

Abrahamic Hajj from the Viewpoint of Contemporary Islamic Scholars

By: Reza Taghizadeh Naini

The late Imam Khomeini (RA) who regarded Hajj as an extremely important issue had in one of his speeches said: "Masji al-Haram, the Holy Ka'ba, embraces the dear pilgrims who do away with political isolation and fundamental deviation of Hajj towards the Abrahamic and Muhammadan Hajj, revive its life, break the idols of the East and the West, and demonstrate the truth of the repudiation of infidels.

Similarly, in the opinion of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Grand Ayatollah Khamenei, "Abrahamic Hajj is the one during which Muslims depart from disunity to unity and circumambulate Ka'ba, which is the House of Monotheism and repudiation of infidelity, consciously, perceive the essence of the rite of Hajj, and benefit from it for their own life and the life of the Islamic Ummah."

Hajj from the Viewpoint of Muslim Elites

The Muslim elites who have paid serious attention to the issue of Hajj and its tremendous effects on Muslims have expressed their thoughts and ideas on it; some of which are quoted hereunder:

Sheikh Mahmud Shaltut, the former president of the Al-Azhar University

Commenting on the Qur'anic verse "that they may witness the benefits for them" he said:

"The benefits, where Hajj is the perceptual and acquirable channel for that and which has been set forth as the foremost philosophy of Hajj, is having a wide and comprehensive meaning which cannot be concluded in any special forms. Rather, this sentence, with all the universality and commonness it possesses, contains all personal and social benefits. If purification of the soul and seeking proximity to Allah are benefits, then seeking advice, too, is a benefit. If these two are reckoned to be benefits then, inviting the Muslims for centralizing their forces for the spread of Islam too is a benefit. Therefore, according to the necessities of time and the conditions of the Muslims, these benefits differ in every era.

"It is worthy that people from all walks of life make haste towards this divine House. It is worthy that people of knowledge, insight, ijihad, and faith and the ones possessing lofty aims gather over there so that it is seen as to how Mecca spreads its wings of mercy over them and how it collects their slogan of tawhid in and around the House and (so that) they finally engage in seeking recognition, advice and help from each other and then they leave for their respective countries as one nation and with a single heart and united goals and outlook."

Malcolm X

The late American Muslim leader has expressed his Hajj experience in these words:

"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.

I have been blessed to visit the Holy City of Mecca. I have made my seven circuits around the Ka'ba, led by a young Mutawaf named Muhammad. I drank water from the well of the Zam Zam. I ran seven times back and forth between the hills of Mt. Al-Safa and Al-Marwah. I have prayed in the ancient city of Mina, and I have prayed on Mt. Arafat.

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.

America needs to understand Islam because this is the one religion that erases from its society the race problem. Throughout my travels in the Muslim world, I have met, talked to, and even eaten with people who in America would have been considered 'white'—but the 'white' attitude was removed from their minds by the religion of Islam. I have never before seen sincere and true brotherhood practiced by all colors together, irrespective of their color.

You may be shocked by these words coming from me. But on this pilgrimage, what I have seen, and experienced, has forced me to re-arrange 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 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 for the flexibility that must go hand in hand with every form of intelligent search for truth.

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.

We were truly all the same (brothers)—because

their belief in one God had removed the white from their minds, the white from their behavior, and the white from their attitude. could see from this, that perhaps if white Americans could accept the Oneness of God, then perhaps, too, they could accept in reality the Oneness of Man—and cease to measure, hinder, and harm others in terms of their ‘differences’ in color.

With racism plaguing America like an incurable cancer, the so-called ‘Christian’ white American heart should be more receptive to a proven solution to such a destructive problem. Perhaps it could be in time to save America from imminent disaster—the same destruction brought upon Germany by racism that eventually destroyed the Germans themselves.

Each hour here in the Holy Land enables me to have greater spiritual insights into what is happening in America between black and white. Racism leads America up the suicide path, turn to the spiritual path of truth—the only way left for America to ward off the disaster that racism inevitably must lead to.

Yahya Christian Bonaud

French Islamologist, philosopher, writer, translator, and commentator of the Qur’an in French describes Abrahamic Hajj as follows:

“Imam Khomeini (RA) was the first person who revived the Abrahamic Hajj and repudiation of infidels. Unfortunately, some Muslims consider politics to be separate from religion and do not consider the issue of repudiation to be a part of Hajj. It is true that Hajj is dhikr; the dhikr of God and Prophets came for establishing monotheism and not government, but repudiation is also a part of Hajj and like other obligatory elements of Hajj, it is obligatory for Muslims. Those who say that repudiation was merely for the time of the Prophet and it is not an obligation when revelations from God have stopped are making a mistake. All Abrahamic qualities must be displayed and no one is closer to Abraham than the Prophet of Islam. He is the Messenger of God and the one who dealt with the infidels with severity and with the friends of God with mercy...”

Ahmed Shalaby

This Egyptian thinker and historian points out the following about his experience in performing Hajj:

Hajj is a congregation in which no one represents and has superiority over other pilgrims. One of the effects of Hajj is the creation of closeness among the people who perform it from different parts of the world and who share the problems of the world of Islam.”

