

3. Arabic language books/reading material:

It is extremely common for Muslims to carry special supplication pamphlets/books during their travels. This includes copies of Quran in Arabic language only or with translation. This should not alarm an officer. In particular, Muslims buy books during their Hajj travel that should in no way be perceived negatively.

Example; Mishandling or unnecessary questions about the book[s] or the content may lead to a negative situation. The question of mishandling continues to haunt the US military from the federal bureau of prisons to the GITMO experience. And in most cases it's because of lack of understanding about Muslims reverence for the Quran or a book with Qur'anic scripture.

1. HAJJ TRAVEL OVERVIEW

There are approximately 20,000 pilgrims traveling from the United States.

Travel Dates:

Departing from October 15th - October 23rd

Returning from November 1st - December 1st

FOR MORE INFORMATION
VISIT WWW.CAIRMN.COM



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In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful



THE HAJJ TRAVELER A MUSLIM'S PILGRIMAGE TO MECCA

I. What is the Hajj?

The Hajj is the Pilgrimage to Mecca in Islam.

It is a spiritual journey that every Muslim aspires to accomplish at least once in a life time. For Muslims, the Hajj is the fifth and final pillar of Islam. It occurs in the month of Dhul Hijjah which is the twelfth month of the Islamic lunar calendar. It is the journey that every financially and physically able adult Muslim undertakes to elevate their spiritual status.

II. Significance

1. The significance of the Hajj is rooted in the life story, faith, commitment and sacrifice of the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him), who is revered not just in Islam, but also in Judaism and Christianity.

2. Judaism: According to A Concise Encyclopedia of Judaism by Dan Cohn-Sherbok (Oneworld Publications 1998), Prophet Abraham is the father of Jewish people. According to Scripture, he was the son of Terah and the father of Isaac, who was born to Sarah, and he is also the father of Ishmael, who was born to Hagar.

3. Christianity: It is through the central figure of Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) that Prophet Abraham is given prominence in the Christian tradition. According to the Catholic Encyclopedia Volume 1 (1999, Kevin Knight, online version), in the New Testament, the generation of Jesus Christ is traced back to Abraham by St. Matthew.

4. Islam: In Islam, Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) is the friend of God and the father of Prophets (Ismail or Ishmael in English and Ishaq or Isaac and the grandfather of Prophet Yaqub or Jacob). He is also one of the ancestors of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him).

5. The Hajj rites performed by a pilgrim are derived from the actions of the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him). With regard to the Hajj, Prophet Abraham's centrality to this fifth pillar of Islam is indicated by the Prophet Mohammed's statement, "You must adhere to the traditions and rituals (of Hajj), for these have come down to you from (your forefather) Ibrahim in heritage" (Tirmidhi).

A. The Ka'aba: With regards to the Ka'ba, God says: "The first House (of worship) appointed for people was that at Bakka (another name for Mecca); full of blessings and guidance for all kinds of beings: in it are signs manifest, the station of Abraham-whoever enters it attains security; pilgrimage thereto is a duty men owe to God- those who can afford the journey; but if any deny faith, God stands not in need of any of His creatures "(Quran 3:96-97). The Ka'aba is the central structure around which the Hajj takes place. No Hajj is valid without going around this structure built by Prophets Abraham and Ishmael in counterclockwise fashion seven times.

B. Second, Muslims who perform the Hajj or Umra (lesser pilgrimage) must run in the middle portion of the distance between Safa and Marwa (two hills close to the Kaba) seven times. This is a commemoration of the sacrifice of the wife of Abraham, Hagar (may God be pleased with her) for her son Prophet Ishmael.

C. Prophet Ibrahim had settled his wife and son in the valley of Mecca by God's order to pioneer a civilization. It was from this civilization that the Prophet Mohammed was born.

D. Finally, Prophet Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his beloved son Ishmael for the sake of God exemplifies his sincere devotion to God. The commemoration of this sacrifice is practiced with the sacrifice of an animal during Hajj and one of the two Islamic holy days: Eid-ul- Adha.

E. Both father and son willingly submitted to God's command. God substituted a ram in Ishmael's place at the last moment. God talks about this incident in Quran 37:100-107.

The sacrifice that is offered by Muslims all over the world every year (at Eid-ul-Adha) is in commemoration of the supreme act and spirit of sacrifice offered by Prophet Abraham in lieu of his son Ishmael.

III. HAJJ ESSENTIALS

1. ZamZam Water

Muslims believe ZamZam water is holy. It is commemorated in the Islamic rites of pilgrimage. Muslims bring back gallons of water for personal use. ZamZam water is revered just as Catholics revere the Holy Water. It is believed that ZamZam holy water heals physical and mental ailments. Staff should be instructed about the 'sanctity' of this water for Muslims and to treat it with respect.

Example: Tossing ZamZam water bottle in trash bin will be deemed a disrespectful act. (We suggest CBP to let the passengers know that their water bottle will not be thrown away and that it will be saved for a later pick up by CAIR if necessary. This will not only immediately diffuse any potential negative altercations but in fact will draw greater respect of the staff's sensitivity and respect to cultures and religions.)

2. Pilgrim Attire

There is special attire that pilgrims wear for the Hajj pilgrimage. This special attire, worn by men, consists of two simple unsown pieces of large towels, one wrapped around the waist and the other on the upper body. This makes them stand out differently in the crowd. It is suggested that staff be informed to recognize this as a religious garb for the occasion of Hajj travel. Pilgrim Appearance: men will have shaved heads when re-entering the country.

Example: Officer with a dog will make a pilgrim traveler extremely uncomfortable. An unusual reaction in such a situation may trigger myriad thoughts in the mind of an officer. The officer wouldn't know that Muslims (traditionally) consider dogs to be unclean and a Muslim may think he/she is being deliberately insulted. Due consideration will diffuse an unpleasant situation.