

Beyond Ritualism: Impact and Implications of Ḥajj on the Pakistani Society

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Abstract

Ḥajj—an annual Islamic congregation—is a supreme manifestation of Faith (Imān) in which Muslims assemble to pronounce explicitly their subservience and loyalty to Almighty Allah alone. Besides freeing themselves from the squalor of Shirk, Muslims satiate their souls with the feelings of ‘Faith’ and ‘Unity.’ This fact is purely accomplished when the Muslims shed off their outer difference by donning the dress of unity (Ihrām). Ḥajj is a perfect blend between ‘Creator’ and ‘creature’, ‘soul’ and ‘spirit’ on the one hand and an enduring and invaluable expression physically, socially, and materially on the other. From this pragmatic Institution, Pakistan—one of the premier countries of the Islamic world—can derive unprecedented benefits politically, socially, and economically.

One of the important objectives of the paper is to describe the significance of Ḥajj to the people of Pakistan. In so doing, the paper examines and explores, objectively and analytically, the institution of Ḥajj and its implications on the Muslim world, particularly Pakistan. The first section of the paper, “Ḥajj—At a Glance”, presents meaning and historical background of Ḥajj. The second section “Revitalizing the Ḥajj”, besides presenting the revitalization of the Institution by the final Messenger (peace be upon him) also gives an overview of some of the very important rituals to be realized (during Ḥajj). The subsequent sections, “Socio-Economic Dimension of Ḥajj” and “Ḥajj—Implications and Impact on the Society of Pakistan”, describe respectively the socio-economic impact and leverage of the Ḥajj on the Muslim world in general and on Pakistan in particular. The study is followed by “Conclusion” wherein it has been argued that the Ḥajj can bring an immense transformation and positivity in a country if its sweetness is sought in all earnestness.

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Introduction:

Ḥajj, literally ‘to make an intention’ and technically a journey to *Bayt al-Ḥarām*, with specific actions and duties in order to fulfill the fifth obligation of Islam is an ancient practice that was practiced way long before the coming of Messenger Ḥaḍrat Muḥammad (SAWW). It was one of those rare practices of the religion of Ḥaḍrat Ibrāhīm (peace be upon him) that survived the assault of the pagan practices of the Arabs and remained in vogue. The *Qur’ān* announces that Ḥaḍrat Ibrāhīm (peace be upon him) together with his son Ḥaḍrat Ismā’īl (peace be upon him) built *Ka’ba* in obedience to Allah proclaimed the *Ḥajj* to all mankind.¹

Ḥajj is obligatory once in life for those who can afford the expenses involved (economic and physical). While carrying out this obligation, the *Ḥājjī* or Muslim pilgrim (pl. *Ḥujjāj*; Urdu *Ḥājjī*) is required to abandon relations, status, country, home, business and even his normal clothing. It reflects without any doubt the state of *Ummah* as a whole. For the believers, performing the obligation of *Ḥajj* is the single most significant religious experience in their whole lives. It is therefore, expected to have a significant impact on one’s immediate and possibly long-term religious practices. Moreover, this obligation according to Ziauddin Sardar is performed not because the *Ḥujjāj* seek inspiration, but they are already inspired.² Similarly, to quote Ahmad Kamal: “We are not to come here in search of inspiration, but because we are inspired. Pilgrimage is a declaration of belief, not a search for it.”³

Ḥajj is a huge congregation of ‘Believers’—from diverse backgrounds—who come from all corners of the world to the city of *Makkah*. In the whole world nowhere is witnessed such a yearly congregation. During this period, it is observed that Muslims of various race and complexion pray in unison and become aware about the power that springs from this unison and concerted action. Directed by Allah to assemble at the sacred places, *Ḥajj* grants an unparalleled opportunity to discover social, political, economic, and spiritual potentialities of this ‘Institution.’ Muslims have been privileged by Allah with the institution of *Ḥajj* so as to know the realities concealed therein.⁴ Allah, the Exalted, in the *Qur’ān* says that the season of *Ḥajj* always brings uncountable benefits in both spiritual and worldly matters. Thus, purporting that there is no room of being unsure about its open or concealed benefits. Asma T. Uddin, while calling *Ḥajj* “a journey to the heart of Islam,” beautifully summarizes the essence, importance, and impact of *Ḥajj* in the following lines:

The hajj pulls believers out of their environment and places them among new surroundings; it also gives them a different pace, marked by both soothing and hectic rituals. It beckons Muslims to go on a journey like no other, with one destination: the Kaa’ba—the center of the Islamic world, the earth, and the cosmos. During this journey, pilgrims explore into their inner selves. They are reminded of and beckoned to their original, primordial state of

being, or *fitra*. The world, society and self are united in a mutual quest; the hajj is a journey to the heart of Islam.⁵

Hajj is undoubtedly an activity that requires expenses to be met with. It involves travel expenses, living and health costs as well. At the same time it provides an opportunity to set up contacts, exchange ideas, establish and maintain unity and solidarity, and work for the betterment of the whole *Ummah*.⁶ Above and beyond this, in this congregation a huge complimentary attitude towards other Muslims is observed which suggests that the institution contributes to the persistence and growth of Islam as well.⁷ Nationalism, sectarianism, and ethnocentrism are the prevailing maladies of the Muslim world that were shaped and designed by the Western occupation of the Muslim lands. In the post-colonial era the Muslim world continued to experience the various modes of diversification. Thus throughout the Muslim world various forms of government with diverse socio-economic structures may be spotted. Yet within this diversity can be observed during the period of *Hajj* a unity.⁸

