the " first absolvment " nullifies " Hajj ". Such a person should complete the remaining rituals of " Hajj ", sacrifice a " budnah " (camel over five years or cow over two years) and do " Hajj " again the following year.

If any untoward circumstances make it impossible to complete " Hajj " (or " Umrah " or " conjoint " " Umrah and Hajj ") he may do " absolvment " and

sacrifice a sheep in the place where he was disabled, or — if he does not find one — offer the equivalent in food.

The “ Odhiyah ” :

This is the animal sacrificed in worship to God during the days of the “ Bairam ”. This was decreed in the second year after “ Hijrah ” and is mentioned in the Holy Koran : “ ... pray (Mohammad) to your God and sacrifice to Him ”. According to Imam Abu Hanifa it is a “ duty ” if the person is capable, which he explains as having the sum of money to make him an alms-giver. In the opinion of the other three Imams it is a “ sunna ”. It should be executed after (and not before) the “ Bairam ” (“ Eid ”) prayers. It is a “ sunna ” to keep one third for your use, one third for friends and one third for the poor.

CHAPETR THREE

AL MADINA AL MUNAWWARAH

Visiting " Al Madinah " is not a part of " Hajj ", But it is a " sunna " to visit the " Mosque of the Prophet " — peace be on Him — at " Madina ". This can be done before or after " Hajj " or at any other time. The Prophet said : " No taking off — meaning journeying — except for three out of all mosques : the " Haram " mosque, this mosque of mine and the " Aqusa " mosque ". He also said : " Prayer in this mosque of mine holds more good than a thousand prayers in any other, excepting the " Haram " Mosque ". It should be clear that the mosque is the subject of the visit ... for the Prophet warned against regarding his grave as a holy shrine. As you approach, you hail God and voice peace and prayer on His Prophet. It is good to say prayers in the " Rawdha " ... that is the area between the house of the Prophet — peace be upon Him — and his pulpit ... described by the Prophet — peace be upon Him — by saying : " From my house to my pulpit is a garden (Rawdha) from the gardens of Heaven ". You then approach the burial place of the Prophet and greet

Him saying : “ Peace be upon You, Messenger of God, and the Mercy of Allah and His blessings ” ... for the Prophet promised every time “ to reciprocate the Salam ”. Just beside, Abu Bakr is buried, then Omar Ibnul Khattab, the first and second caliphs, may God be pleased with them.

Then you may visit “ Baqueea ” ... where many of the “ Sahaba ” (Prophet’s companions) are buried, and where the Prophet once said : “ Peace be upon you, people of the “ Baqueea ”, you are the forerunners and we are — if God pleases — the followers ”.

Another place to visit in “ Madina ” is the mosque of “ Quba ” the first mosque that the Prophet founded in Madina.

The martyrs of the battle of “ Uhud ”, especially the grave of “ Hamza : the master of martyrs ” may also be visited.

CHAPTER FOUR

BUT GOD COMMANDS MORE!

Just for a start, I would like to put you in direct confrontation with one or two Islamic rules. The first is God's instruction in the Holy Koran : " (and) do not throw your hands into destruction ". The second is the hadith of the Prophet — peace be upon Him — saying : " your body has got a right upon you ".

If this is the teaching of Islam (and indeed it is), then one is disheartened by the complete blindness of some Moslems to it, in comparison with certain other acts of worship about which they seem to be extremely enthusiastic.

It is at this stage that the " Doctor " would like to speak to you. In so doing I am not only satisfying " medicine " but also " Islam " ... for the Prophet — peace be upon Him — said " Religion is advice ". Because this is my domain, it is my duty to speak, and yours to listen ... and obey. As you see, keeping healthy is an " Islamic " duty on your part. Yet so many misdeeds are committed that I feel this book would not be adequate without a relevant chapter.

A serious offence is often committed even before departure from home; and this is neglecting to take the necessary vaccinations. Some people manage to escape them by false documentation of vaccination, either through personal connections or even resorting to bribery. It is indeed painful to realise that a few fellow Moslems start their holy pilgrimage with lying, cheating and even bribery. It is a pity that on their deaf ears have fallen the saying of the Prophet — peace be upon Him — in the three “ hadiths ” :

(1) “ Tbe ‘monafeq’ is known by three signs : if he speaks he lies, if promises he breaks and if confided he betrays ”.

(2) “ He who cheats us is not from us ”.

(3) “ The bribe giver and its taker are both in Hell ”.

The crime is not only moral, but it is those persons who fall an easy prey to various infections. They fall ill and may infect others especially under the conditions of overcrowding during the pilgrimage season. They may also become infected and carry back infections to their citizens at home after pilgrimage.

“ Cleanliness is an act of Faith (Iman) ” ... the hadith of the Prophet — peace be upon Him — teaches us. In the Koran we read : “ God likes those who emphatically repent, and those who emphatically clean themselves ”. The “ woddo ”, our wash before prayer, is

but a lesson in cleanliness.

