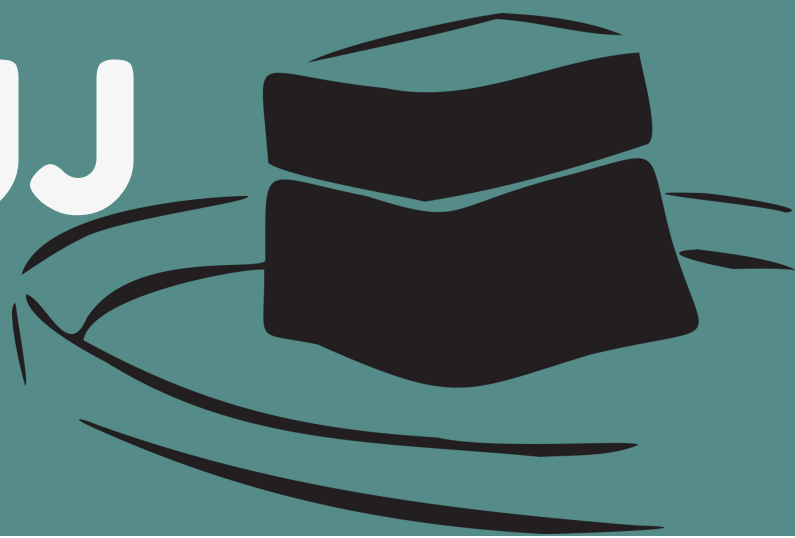


THE STORY OF HAJJ

Understanding the meaning of the 5th Pillar of Worship



What is Hajj?

Hajj or Pilgrimage is the 5th Pillar of Worship in Islam. Hajj is to be performed once in a lifetime when you have reached adulthood and have the physical ability and the money to go. It is a time of great spiritual reflection and physical effort made to perform the rituals with patience and focus.

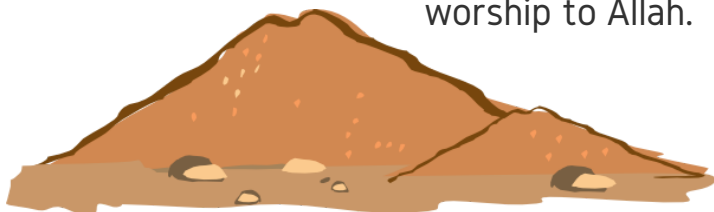


What is the Kabba?

The Kabba is the first house of worship built by the Prophet Ibrahim and his son, in thankfulness to Allah for His mercy. Muslims pray towards the Kabba, as the Prophet Mohammed did. In his time, the Kabba was rebuilt with his help; and he along with the important tribes of Mecca had the honor of placing the Black Stone at the corner of the building.

What is the Black Stone?

According to Islamic tradition the Black Stone fell from the heavens when Adam and Eve (Hawa) were on earth, marking the place for them to build an altar for worship to Allah.



Mountain of Arafat

Pilgrims spend the 2nd day of Hajj on the mountain of Arafat in prayer, asking for Allah's mercy and forgiveness. It is the place where the Prophet Mohammed gave his Farewell Sermon on the last Hajj he performed before he died.

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Hajar and Prophet Ismael

Hajar and Ismael were left by the Prophet Ibrahim in the desert by Allah's command. Hajar becomes worried when she does not find food and water to survive. She prays for Allah's mercy and puts her trust in Him and he answers her prayers by opening a spring of water at Ismael's feet. The spring is named "Zam Zam" which means to gather. First the birds arrive to drink from the spring, animals too, and soon after people settle in the valley. Mecca becomes an oasis in the desert.

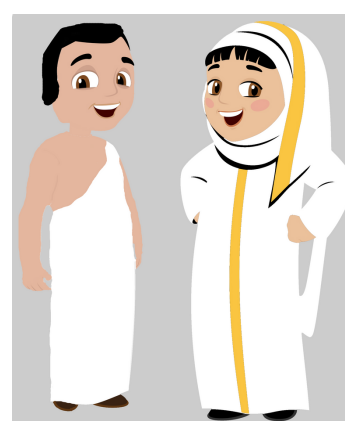
Prophet Ibrahim and his Son Ismael

Ibrahim returns to Mecca to visit his wife and son, and Allah tests Ibrahim by asking him to give up something very dear to him – his son, who he had waited for, a long long time.

Have you had to give something up? How did it feel?

When Ibrahim and his son agree they must obey Allah, He has mercy on them and asked them to sacrifice a ram instead. Ibrahim and his son were so thankful that they built the Kabba, the holiest place on earth for Muslims.

What are the Ihram Clothes?



The white clothes of Hajj are simple and make everyone feel equal. Allah rewards the good deeds that we do, not whether we are rich or poor,

from important tribes or families, or the color or our skin or the country we are born in.