Besides this social unison, the Institution of *Hajj* has unrestrained economic implications not only on a particular region (Makkah or Madinah) but beyond that as well. This obligation involves expenditure hence circulation of wealth is made and money changes many hands. Its impact on boosting the business activities at large too maybe conveniently established. Its impact on stabilizing and boosting the economic condition of the Muslim world is no hidden reality. In short, *Hajj*, beyond ritualism symbolizes a dynamic endeavor that consummates in it every aspect of human life be it physical, spiritual, cultural, political or material.

***Hajj*—At a Glance:**

According to E.W. Lane *Hajj* literally means “He prepared, or betook himself, to or towards a person ... or towards an object of reverence, veneration, respect or honor.”⁹ Technically, *Hajj*—a dynamic form of the command of Allah and an annual pilgrimage—refers to the performance of certain recognized and well-established practices at and around Makkah i.e. ‘Arafah, and Minā during the second week of *Dhū al-Hijjah*.¹⁰ ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd Ṣiddīqī says that *Hajj* literally means ‘repairing to a place for the sake of visit’ (*al-qaṣd li ziyārah*) and technically it means repairing to *Ka’bah* (Bayt Allah) in order to observe the necessary devotions.¹¹

The *Ka’bah* (*Baytullah*), the focal point the *Hajj* was the site of pilgrimage long before Ḥaḍrat Muḥammad (peace be upon him). Constructed by Ḥaḍrat Ibrāhīm (peace be upon him) and his son Ḥaḍrat Ismā’īl (peace be upon him), *Ka’bah* is the spiritual center of all the Muslims.¹² Allah provides the details regarding the construction of this centre and the initiation of the *Hajj* in the following Āyāt:

إِنَّ أَوَّلَ بَيْتٍ وُضِعَ لِلنَّاسِ لَلَّذِي بِبَكَّةَ مُبَارَكًا وَهُدًى لِّلْعَالَمِينَ

Verily, the first House (of worship) appointed for mankind was that at *Bakkah* (Makkah), full of blessing, and a guidance for *Al-‘Ālamīn* (the mankind and jinn).¹³

فِيهِ آيَاتٌ بَيِّنَاتٌ مَّقَامُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمَنْ دَخَلَهُ كَانَ آمِنًا وَلِلَّهِ عَلَى النَّاسِ حِجُّ
الْبَيْتِ مَنِ اسْتَطَاعَ إِلَيْهِ سَبِيلًا وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ عَنِ الْعَالَمِينَ

In it are manifest signs (for example), the *Maqām* (place) of Ibrāhīm (Abraham); whosoever enters it, he attains security. And *Hajj* (pilgrimage to Makkah) to the House (Ka‘bah) is a duty that mankind owes to Allāh, those who can afford the expenses (for one’s conveyance, provision and residence); and whoever disbelieves [i.e. denies *Hajj* (pilgrimage to Makkah), then he is a disbeliever of Allāh], then Allāh stands not in need of any of the *‘Ālamīn* (mankind, jinn and all that exists).¹⁴

With the construction of *Ka‘bah* emerged the ‘movement’ of propagation of the ‘universal’ message of Islam. The fundamental objective of this spiritual center was that the believers should “gather here, perform ‘*Ibadat* of Allah collectively and then return to their respective countries with the message of Islam”¹⁵, so says Mawlānā Abū al-A‘lā Maudoodi. But with the passage of time, the situation turned gloomy since the people distorted and disfigured the basic purpose and objective of this practice. They turned toward their own formulated customs, traditions, and practices that had no connection at all with the *Hanīf, Dīn* of Haḍrat Ibrāhīm (peace be upon him). It was observed that the people both men and women used to circumambulate the *Ka‘bah* naked, smeared it with the blood of the animals, and threw flesh of animals at its gate.¹⁶

Revitalizing the Hajj:

The divinely promulgated obligation i.e., *Hajj*, was again revitalized with the advent of the last and final Messenger Haḍrat Muḥammad (peace be upon him). The Messenger of Allah, with Allah’s order, besides declaring *Ka‘bah* as the center of Muslims and calling the humanity to come to this center and perform *Hajj* wiped out once and for all, the fabricated addition of traditions that were rampant hitherto in the region. He “did not innovate this institution,” says ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd Ṣiddīqī, “but purged it of all evil practices and made it an obligatory act of piety by which one can develop God-consciousness.”¹⁷ Declaring *Hajj* as an incumbent religious obligation, Allah says in the *Qur’ān*:

وَأَذِّنْ فِي النَّاسِ بِالْحَجِّ يَأْتُوكَ رِجَالًا وَعَلَى كُلِّ ضَامِرٍ يَأْتِينَ مِنْ كُلِّ فَجٍّ عَمِيقٍ

And proclaim to mankind the *Hajj* (pilgrimage). They will come to you on foot and on every lean camel, they will come from

every deep and distant (wide) mountain highway (to perform Hajj).¹⁸

Moreover, its further significance was demonstrated and enhanced by Haḍrat Muḥammad (peace be upon him) who said is quoted to have said in the *Aḥādīth*:

Abū Hurayrah (Allah be pleased with him) reported that Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) addressed us and said: O people, Allah has made *Hajj* obligatory for you; so perform *Hajj*.¹⁹

Hajj caters to all the unique and distinctive acts and institutions of Islam and perfection of *Īmān*. In practice, it is the commemoration and reenactment of all of the acts of devotion to Allah by Haḍrat Ibrāhīm (peace be upon him) and his family. Believers take on this pilgrimage to participate and practice these acts of devotion sequentially at a prescribed place and time. A mere pilgrimage or the observation of the various acts of *Hajj* at a different season or place never ever would amount to the fulfillment of this obligation.²⁰

During *Hajj*, all the Muslims don a special dress known as *Ihrām*.²¹ This symbolizes the equality of all believers before Allah besides obliterating the worldly differences. Robert Bianchi, a non-Muslim, also acknowledges this fact when he says that *Ihrām* “symbolizes the radical equality and humility of all believers before God regardless of worldly differences of race, nationality, class, age, gender or culture.”²² *Hajj*, a series of symbolic rituals carried out in unison, includes among other practices like *Ṭawāf*, *Sa’yee*, *Waqūf-i-‘Arafah*, *Waqūf-i-Muzdalifah*, *Ramī al-Jimār*, and *Qurbānī*.²³

Ṭawāf, the first and initial rite of the *Hajj*, is the seven fold circumambulation of *Ka’bah*, the first three with alacrity and the remaining four at a normal speed.²⁴ It is immediately followed by the *Sa’yee*, wherein the *Hujjāj* run back and forth seven times between the two hills of *Safā* and *Marwah*. This ritual reenactments Haḍrat Hājirāh’s (wife of Haḍrat Ibrāhīm) delirious and frantic search for water after she and her son Haḍrat Ismā‘īl (peace be upon him) were left in the desert by Haḍrat Ibrāhīm (peace be upon him) at the command of Allah. The ritual which follows *Sa’yee* and which represents the apex of the *Hajj* is the *en masse* ‘procession’ and ‘standing’ of all the *Hujjāj* at Arafat (*Waqūf-i-‘Arafah*) on ninth day of *Dhū al-Hijjah*.

Quickly, the *Hujjāj* after observing *Waqūf* at Arafat inch their way towards Muzdalifah at the time of sunset and spend night there. Subsequently, on the tenth day of *Dhū al-Hijjah*, at sunrise, the *Hujjāj* depart from Muzdalifah and proceed toward Mina. It is a very busy day for the *Hujjāj* writes Maulānā Mukhtār since they are required to perform four very important devotional acts: (a) *Ramī al-Jimār* (throwing pebbles at the *Jamrah*) (b) *Qurbānī* (slaughtering the animal) (c) shaving the head and (d) performing the ‘*Ṭawāf al-Ifāda*’.²⁵

On the completion of these devotional acts, the *Hujjāj* feel relaxed with a more flexible schedule in which they perform some more rituals like more *Ramī* on consecutive days at Mina, and *Tawāf* and *Sa'yee* as well if not done earlier on youm un Nahr. Thus, with the observing of all the fundamental rituals practically culminates the *Hajj*²⁶ and thereafter, gradually the *Hujjāj* reenter into the worldly business but with a profuse change in their lives.

Hajj—profoundly a personal activity—wherein, a believer not only observes the liturgy of others, but himself carries out, albeit in the company of other Muslims who have come from far and wide, the prescribed liturgical rites in which he is the sole performer. Although, while performing these rites he may receive help and assistance from others (guide) but in no case they are meant for mediation between him and Allah. Since, Haḍrat Ibrāhīm (peace be upon him) and his family stood alone before Allah at the times of trials and tribulations, likewise, a Muslim also stands solitary before Allah while performing the *Hajj* with no intermediaries to mediate his actions to Allah.

Social-Economic Dimension of *Hajj*:

Islam has its rituals like other religions and at the same time these rituals are no end in themselves. Nor are they the means to appease Allah because Allah, unlike those gods made by man himself, is above all needs. Pertinently, all these rituals are intended and designed to elevate man's own position and the same holds true for the *Hajj*.²⁷ *Hajj*, an activity beyond ritualism, is a means to gain piety by seeking the Mercy of Allah. Being one of the pillars of Islam on which the whole edifice of Islam rests, the institution of *Hajj*, therefore, reflects the state of the *Ummah*. It is the 'act' that welds together the whole *Ummah* to seek among others the pleasure of Allah, exchange the thoughts, help the needy ones, and last but not least invokes them to toil hard for the melioration of the entire *Ummah*.²⁸ Even the non-Muslims, despite their ill designs against Islam and the Muslims, acknowledge this fact. One of the best examples is of P. K. Hitti, an Arab historian, who admits the social, cultural, and political efficacy of the *Hajj* in the following lines:

Down through the ages this institution [i.e., *Hajj*] has continued to serve as the major unifying influence in Islam and the most effective common bond among the diverse believers [belonging to diverse lands, races, and cultures]. It rendered almost every capable Moslem perforce a traveller for once in his life time. The socializing influence of such a gathering of the brotherhood of believers from the four quarters of the earth is hard to over-estimate. It afforded opportunity for [N]egroes, Berbers, Chinese, Persians, Syrians, Turks, Arabs—rich and poor, high and low—to fraternize and meet together on the common ground of faith. Of all world religions Islam seems to have attained the largest measure of success in demolishing the barriers of race, colour and nationality—at least within the confines of its own community.²⁹

One of the very significant social dimensions of the *Hajj*, unlike prayer, is that it is on the one side a communal experience and on the other side perhaps the most significant institution rather the only institution that facilitates the process of integration of the Muslim world which is currently witnessing a deluge of new problems and issues. This huge gathering invigorates in the Muslims a sense of unity, equality, love, and brotherhood with the others who were earlier estranged and separated by ethnicity, color, sect, nationality, or gender.³⁰ Malcom X (Malik al-Shabaz) while experiencing unity amid diversity during the *Hajj* reflected in his letter he wrote from Makkah:

On this pilgrimage, what I have seen, and experienced, has forced me to rearrange much of my thought patterns previously held, and to toss aside some of my previous conclusions. This was not too difficult for me. Despite my firm convictions, I have been always been a man who tries to face facts, and to accept the reality of life as new experience and new knowledge unfolds it. I have always kept an open mind, which is necessary to the flexibility that must go hand in hand with every form of intelligent search for truth.³¹

In the same letter, while unfolding the universality of the teachings of Islam, he exhibited Islam's underpinning wisdom especially those related with *Hajj*. It will be again fitting to quote him verbatim:

Never have I witnessed such sincere hospitality and overwhelming spirit of true brotherhood as is practiced by people of all colors and races here in this Ancient Holy Land, the home of Abraham, Muhammad and all the other Prophets of the Holy Scriptures. For the past week, I have been utterly speechless and spellbound by the graciousness I see displayed all around me by people of all colors ... There were tens of thousands of pilgrims, from all over the world. They were of all colors, from blue-eyed blonds to black-skinned Africans. But we were all participating in the same ritual, displaying a spirit of unity and brotherhood that my experiences in America had led me to believe never could exist between the white and non-white ... During the past eleven days here in the Muslim world, I have eaten from the same plate, drunk from the same glass, and slept in the same bed (or on the same rug)--while praying to the same God--with fellow Muslims, whose eyes were the bluest of blue, whose hair was the blondest of blond, and whose skin was the whitest of white. And in the words and in the actions in the deeds of the 'white' Muslims, I felt the same sincerity that I felt among the black African Muslims of Nigeria, Sudan, and Ghana.³²

Performed by about three million Muslims from a wide range of ethnicities and races across the world, from Southeast Asia to Africa and to Europe, this annual gathering establishes a route for the exchange of ideas, thoughts, and cultures. In

this process of ‘cross fertilization’ a sense of social justice, cooperation, co-action and other such significant treasures are fortified. The *Hajj* best fits to capitalize the situation in the best possible way for changing the state affairs of the *Ummah*, that otherwise seems grave and gloomy. In the words of Kalim Siddiqui: “It represents the ultimate commitment of the *Ummah* to its unity and to its recovery from decline and deviation”³³

Mankind is currently in deep crisis. The rise of individualism has led to the repudiation of social responsibilities altogether on the one side and the fragmentation of humanity on the basis of nationality, color, language, or caste has closed the doors of social relations on the other side. Nevertheless, *Hajj* serves as an effective tool to eliminate all the sources that divide the Muslim world. Moreover, the *Hajj* wherein millions of Muslims from all the corners of the world assemble presents the biggest congregation of ‘open dialogue’ and ‘unity.’³⁴

Obviously, it is the *Hajj* which is the best manifestation of the teachings of Islam that are universal in nature. It is in this congregation where, irrespective of manmade distinctions, all don one garb, all bow before none other than Allah, all deny the false gods, all seek one destination, all grab the opportunity to help other Muslim fellows, all seek pleasure to know one another, all cherish each other’s company, all blithely exchange different things, and all pray for the whole Muslims wherever they are living.

Apart from aforementioned eternal benefits derived from the *Hajj*, it is also an endeavor to extract worldly benefits as well. To further effectuate this end, the *Qur’ān* reveals:

لِيَشْهَدُوا مَنَافِعَ لَهُمْ

That they may witness things that are of benefit to them (i.e. reward of Hajj in the Hereafter, and also some worldly gain from trade) . . .³⁵

Exegetes (*Mufasssirūn*) and Scholars of Islam have pointed out that here the term ‘*manāfi*’ indicates both worldly benefits and benefits of the Hereafter.³⁶ So, in case of worldly benefits, this annual pilgrimage has turned into a lucrative business for hundreds of thousands of people as for instance millions of people who perform the *Hajj* contribute not only to the economy of Saudi Arabia but beyond that as well. Moreover, the *Hajj* throughout the history has produced significant trade benefits seeing that the millions and trillions of dollars are spent on this obligation as a whole which are reaped by one and all associated with it in one way or the other.³⁷ With the result, loads of innovative plans are proposed, new projects are designed, social institutions are formulated and economic centers are established both regionally (Saudi Arabia) and globally (Muslim world). Its perfect manifestation is the recent expansion of *Masjid al-Ḥarām*,

Masjid al-Nabwi, and the development of other significant religious places and centers.