Cleanliness is not related to being rich or poor ... but is a personal feature by itself. A poor person may be clean in how he looks and what he does, whereas a rich person may feel no shame in throwing his garbage in the street or leaving it exposed and thus furnishing a fertile breeding place for flies. A thorough washing of the hands after use of the toilet is again a habit that pays off in terms of prevention of illness, to oneself and to others. It is a shame that some people soil the road in various ways, in defiance to the "ethics of the road" as taught by our Prophet — peace be upon Him — who tells us in his "Hadith": "Imam comprises over seventy divisions, ranging from witnessing that 'there is no God but Allah' to removing dirt from the road' ... and 'shyness' is one of them". To the mention of "shyness" in this "Hadith" one would like to draw the attention of those who give themselves the free use of the street even as a W.C. In my experience as a doctor I have often seen people having their legs broken by slipping on a banana peel thrown by a careless person. Some Moslems seem to be completely unaware of the "Hadith" of the Prophet: "The Moslem is him from whose tongue and hand that Moslems are safe" ... meaning from what he speaks and what he does.

Another matter of cleanliness concerns the slaughter of your " Odhiya " at " Mena ". It is much preferred if this is done in the slaughter house and not just anywhere and everywhere as usually happens. Offensive odours and breeding of flies are the direct result, as well as the tremendous waste. It is universally hoped all over the Islamic world that the Saudi Arabian authorities will organise a project to deal with, and benefit from, the huge number of animals slain there, in accordance with modern industrial means, and in the best interests of Islamic communities.

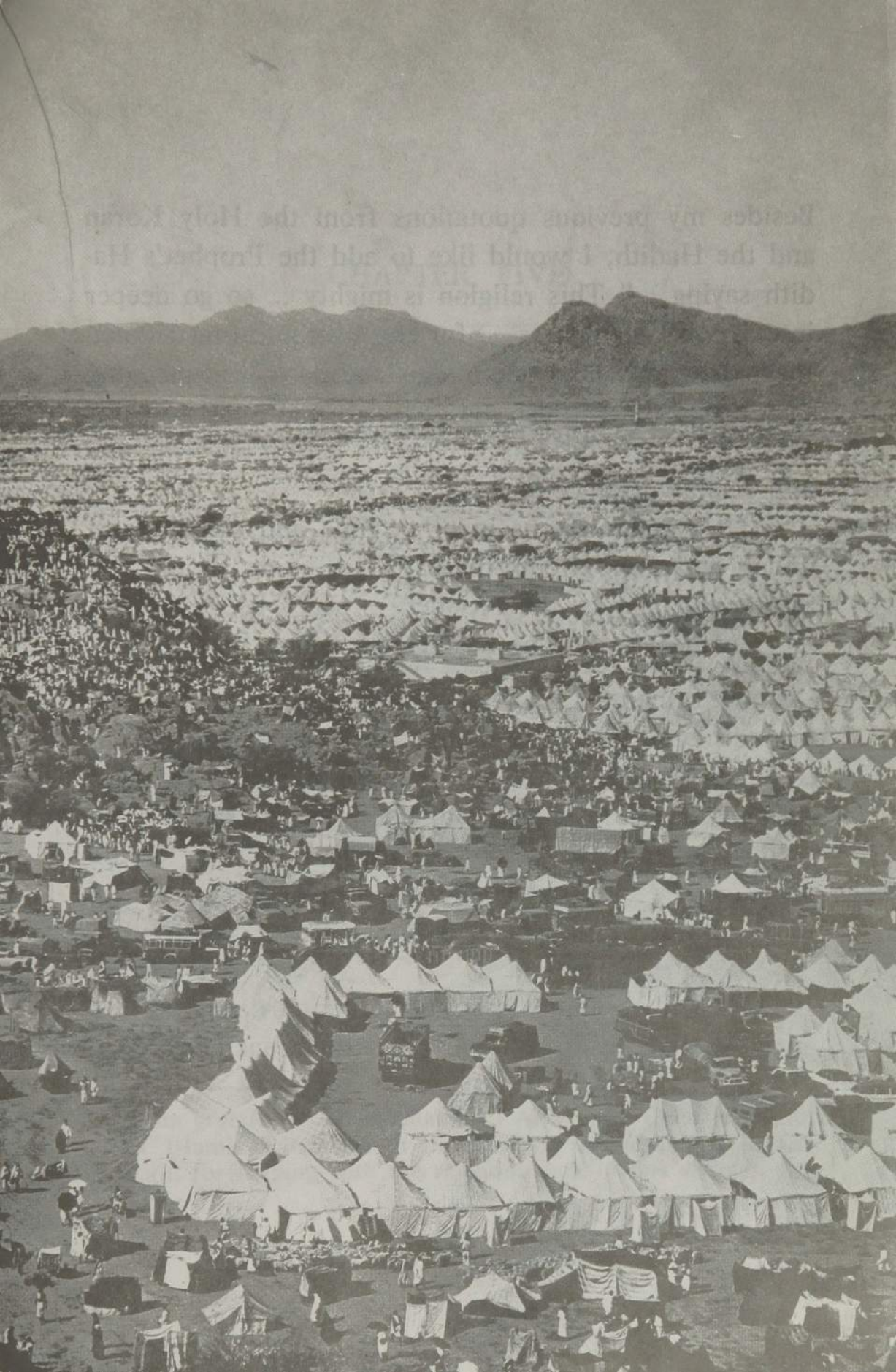
If you ever take ill while there, it is your duty not only to seek medical advice, but also to avoid mixing with others or frequenting crowded places in case your illness is infectious, lest others catch it from you. This desire to protect others from harm is worship indeed, and be sure it will be quite appreciated and generously rewarded by God.