Mohammad Farid Wajdi

He describes Hajj in the Encyclopedia Islamica in the following words:

“If the heads of the Islamic states take advantage of this rite to create Islamic unity among the Muslim nations, they will achieve full result because the congregation of tens of thousands from different parts of the world in a particular place and their concentration on a single objective cause convergence and empathy among them and on their return to their homelands they can spread the message of Hajj.”

Yusuf al-Qaradawi

In his book “Al-‘Ibadah fi al-Islam” he writes:

“Hajj can be the most important factor for Islamic awakening and for this reason, some of the puppet governments or occupiers of Islamic lands prevent Muslims from going to the House of God. Because they know that if a movement starts among Muslims, no factor can stop it from advancing.” Elsewhere he writes: “Hajj is a means of getting to know Muslims with each other and the reason for the emergence of interest and connection between them.”

Allamah Husain al-Mustafa

This Shiite scholar from the Qatif region of Arabia defines Hajj as under:

“The most important philosophy of the Hajj is creating unity, empathy, and humility before the Oneness of God Almighty, and it is appropriate that Muslims who perform the rites of the Abrahamic Hajj should be heralds of the call to brotherhood, friendship, and peaceful coexistence in the world. Hajj is a great opportunity for the Islamic world and should not be used as a means of division. This is because Hajj is not a place to discuss ethnic issues, but is an opportunity for strengthening relations between countries. Hajj provides the best opportunity to spread divine knowledge and convey the message

of the Qur'an to the people of the world. It was for this very reason, the Holy Prophet of Islam and the infallible Imams (peace be upon them) also took advantage of this opportunity to propagate the teachings of Islam.

Sheikh Abdul Salam Muhammad of Al-Azhar University

In his interview with Al-Kawthar TV Sheikh Abdul Salam Muhammad stated: "Prophet Ibrahim supplicated to God Almighty and said: "Our Lord! I have settled part of my descendants in a barren valley, by Your sacred House, our Lord, that they may maintain the prayer. So make the hearts of a part of the people fond of them, and provide them with fruits, so that they may give thanks." (Surah Ibrahim, Verse, 37.) It is due to this supplication of Prophet Ibrahim that God has placed the desire of visiting His house in our hearts. Adhering to the principles of Hajj and being careful and focusing on its rituals create peace in the heart of the believers and adorns them with good morals."

Syed Salman Chishti, the Head of the Chishti Sufi Foundation of India

"Hajj is considered as a manifestation of unity among Muslims, and today unity is an important necessity of the Islamic society for which all sections of the Islamic Ummah, especially thinkers, and scholars, should take steps. By resorting to the morals and noble character of the great Prophet of Islam, empathy and love can be created among all Muslims, and by serving and helping fellow human beings selflessly, this unity can be created among all Muslim groups throughout the world.

Parvez Shabbir Mandiwala, Representative of the Indian Institute of Islamic Studies and Member of the Jamaat-e-Islami, Maharashtra Branch

"Hajj is the manifestation of unity and empathy among all Islamic schools of thought. In Hajj, all Muslims, rich and poor and black and white, sit next to each other and prostrate before the Almighty God. This is the manifestation of unity and solidarity among Muslims."

Hojjat al-Islam Azhar Husain Abedi, Member of



the Board of Trustees of Waqf Committee of Karnataka, India

"The house of Ka'ba is the house of blessings and a safe house. In the religion of Islam, there is a law even for the smallest of issues. Islam is a universal religion, and Hajj is a congregation in which Muslims from all countries must participate in Ihram clothing and perform its special rituals."

Dr. Salim Khan, Deputy of the Jamaat-e-Islami, Maharashtra Branch

"God Almighty invites all Muslims to participate in it without any discrimination and everyone, regardless of the color of their skin or the amount of their wealth, stand next to each other in a white dress and pray and supplicate to their God and Lord to purify



their hearts from sins and bad qualities.”

Sheikh Ezzedin Abdel Aziz; President of Jam’iat al-Ulama of Addis Ababa

“At the time of Hajj, a large part of the world’s Muslims, from different ethnicities, nations, and races and with different colors, move with great enthusiasm towards the center of revelation and regardless of differences in appearance, ethnicity, and race, wear similar white clothing and start a unique congregation.”

Prof. Elias Gitti Tarai, Thailand

“God’s House is a safe place that even non-Muslims feel at ease when they enter this holy place. Every year, more than three million pilgrims perform

this divine duty in Mecca during the Hajj days, which reflects upon the greatness of God Almighty.”

Seydina Oumar Sy, the former Foreign Minister of Senegal

God Almighty says: Do not create differences because you will become weak. Isn’t the separation and irrational divisions of the Islamic Ummah a reason for the weakening of the Islamic Ummah? Hajj is a call to regain all our strength and unite with each other again. We must form a strong Islamic Ummah, and only when this Ummah is united, it will regain its strength. Islam is the religion of God and goodness, brotherhood, and peace for all, and Muslims can have an important role in the world, provided they are united.