Beyond Saudi Arabia, unprecedented development is also observed in other countries of the Muslim world where huge number of new establishments and enterprises are established by both private as well as government institutions and this process goes on. To sum up, it can be said that the institution of *Ḥajj* caters to a large extent the spiritual and material needs of both individuals as well as communities.

Ḥajj—Implications and Impact on the Society of Pakistan:

Social Impact

Pakistan, a sovereign country in South Asia and second largest Muslim country in the world after Indonesia, has a population of around 190 million people³⁸ and is located at the confluence of South Asia, Central Asia, and Middle East.³⁹ It shares borders with India in the east, Afghanistan in the west and north, Iran in the southwest and China in the far northeast.⁴⁰ Emerging on 14 August 1947, the country has experienced various transitions and transformations politically, economically, and socially. One of the seven declared nuclear states in the whole world and the only one in the Muslim world, it besides being gifted with a vital and strategic geographic location is also actively engaged in world affairs in general and Muslim affairs in particular.⁴¹ Therefore, and true as well, it has always been the center of attention for both Muslim and non-Muslim world. Its stability and potency will much depend on how it will *re-build* and *re-constitute* its institutions at the broader level and while doing so the significance of the institution of *Ḥajj* can never ever be underestimated.

Every year, according to the figures near about three million Muslims from all over the globe assemble in Makkah and perform the fifth fundamental obligation of Islam.⁴² Among them, near about 1, 50,000 *Ḥujjāj*, or more than that as the figures vary, come from one of the most important countries of the Muslim world that is Pakistan.⁴³ Even though, the compulsory and incumbent rituals associated with the *Ḥajj* are accomplished within the five specified days but the *Ḥujjāj* spend more than a month in the two important centers of Islam i.e., Makkah and Madinah and remain there profusely engaged in *ʿIbādah*. During this period, *Ḥujjāj* from varied regions blend with each other exhibiting that the separation across the lines of ethnicity, color, nationality, sect, and gender stands nullified.⁴⁴ It is a living and practical experience where one witnesses the real meaning of what is called *Akhuwwah* (brotherhood) and where the regional disparity befalls insignificant. In the words of Hastings Donnan:

When Pakistanis talk about the ḥajj, they invariably refer to integration, equality, and community. Returning pilgrims report sensations of solidarity and ‘a great feeling of oneness,’ while those who have not been to Mecca talk similarly, if less

personally, about the pilgrimage's unifying effect. For pilgrims and non-pilgrims alike, the ḥajj thus represents what is popularly considered by many Pakistanis to be the central message of Islam, the message of equality and brotherhood, and whenever these ideals are discussed, the ḥajj is cited as an example what Islam can achieve.⁴⁵

For Pakistani pilgrims and for others as well, *Ḥajj* signifies the equality of all the people before Almighty Allah. In spite of worldly differences like that of wealth, rank, and status all the Muslims in this annual congregation stand equal; reflected in the form of a uniform dress (*Ihrām*). Such an atmosphere amid generating among the pilgrims a sense of equality demonstrates a sight of a utopian world free from material differences. It is, therefore, a beautiful model whose reflection should be reflected everywhere and not just during the season of *Ḥajj*.⁴⁶ *Ḥajj* apart from signifying equality also signifies unity—both religious and political. “[T]he underlying idea [of *Ḥajj*] is to give participants a feeling of unity ... and to impress on them that they belong to Muslim *Umma* (community, nation, sect) and as such are equal members of the Muslim fraternity.”⁴⁷ In addition to religious unity, the people of Pakistan recognize *Ḥajj* as an indication of political and military unity of the Muslim world. As a matter of fact, the political groups, while affirming that *Ḥajj* represents political unity, believe that this institution can highly beneficial for the Muslims to “work as a compact block against the enemies of Islam”.⁴⁸

This dynamic institution apart from blending the Muslims plays a significant role in reforming, based on *taqwā*, the lives of the *Hujjāj*. The *Hujjāj* of Pakistan when interviewed promptly acknowledged and reported the fact indicating an unprecedented increase in their level of spirituality, purity, and peace. Expressed by a columnist of Pakistan named Musharraf Zaidi that: “In *ihrām*, you cannot lose your temper or do anything that would disturb your own peace, or the peace of anyone around you.”⁴⁹ Standing in huge numbers before Almighty Allah, repenting and seeking His pleasure, the *Ḥajj* is an individual endeavor within and without. Though it looks that the whole population has assembled but still there is a sense of being standing solitary before Allah. From Rawalpindi, Shaza Haq, wife of former Pakistani Minister for Religious and Minority Affairs, avouched that: “When I reached Arafat, there were millions of people there, but there was still a feeling of being alone, with just God there.”⁵⁰ Another woman from Pakistan namely Farheen admits that *Ḥajj* has completely transformed her life as she says:

While we were there [Farheen and her husband in Makkah and Madinah], we lived completely according to the Quran and Hadith. I wore a veil and my husband didn't shave. When we returned to Pakistan, it just felt odd to go back to our old lives. It seemed hypocritical to just want to please God while at *Hajj* and not in our daily, everyday lives. I continued to cover my face and

my husband grew a beard. Before Hajj, I would often gossip with friends and was careless in passing comments that may hurt others. Ever since Hajj, I have firmly tried to stay away from back-biting and try my best not to hurt anyone's feelings.⁵¹