A little word about food. Some people get stomach upsets or diarrhoea on eating foods to which they are not accustomed to. Diarrhoea on such a journey is both a nuisance and a danger. You should therefore be cautious in choosing your food and exercise care in the choice of what and how much you eat. The less you eat the better, and it is better to keep to simple food. A cheese sandwich and a thoroughly washed fruit are

adequate and leave no garbage. You will not starve if you eat a little less than you are used to; indeed you will feel fresher and more active in your worship. You should not stubbornly stick to your dietary habits and thus cause your wife to spend hours cooking the same kind of meals you used to have at home ... you are simply not at home. Facilities are much more limited and, moreover, this is an expedition for worship : not for cookery. I have seen people preparing their food on fire stoves even in the Haram, thus upsetting sight and smell and causing much untidiness : whereas simpler ready made food could have been secured and at a lower cost.

I would finally like to assure my brethren that masochism (to wilfully inflict pain on oneself) has nothing to do with Islam at all ... to which it is both alien and unacceptable. When the pilgrimage season was in the summer some years ago, I saw how people could fall unconscious and die of heat stroke just as flies do when sprayed with a fly killer. In spite of that, certain persons would choose the hottest time of the day to do their " Tawaf ", or in " Arafat " to insist on climbing the " Mountain of Rahma " under the burning sun. They did that at will, under the false impression that their reward would be commensurate with their share of pain and suffering. This view is just anti-Islamic.





Besides my previous quotations from the Holy Koran and the Hadith, I would like to add the Prophet's Hadith saying : " This religion is mighty ... so go deeper into it with gentleness ... for the overenthusiastic neither covers any land nor retains any back " ... meaning that a man too enthusiastic to finish a journey will disable the horse whose back he rides before covering any appreciable distance of land.

Here and now, as in other time and places, and under whatever circumstances, your guide should be the dictum laid by the Prophet — peace be upon Him — : " No harm and no harming in Islam ".

CHAPTER FIVE

***WOMEN ONLY !**

What has been written so far applies to both men and women. There are certain conditions, however, pertaining only to women pilgrims, and which are sometimes a cause for confusion.

Menstruation, or the monthly period, is the commonest of these conditions. It is the near-monthly flow of blood from the genital system of the adult woman for a period of time that varies from woman to woman, the average being three to seven days. It is absent before puberty, during pregnancy, sometimes during lactation, after a certain age when the woman ceases to be capable of getting pregnant (the change of life), as well as in certain variable disease conditions.

During menstruation a woman shall refrain from prayers and fasting.

A menstruating woman also cannot do Tawaf. During pilgrimage she can do all the other steps such as

* I am grateful to Mr. Mohammad Al Sheikh, Chief Inspector of Islamic Education in the Ministry of Education in Kuwait, for helping with the religious data in this chapter.

Ihram, Arafat, throwing the Jimar and Saay between Safa and Marwa. Unlike other Tawafs from which a menstruating woman may be exemptee (like Tawaf of arrival or Tawaf of farewell) the Tawaf of Ifadha is an integral part of pilgrimage that must be done, and it cannot be done until the period is finished and the woman has taken her (ritual) bath.

Since the days of the Prophet (peace be upon Him) Moslim women felt the resulting inconvenience. Aisha (may God be pleased with her) recalls the day when her husband (the Prophet, peace be upon Him) came in and found her crying. He guessed the reason and asked her " Did you have your period ? ". She replied " Yes " and he said " This is something that God has written on the daughters of Adam ... proceed with all that a pilgrim has to do, but don't do Tawaf until you have finished and bathed from your period ".

A woman would be lucky if she has finished the Tawaf even a moment before the onset of the period, for then she can proceed with Saay. Since the early days it has been the custom for women to hurry and do Tawaf on the first Bairam day if they thought their period was due soon. When the Prophet (peace be upon Him) was told that Safiyya (may God be pleased with her) had started her period he asked " Is she therefore delaying us ? " ... but when told that she had already

done Tawaf on the first Bairam day, he said " Well, she can carry on with us ".

Even in early days women longed for a medicine that would postpone the period. The Son of Omar (may God be pleased with them) was asked about the woman buying a medicine to stop the bleeding so as not to postpone Tawaf ... he did not object and even prescribed for that purpose 'the water of the Arak plant'.

In the present time this problem has been largely solved by the availability of modern effective drugs. Contraceptive pills (used to prevent pregnancy until it is wanted) have also the effect of postponing the onset of menstruation if their administration is continued beyond the usual time when they are stopped in order to bring about a period. Taken for contraception, the course usually starts from the fifth menstrual day, taking a pill every day until the twenty fifth day ... stoppage of the drug will then bring about menstruation within a few days. If the drug is not stopped and the woman continues to take it in the same manner, menstruation will not come for as long as the woman wishes, thus enabling her to suspend her period until Tawaf is done. She can even remain clean until she is back home, for the period will come only when she stops taking the pills.

As many women already know, these pills some-

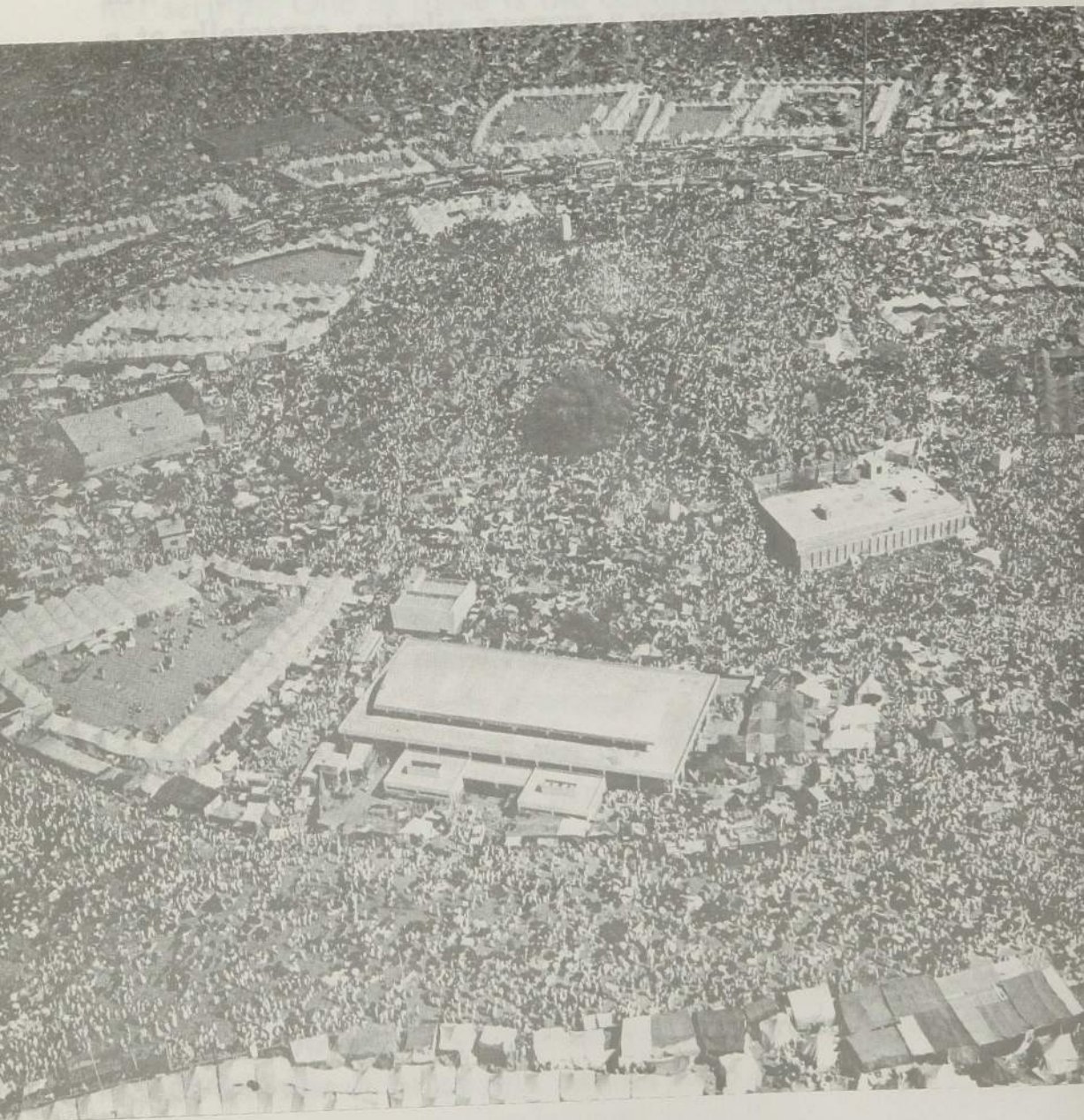
times have variable side effects but which are usually not serious. One of these is the occurrence of blood spotting. If this happens the woman should not stop taking the pills. On the contrary, she should take two (or even three) pills daily instead of one until the bleeding stops, then go back to one a day again. It is much better for the woman to consult her doctor on this matter, to make sure there are no objections that a particular woman may take the pills. It must also be remembered that the pills should start on the fifth day of the previous period, and a late start might not assure the required result.

Apart from the known 'regular' menstruation, other ailments may affect a woman making her greatly perturbed about their religious implications.

Among these is irregular or abnormal bleeding that goes on beyond or apart from the regular normal period. In religious terms such a woman is called 'mostahada', that is having a nonreal period. This woman can do Tawaf, and can say her prayers provided she wipes away the blood, wear a suitable pad and does Wodou (the ritual prayer wash) for each prayer.

The same also applies to women with a chronic non-bloody discharge ... and to women with incontinence of urine who involuntarily suffer from uncontrollable leakage of urine and cannot help getting wet with urine.

It is hoped that this chapter " Women Only " will be of benefit to many a woman pilgrim, especially at a time when return air-passages have to be booked a long time before, and it is quite difficult to change the date of departure being previously fixed, or if the woman is attached to or dependent on a group of companions.