Besides increasing the individual's level of spirituality, *Hajj* also proves one of the major instruments in increasing among others a sense of cooperation, integration, tolerance towards women and non-Muslims; not excluding the other Muslim sects and groups. *Hajj* acts as a source to increase the religious fervor of the *Hujjāj* who start practicing regularly other obligations of Islam. According to analysis of David Clingingsmith, Asim Khwaja, and Michael Kramer, on more than 1,600 Pakistanis, *Hajj* could potentially affect the *Hāj* by altering his or her social status and engagement upon his or her return.⁵² The research conducted further highlights certain very important dimensions of the subject that tremendously affect the society of the country at large. As the analysis reveals that the *Hujjāj* demonstrated a greater harmony towards the people of other nationalities, social and ethnic groups and more importantly towards non-Muslims.⁵³ Habib Allah, another *Hāj* from Pakistan while expressing his emotions after performing the *Hajj* manifested the same:

I felt like we are all brothers. I never thought about this before. The hajj has changed my thoughts about other Muslims from other countries. The hajj has united us as Muslims and as brothers. After I performed the hajj, I felt that the world is small and we all sharing one place ... the earth. We should all live in peace with each other, whether with Muslims or non- Muslims.⁵⁴

The researchers during their research also witnessed among the *Hujjāj* of Pakistan a shift from regional beliefs and practices such as using amulets, visiting tombs of saints, giving marriage dowry, observing *chālīswān* (the 40-day death ceremony) etc. towards more globally accepted practices such as *Ṣalāh*, *Ṣaum*, *Zakāh* etc.⁵⁵ Moreover, their research also showed an increase in the religiosity of the *Hujjāj* who after performing the *Hajj* observed the supplementary rituals or those rituals that otherwise are not obligatory (*nawāfil*) such as fasting outside *Ramaḍān*, *Tahajjud* etc.⁵⁶

The core thing that drives the *Hujjāj* of Pakistan towards such a change was their exposure with the Muslims of the entire world reveals the research conducted by the aforementioned team. Their study further suggests that generally the *Hujjāj* do not acquire more formal religious knowledge, yet they do gain practical knowledge of the diversity whether of Islamic practices and beliefs or social groups, gender roles within Islam, and more significantly, the world beyond Pakistan.⁵⁷

Although, *Hajj* is a representation of unity and brotherhood, yet in certain contexts it acts a force creating social gaps among the society. “[W]hile in the context of the pilgrimage itself”, Donnan argues that, “the effect of the hajj is to annul status, in another context, the pilgrim's return, it helps to create it.”⁵⁸ For

instance, in the society of Pakistan, like other Muslim societies, a pilgrim is respected by everyone. He is referred to with the honorific title of *Hājji*, his advice and suggestion is sought by many, and he is treated very differently from that of others. *Hajj*, therefore, increases the standing and status of a *Hājji* in the society of Pakistan.⁵⁹ However, despite this fact, it is to argue that this situation and atmosphere also can be advantageous, if viewed positively and explicitly. In the simple words, *Hājji*'s life can prove a vital source of inspiration for the others because actions speak louder than words. In one sense it creates status differentiation (a negative expression), yet, in other sense it helps to transform the lives of the people and thereof the transformation of the society as well. In short, *Hajj*, to use Donnan's words, "is a status symbol elevating some, as well as a unifying force integrating all, [and this thing] makes the hajj a remarkably versatile symbol in Pakistan."⁶⁰

Currently, *Hajj* is one of the major subjects discussed and debated in Pakistani society by a wide variety of commentators ranging from politicians, religious scholars, and businessmen to common people and from national level to provincial and village level. It implies that the majority in Pakistan are well aware about the essence, importance, and benefits of the *Hajj*. Further, in a linear fashion, as the number of the pilgrims is continuously increasing with every passing year so increases the conscience among the Pakistanis about this fundamental institution of Islam as well.

However, the other side of the situation reveals that the bulk of the people of Pakistan lacking sound financial sources fail to accomplish the duty of performing the *Hajj*. And there are a good number of those Pakistanis who use to save throughout their life in order to be able to perform the *Hajj*. This all implies that, by and large, those Pakistanis who are materially or financially sound easily perform the *Hajj*. Further, there are many who have no knowledge about what are the necessary acts involved in the *Hajj* and how to perform them. Nonetheless, the ritual of *Hajj*, as a whole, is extremely vital for almost all the Pakistanis. For them, *Hajj* represents certain principal values of Islam and even for those Pakistanis who have never realized this dream; it is a symbol of great emotional and passionate appeal.⁶¹ In a broader sense, it can be put that how the institutions of Islam (like that of *Hajj*) can facilitate the process of shaping the individual's belief, thought, and identity on the one side and promoting the ethos of the country on the other side, and more importantly at a macro-level, in fostering unity within diversity.