PART II

THE WHY

- 1 The Spirit of Hajj**
- 2 Epilogue**



CHAPTER ONE

THE SPIRIT OF HAJJ

In the Holy Koran, the verses 124 to 129 from Surat Baqara (Cow) read : “ His Lord put Ibrahim to the test by enjoining upon him certain commandments which he fulfilled. Said HE : “ I have made you an Imam (leader) to people ”. Asked he (Ibrahim) : “ And of my descendants ? ”

“ My covenant ” said HE “ does not include the unjust ”.

WE made the House a resort to people and a sanctuary. Make the stand of Ibrahim a place of prayer. WE assigned to Ibrahim and Ismail to cleanse MY House for the use of those who — in worship — walk around it, meditate in seclusion and kneel and prostrate themselves. Ibrahim said : “ Lord ... make this a peaceful town and bestow plenty upon its dwellers : those of them who believe in Allah and in the Last Day ”. HE said : “ and him who disbelieves I shall leave in his joy for a short while then push him into the torture of Hell ... and what an evil fate ?

Ibrahim, raised the foundations of the House, toge-

ther with Ismail, praying : “ Our Lord .. grant us Your acceptance from us .. You .. who hear all and you know all. And, Our Lord, make us surrendering (Moslems) to You, and of our offspring a nation of surrenderers (Moslems) to You, and show us our rites of worship, and be forgiving to us, You are verily the Forgiving and Merciful.

Our Lord, and send forth in them a Messenger (Apostle) from amongst them, who would recite to them Your revelations and teach them the Book and wisdom and purify them .. You are the Mighty and Wise ”.

But this record of Ibrahim is not the first in the Holy Koran. The Koran describes how Ibrahim was dissatisfied with his people including his own father who sculptured idols and worshipped them. He was sick of those statues and one day he broke them to pieces while his people were away. Asked who did it, he defied his people by referring them to their stone gods who would certainly know .. if they were really gods ! They arrested Ibrahim and threw him into a huge fire, but God made it “ coolness and peace ” for Ibrahim. The Koran also tells of Ibrahim’s debate with the king. The king tried to prove that he — like Ibrahim’s God — was able to give life and take life .. so he killed one prisoner

and pardoned another. But then Ibrahim challenged him to cause the sun to rise from the west and set in the east, thus changing what God had laid .. and the king's case was shattered.

The faith of Ibrahim was the crowning of a long period of thought and reasoning. The star, the larger moon and the still brighter sun, each attracted his attention as a possible god, but none satisfied him. Then he realised that God was behind and beyond everything .. the One God, the Totipotent and Omnipotent, the Absolute. Thus was monotheism revived after it has been forgotten, long after the great flood and the arc of Noah. And so, God honoured Ibrahim by His revelations and appointed him leader and Imam.

When Ibrahim married Sarah they remained childless for a long time. It was Sarah who coaxed Ibrahim to marry her maid Hajar so that she would beget him children. But when Hajar gave birth to Ismail, Sarah felt jealous and Ibrahim had to take Hajar and the child away .. to the place where Mecca stands now, and he left them in the desert. The place was hardly suitable to leave a mother and a child in, but Ibrahim, in complete surrender to the will of God left them, uttering his prayer to God which we read in the Koran: " Ibrahim said : Lord .. **make this a town of safety ..** and preserve me and **my children** from worshipping

idols : (for) they have — my Lord — led many people astray. He who follows me is from me, as to him who disobeys me : You are surely Forgiving and Merciful. Our Lord, I have settled some of my offspring in a barren valley at Your Sacred House .. Our Lord : May they keep prayer. Inspire peoples' hearts attraction to them, and provide them with many a fruit that they may give You thanks ”

So did Ibrahim tell his God .. speaking about the Holy House before it ever existed and praying for the safety of the town when there was no town. His main concern and his first wish was that they would keep their prayer.

As to Hajar, inspite of her faith in God she was certainly frightened and terrified. Frantically she scanned the place in search for water for the child .. It was logic that the two mountain tops in the vicinity would be the most suitable places to explore the landscape. This she did, going from one (Safa) to the other (Marwa) and hurrying in between. Each time she found nothing, but she would not give up, and thus covered that strip of land seven times. Only then she — in despair — remembered the baby and went to see him. But Ismail had moved a little, and when she ran to him she found water emerging from the ground : and this was the first discovery of the Well of Zamzam.

Told as a story the incident is apt to be taken lightly. But with a little thought, how can anybody fail to grasp the gravity of the situation and the throes of agony that engulfed this mother, so abandoned with her child searching desperately for water ? Yet the distant future bore a great reward. For an endless flow of the progeny of Ibrahim, the nation of surrenderers (Moslems) to God, would be commemorating that incident of Hajar, marching and hurrying between Safa and Marwa, as a rite of worship. But back to our account ! With Zamzam Well the prospect of life there was, of course, tremendously promising. A tribe of Arabs called Jorhom arrived and obtained the permission of Hajar to stay .. and many others followed. Years later Ibrahim longed to see his son Ismail, and came to find the place generously populated and busy. He also found his beloved son .. beloved to him and to all who lived there. But the toughest test was yet to come !

Ibrahim was to slay Ismail ... with his own hands... and the happenings are vividly described in the Holy Koran speaking of Ibrahim : “ We gave him the good news of having a gentle boy. And when he reached the age to work with him, he (Ibrahim) said “ My son .. I have seen in my dream that I should sacrifice you .. so tell me what you think ! He said “ Father, do as you are told. With Allah’s will you shall find me pa-

tient. ” When both surrendered (to God’s will), and Ibrahim laid down his son prostrate upon the forehead, We called upon him : Ibrahim .. you have fulfilled your vision. We so do reward the righteous. That was indeed a drastic test. And We provided a (sheep to) sacrifice to ransom him. And WE decreed his praise in the future generations : Peace be on Ibrahim ”. (Surat Saffat) .

This was indeed a bitter test. Old Ibrahim, so attached to his son, and both demonstrating for future humanity the real meaning of surrender. The word “ Islam ” literally means surrender. The word was coined by Ibrahim .. and, later on, the Koran tells us of Islam that it is : “ The religion of your father Ibrahim.. he named you “ Moslems ” ever before ”.

But as they walk along on their way to fulfill God’s will, Ibrahim’s feelings were not blunted nor was his human nature blighted. He surrendered to God .. but he did this against the full impact of his natural feelings under the circumstances. On three occasions the pressure of the human sentiment seemed overwhelming, and when it occurred to him that the devil wanted to tempt him to disobey his Lord, he just pulled himself together, summoning up all his Iman power, and the result of the struggle is defeat ... for the devil, and victory for the faithful will.

We are made to remember these three episodes of satanic temptation .. and in a manner symbolising the victory of faith (in Ibrahim) on (satan's) temptation, when we throw seven pebbles at the memorials erected at each of the three sites. It is a lesson in history as well as in behaviour, and it is included in the pilgrimage ritual to make it a sacred memory to us; that whatever the magnitude of duty or the strength of temptation against it, Man should conquer every difficulty in his pursuit of the path of God.

Some simple minded people, however, tend to think that the pillar they are aiming at is really Satan himself : and seem to behave accordingly. This, amongst other things, is regrettable, and shows how much those of us who " know ", have fallen short of their duty towards those of us who " do not ".

The background to the sacrificing of an "Odhiya" in Mena is similarly obvious. Our hearts should, there and then, remember father Ibrahim willing to offer his son Ismail for the cause of God .. thus demonstrating to us the meaning of " Islam ". We should also feel thankful to God for sparing Ismail .. because out of his progeny came the Seal of Prophets : Mohammad .. God's prayer and peace be on Him.

Another practical aspect of the slaying of all these animals is to feed the poor. However, with the large

number of pilgrims nowadays, hundreds of thousands of animals are sacrificed at Mena without there being enough " poor " available to consume them. The result is a tremendous amount of waste : both in flesh and in the fulfillment of the wisdom from its provision. In this industrial age the waste could be reduced to nil .. and a " meat bank " could keep it in store (canned or even frozen) for release whenever and wherever indicated. Besides making the most benefit out of the meat and other products as wool, blood, bones, hoofs, gut etc. ... " sacrifices " would then yield their maximal revenue both economically and morally, and Moslems will live " Islam " .. real progressive " Islam " .. I sincerely hope these words might fall on open ears .. and open hearts ! Amen.

Emerging out of his tests with success, the order came to Ibrahim to build the Holy House " Kaaba " with the help of Ismail. It is the building which God refers to as " My House " .. and it had to be purified and cleansed and devoted to the worship of God. Along the long chain of messages from God, this was the first time ever that such a House for worship was erected, and the Koran says : " The first House ever laid to people is that in Bacca (Mecca) : being blessed .. and giving guidance to all peoples. In it are evident signs and the stand of Ibrahim. Whoever enters it is safe.

Hajj to the House is a duty to Allah for all people who can afford it ”.

At this juncture I should like to take the reader back to those verses of Surat al Baqara mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. A quick review will at once reveal the following points :—

1 — After being tested and proven worthy, Ibrahim was appointed Imam (leader) to mankind.

2 — This Imamate (leadership) Ibrahim aspired to be bestowed also upon his offspring.

3 — This was granted but to the exclusion of the “ unjust ”.

4 — The first Holy House .. (My House as God calls it) .. was built, cleansed and devoted to worship : upon God’s instructions to Ibrahim and Ismail.

5 — Ibrahim prayed for the safety and prosperity of those of the dwellers of that town who believed in God and, in the Last Day. The non-believers would await a fate of torture.

6 — Ibrahim and Ismail, begging acceptance by God : asked Him to make them “ Moslems ” to Him, and to show them how to worship.

7 — The same request applied also to some of their progeny : a nation of Moslems (to God).

8 — Their final request was that God would send to

this Nation a Messenger (Apostle), who is one of them, to " recite " to them the " Ayat " (signs, or verses of the Koran) of God and teach them the " Book " and " wisdom " and purify them.