Economic Impact:

Hajj not only fosters unity and brotherhood but also fosters the economy of the Muslim world as it forms one of the most significant economic enterprises. For instance, for a Pakistani to realize this objective requires a huge amount of wealth. According to Ray Fishman, Columbia Business School professor, "The Hajj is a huge expense for a typical Pakistani. The cost of making the trip starts at \$2,500, nearly three times Pakistan's average income. Poor families save for

years in order to attend. And what does \$2,500 buy you?"⁶² Despite that, there are thousands of those who vehemently desire to see this dream come true. Therefore, in this whole endeavor huge numbers are benefitted materially like the tour and travel companies, *khuddams*,⁶³ airlines, mobile phone companies, telecom agencies, traders and many more and the state too is benefitted in the form of taxes. The whole scheme of the things suggests that if Pakistan upholds this institution in a proper way⁶⁴ and thereof extracts aptly its countless benefits then in the very near future the country's innumerable problems and issues will evaporate altogether.

At last what to say is that the affirmations of the people and the analysis of different analysts suggest and speak of tremendous impact on the individual life of the *Hujjāj* and the society to which they belong. Besides, leading to a greater socio-economic engagement and benefits, it also proves that *Hajj* unites the *Ummah*, shapes the lives, beliefs, thoughts, and identities of the *Hujjāj* as well. Beyond that, of particular interest is that, these *Hujjāj* with complete change in their persona—as those who perform the *Hajj* are treated with increased deference and respect—would play a pivotal role in building a more prosperous Pakistan materially, spiritually, and morally. Proving a major force to efface dispute, division, disunity, and animosity, this institution will, therefore, help in bridging the gap between various sections rather antagonistic sections of the society. The process will obviously strengthen the state and religious institutions of the country which in turn will be well placed to serve and fulfill in a better way the greater needs of the masses. Briefly, to put it as that if the *Hujjāj* together with other dynamic groups of the country perform a wider role in Pakistan, then a remarkable transformation is likely to be expected.

Conclusions:

During *Hajj*, Muslims belonging to various races, ethnicities, languages, cultures and backgrounds from across the globe assemble at Makkah and perform one of the fundamental obligations of Islam. All of them remain busy to gain serenity, spirituality, and pleasure of Allah. It is the only congregation wherein 'practically' all the worldly distinctions vanish and what persists is the devout yearning for deliverance. The *Hajj* undoubtedly helps in increasing individual and collective conscience of the *Ummah* besides reforming the lives of the *Hujjāj*, bringing them closer to Allah, and shaping or broadening their views and visions. Moreover, as is evidenced from the study that besides elevating the *Hujjāj* spiritually, it also induces a transformation in them from 'regionalized practices and beliefs' to 'universal Islamic practices and beliefs,' augments the virtue of being tolerant, and leads to a more favorable attitude towards other communities and groups.

Currently, Pakistan is inundated in a flood of problems and issues. Regionalism, casteism, sectarianism, and tribalism are permeating throughout; economy is shattering, security situation is worsening, and the enemies within and without are profusely engaged in disintegrating the country. Moreover, the mercenary

voices are desperately endeavoring to maroon the country. However, in the midst of such discouraging circumstances, the only alternative left is to rise and rise again resolutely and efface forever the ill designs of one and all emerging either from within or without. For that the country has a plethora of hope giving and shining examples, models, institutions, and personalities.

In the same vein, the institution of *Hajj* among others—with its massive social and economic implications—can bring laurels to the country. This institution of Islam can help to build the society on more pragmatic lines that presently seems to be divided across the lines of ethnicity, language, culture etc. The *Hujjāj* who have practically witnessed unity within diversity and have gained more piety and spirituality can prove vital assets in this wholesome process. Moreover, they can establish links and contacts, which they obviously do, with Saudi Arabia and beyond. In so doing, chances are quite bright to avail different opportunities and avenues available abroad. These opportunities may be in *among others* business sectors, institutes of higher learning and in various private and government sectors as well. Availing these avenues will in turn boost tremendously the economy of the country⁶⁵ so much so that the vital issues of the people like unemployment, availability of essential commodities at affordable prices, high-quality of health and education etc. will be addressed. In short, it can be concluded that the *Hajj* can prove one of the significant institutions by which the country can be led on the path of peace, progress, prosperity, development, and harmony provided if the sweetness of the institution is copiously extracted. If that is done then the others beyond Pakistan will also smell and benefit from the sweet fragrance the country will produce thereof.

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- ⁶ Fateh M. Sandeela, "Hajj as a Witness to Allah's Sovereignty," in Zafarul-Islam and Yaqub Zaki, (eds.) *Hajj in Focus* (London: The Open Press, 1986) p. 19
- ⁷ David Clingingsmith, Asim Ijaz Khwaja, and Michael Kremer, *Estimating the Impact of the Hajj: Religion and Tolerance in Islam's Global Gathering* (Harvard Kennedy School, Faculty Research Working Papers Series) p. 6. The paper is available online at <http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/files/xstandard/estimating%20the%20impact%20of%20the%20hajj.pdf>

- ⁸ Sami Mohsin Angawi, "Preface," in Sardar and Badawi, *op. cit.*, p. 11
- ⁹ E.W. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon* (England: The Islamic Text Society, 1984) vol. 1, p. 513
- ¹⁰ Maulana Mufti Mohammad Shafi, *How to Perform Hajj* tr. Mohd Mohtarim Fahim Usmani, (Pakista: M/s. IRH, ND) p. 27
- ¹¹ Imām Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* tr. 'Abdul Ḥamīd Ṣiddīqī (Delhi: Kitab Bhawan, 1978) vol. 2, p. 577. Hereafter cited as Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim.
- ¹² There are different opinions regarding the question that who first constructed the *Ka'bah*. The details of which are given in the various books, and here in the paper it is not amicable in any case either to discuss the history of the *Ka'bah* or the objectivity of the different opinions regarding its construction. Rather, it will be aimed to provide a brief and concise detail about the *Hajj* and its significance.
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- ¹⁴ Al-Qur'ān, *Surah al-'Imrān*, Āyat no. 97
- ¹⁵ Mawlānā Sayyid Abū al-A'lā Mawdūdī, *Khutbāt* (Delhi: Markazī Maktabah Islāmī, 1994) p. 265
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 271-73
- ¹⁷ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, *op. cit.*, p. 577
- ¹⁸ Al-Qur'ān, *Surah al-Hajj*, Āyat no. 27
- ¹⁹ Imām Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 1995) vol. 2, p. 795
- ²⁰ G. E. Von Grunebaum, *Muhammadan Festivals* (New York: Henry Schuman, 1951) p. 15
- ²¹ In case of female pilgrims (*Hawājj*) the dress requirements are less stringent. They have freedom of wearing other than white provided they remain modest and their dress compatible with the conditions laid by Islam. However, in practice they also prefer to wear white dress. See Maulana Mukhtar Ahmad Nadvi, *Hajj-E-Masnoon (Haj by Tradition)* tr. Siddique Ahmed, (Bombay: Al DarusSalafiah, ND) pp. 21-2
- ²² Robert Bianchi, "Hajj," in John L. Esposito, et al., (eds.) *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), vol. 2, p. 355
- ²³ See for more details the Chapter *Hajj* in various books of *Ḥadīth* like Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim etc. See also Anis Daud Matthews, *A Guide for Hajj and 'Umra* (Delhi: Taj Company, 1986); Maulana Muhammad Zakariyya, *Faza'il-e-Haj* (New Delhi: Idara Isha'at-e-Diniyat (P) Ltd., 1995); Hasan Hathout, *Hajj Pilgrimage: Form and Essence* (ND); Ahmad Nadvi, *op. cit.*; Mohammad Shafi, *op. cit.*
- ²⁴ It is reported by Nāfi on the authority of Ibn 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with them) that when the Messenger of Allah circumambulated the House while observing the first *Tawāf*, he walked during the first three circumambulations at a brisk pace and then normally in the remaining four. Imām Muslim, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 750
- ²⁵ Ahmad Nadvi, *op. cit.*, p. 48
- ²⁶ Asma T. Uddin, *op. cit.*, p. 44
- ²⁷ M. Sandeela, *op. cit.*, p. 19
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*
- ²⁹ P. K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006) p. 136

- ³⁰ Clingingsmith, et al., *op. cit.*, p. 2
- ³¹ Malcolm X, Letter from Mecca, April 1964, retrieved from http://www.malcolm-x.org/docs/let_mecca.htm accessed on 22-09-2014
- ³² *Ibid.*
- ³³ Kalim Siddiqui, "The Hajj in the context of contemporary history," in Khan and Zaki, *op. cit.*, p. 6
- ³⁴ *Saudi Arabia: Experience Makkah* (World Report, 25 October 2010) p. 2.
- ³⁵ Al-Qur'ān, *Surah al-Ḥajj*, Āyat no. 28
- ³⁶ See for more details *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, Urdu trans. 'Allāmah 'Abd a-Rashīd Nu'mānī (New Delhi: Farid Book Depot, ND) vol. 3, pp. 55-56; Mawlānā Sayyid Abū al-A'lā Mawdūdī, *Tafhīm al-Qur'ān* (New Delhi: Markazi Maktaba Islami Publishers, 2002) vol. 3, p. 219
- ³⁷ Ayesha Sarfraz, "The economics of Hajj," *Arabian Gazette*, 30 May 2013, <http://www.arabiangazette.com/economics-hajj-20130530/> accessed on 21-09-2014
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⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 15

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 24

⁵⁸ Donnan, *op. cit.*, p. 19. There is a balanced and careful analysis done by Hastings Donnan on how *Hajj*, in the context of Pakistan, creates and sustains socio-economic and political competition (pp. 17-24).

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⁶³ *Khuddams* are volunteers for the *Hajj* every year and their expense is taken care of by the state.

⁶⁴ Ali Wahab, an investment banker, suggests that if the state takes pragmatic steps to end mismanagement and scams and also reduces the number of days from 40 to 35 or to 30, then it will obviously enhance the economy of the country. See Ali Wahab, "Money matters: The backbreaking side of Hajj that no one talks about...," *The Express Tribune*, 17 October 2011, retrieved from <http://tribune.com.pk/story/275464/money-matters-the-backbreaking-side-of-hajj-that-no-one-talks-about/> accessed on 21-09-2014

⁶⁵ The Dawn newspaper reported that in the year 2013 Pakistan received a total of \$14.9 billion as remittance from its nationals working abroad. It means an increase in the remittance will stabilize the economy of the country to a large extent. See <http://www.dawn.com/news/1075799> accessed on 22-09-2014