It is no surprise therefore that " Hajj " is one of the pillars of Islam; a duty to be carried out once in a life time. By so doing, we are just establishing contact with the roots of our " Message " Our religion is that of Ibrahim. It is our heritage of Ibrahim .. but we have not inherited it by being the descendants of Ibrahim's flesh and blood .. for at the outset those of Ibrahim's descendants who would be unjust were excluded from this covenant with God. Unjust indeed were any who rejected or distorted the faith of Ibrahim. It was Ibrahim who named us Moslems .. and the faith was propagated in unbroken continuity to the Nation of Mohammad — peace be upon Him — whom God instructs in the Holy Koran saying : " Say : we believe in Allah and that which has been transcended unto us, and that which transcended upon Ibrahim, Ismail, Isaac, Jacob and the tribes, and that which was given (to) Moses and Jesus, and which was given (to) the Prophets from their Lord .. we do not discriminate between any of them .. and to Him we are surrenderers (Moslems) ".

Mohammad himself was the answer to Ibrahim's very prayer that God would send that nation one of

them as His Prophet and Messenger .. Although Mohamad was amongst the grandchildren of Ibrahim and Ismail, this was not his main attribute, for this he shared with many others who were descendants by blood only but not by faith.

It is no wonder then that Moslems worship God by this visit to His House, which He instructed Ibrahim to build and cleanse for worship, taught him the rites and ordered him to exhort people to make pilgrimage, so that they may come, on foot and riding, from every distant quarter : as the Koran tells. By God's decree Ibrahim voiced the " call ", and we " go " in reply.

But what was the situation at the time of Mohamad, blessings and peace be on Him ?

Numerous indeed have become the descendants of Ibrahim, either through Ismail or through Isaac, his second son born to him later from Sarah. But a look at their life would immediately bring home the relevance of that restriction made by God when Ibrahim aspired that the " leadership " (Imamate) given him would be passed on to his descendants, viz " MY covenant shall not apply to the unjust " .. and " unjust " they were.

To start with, there were the Jews .. descendants of Isaac, and followers of Moses — peace be upon Him. From early times they showed ample evidence of disobedience. Even with Moses amongst them, only a lit-

the time after he had delivered them from the tyranny of the Pharaoh of Egypt, they would see people worshipping idols and straightaway ask Moses why not " make " them a god like that of those people. When Moses left them for an audience with God in Sinai and receiving the Commandments, they would soon make a golden ox and worship it as " their god and that of Moses ". To the warnings, reminders and protests of Haron, brother of Moses, their ears were completely deaf. And later on, when Moses chose seventy of them and went to have audience with God to repent and apologise, those men would say to Moses : " we will not believe you unless we have seen Allah plainly ", and a thunderbolt immediately struck them as they watched. They killed many prophets. And when Jesus son of Mariam — peace be upon Them — was sent to them, only a few believed in Him and followed Him to become Christians. The remainder rejected Him, mocked Him, opposed Him and condemned Him to death : a verdict they passed but which they could not execute. At the time of Mohommad — peace be upon Him — they held the same attitude as they do today, thinking that by their blood descendance from Isaac and Ibrahim they were the guardians of the faith and the " chosen people of God ".

Christianity after Jesus also suffered as time pas-

sed on. Some Christians held Jesus was God, others that he was His son, and others rejected the virginity of Mariam. Christendom also deviated from christianity in many spheres of life. The world was in real need of an Apostle to put matters aright and re-clarify the message of Ibrahim .. and indeed give humanity the **true** religion of God, purified from all that vitiated it, as well as the foundations of a legal system for Humanity to abide by .. now that Humanity had come to age.

But the serious and decisive confrontation was to take place in Mecca between Mohammad and his brethren, the children of Ismail, headed by Mohammad's own tribe, Quoraish. The House of God became the house of idols : worshipped by those Arabs. The message of Ibrahim was in essence abandoned, and the original rites were used to worship a multitude of statues, circling around the Kaaba naked, and holding a nominal pilgrimage season which those pagans spent in feasting, drinking and merriment.

It was a long struggle, but at the end it was won by the faithful, and Mohammad led the victorious Moslems into Mecca, destroying the idols and wiped out paganism once and for all.

From all the grandchildren of Ibrahim it was only the Nation of Mohammad who could claim the Imam-ate of Ibrahim after the lapse of so many generations.

Arabs and non-Arabs, Christians and Jews, white, black, and yellow, were later converted in great numbers to Islam, to become brothers in God, and though not blood descendants of Ibrahim they constituted that Nation which Ibrahim foresaw a long time before, and which God addresses in the Koran by saying : “ And thus WE make you a justly balanced Nation, that you might be witness over the nations and the Messenger (Mohammad) be a witness over you ”. The continuity of the true faith of Ibrahim was at last restored.

CHAPTER TWO

EPILOGUE

With all this in mind — and in heart — you have come for “ Hajj ”. Aware of this background you now know what it is all about, and the steps of “ Hajj ” will not seem as meaningless as some people would like you to believe.

Do remember, however, that “ Hajj ” has not stopped since Ibrahim .. there has been a “ Hajj ” every season alright but the crucial difference has been in spirit rather than in form .. Mohammad found his contemporaries doing “ HAJJ ” in paganism and idolatry, and he took up the battle until “ Hajj ” was done in monotheism and in worship of God, as first decreed upon Ibrahim.

Please do remember also that the pagans did not think or claim that the statues they worshipped had any of the attributes of God.. Lord of the worlds and Greater of all beings. During their debates with Mohammad, as the Koran tells us, they said : “We only worship them in order that they bring us nearer to God”. But to Islam this did not make them astray any less.. or friends

any more.

You will therefore keep alert and endeavour not to mix worship inadvertently with any trace of paganism. Never think that the stones of "Kaaba" can produce any good or harm. The "black stone" in the "Kaaba" is just a stone. The Prophet kissed it, it is true, and during "Tawaf" you may kiss it or make a gesture of reverence by raising your arm towards it. But it is a stone just the same, and Omar ibn al Khattab, the friend of the Prophet and his second Caliph, addressed the "black stone" by saying : "I witness you are a stone which can not do good or do harm .. Had I not seen the Messenger of God kiss you I would never have kissed you".

Some over-enthusiastic pilgrims, although well meaning, behave in such a manner unworthy of a true Moslem. I have seen people in the crowded "Tawaf" place fighting their way through the crowd to reach the "black stone" for a touch or a kiss, and whilst so doing they do not care if women or old and weak people may fall or become injured. I have seen several cases of fractured ribs inflicted in this way.

Is this really the spirit of Islam ?

Would it not be more Islamic to pray : "My Lord .. I would have loved to kiss the 'black stone' to follow the example of Your Prophet .. but the place is crowded

and so many others of my Moslems brethren want to do the same .. My Lord : in love and fraternity to my brethren I will not compete .. I will give them priority over myself .. please Lord make it for thy sake and accept from me that I give preference to my fellow Moslems over myself". ? Indeed it is .. and let me quote the Koran describing the faithful : "and they give preference over themselves even though they are needy". And here is the criterion of Iman in the words of our Prophet : " None of you is a Momen (faithful) unless he likes for his brother what he likes for himself".

The "black stone" should indeed be revered, to the Moslem Nation it has a status similar to that of the flag. A flag is honoured, and may even be kissed .. but only in such a context and not more.

While in "Ihram", Moslems really exercise equality, for the garments of Ihram make the very rich and the very poor look alike : everybody is free from the "clothes" barrier. Brotherhood is fostered by the gathering from near and far, converging upon the House of God, all worshipping Him, all being the members of the one Nation inspite of creed, tongue, colour, culture and status. I have been told by some Moslems coming from certain countries where the practice of colour discrimination is rampant, about their amazement on their first visit to Moslem countries, where the problem of

colour is simply nonexistent.

The journey of "Hajj", however, is not easy. It is a taxing process and I do not speak in terms of the distance you cover from Home to "Hajj". Coming together with a few hundred thousand people within a limited span of time and space, having to perform the same rites, entailing mass movements in a limited time from one place to another, is an ordeal. Yet the main cause of difficulty is the human one. These people have many different backgrounds and customs, do not speak the same language, and yet they are gathered into this colossal human mass. One imagine that endless situations would arise all loaded with nervous tension and intolerance. Yet strong "brakes" are placed on any tendency to nervousness or intolerance .. it is a criterion of pilgrimage to be pure and tolerant. The Koran says : "The Hajj season comprises the specified months. He who proposes to do Hajj in them must abstain from obscenity, wickedness and illtempered disputes during Hajj". However provoked you should remain gentle and tolerant. This attitude of peace and forgiveness is imposed by your own self .. and you do not pretend to be tolerant, but you feel you really are. This is indeed a great exercise in self-restraint and self exploration .. for you will sometimes be surprised to discover your tremendous faculties for love and patience, thus un-

earthing treasures you can count on in your future life.

Some of us who are highly sophisticated, especially those with western upbringing, do time and again come back from pilgrimage unsatisfied and voice many complaints about their encounters. Some of them complain about the behaviour of certain groups of Moslems and adjectives such as "untidy", "uneducated" etc.. are often used. It seems to me that one of the aims of "Hajj" is to put the one Nation together in the one pot and make them mix and mingle. As they cast away their clothes to wear Ihram, the privileged also cast away their arrogance and pride. Because they know that it is a sin to be harsh to your brother or be scornful of him, this superiority complex will be tamed until utterly gone. It is democracy in practice .. and it is democracy in love .. under God. Diagnosing the backward condition of certain groups of Moslems should merely confront the better privileged Moslems with a responsibility they fail to have fulfilled. We are one Nation .. one family .. and if some hold the torch in their custody then they are to blame for those living in the dark. It is true that some Moslems live in circumstances precluding them from attaining the standard that would please. Instead of being angry with them we should be angry for them.

As to the meaninglessness of the rites of Hajj I

hear about now and then from some colleagues, I am hoping by now the picture is clearer to them .. and more meaningful. I would also request them to ask themselves a direct question and insist on an honest answer :
“ Do I believe in Allah and am I willing to worship Him as a Moslem ? or not ?”

If the answer is Yes .. then let us realise that our regard for God should be quite different from our regard for mortal human beings. A fellow man tells you something and it is your right to question it. A ruler issues a law and you have the right to vote with or against it, and even oppose it through constitutional means. These are inter-human relations. But when it comes to God .. the question is not the same. God created us, owns us, and we derive pride and dignity from being His slaves .. but His alone, and when God gives and order :

the answer should not be “Why” ?..

It should be : “We hear and obey” ..

for “Islam” .. is .. “SURRENDER”.

