

The Spiritual Meanings of the Hajj

وَإِذْ بَوَّأْنَا لِإِبْرَاهِيمَ مَكَانَ الْبَيْتِ أَنْ لَا تُشْرِكْ بِي شَيْئًا وَطَهِّرْ بَيْتِيَ لِلطَّائِفِينَ وَالْقَائِمِينَ وَالرُّكَّعِ السُّجُودِ
 وَأَذِّنْ فِي النَّاسِ بِالْحَجِّ يَأْتُوكَ رِجَالًا وَعَلَى كُلِّ ضَامِرٍ يَأْتِينَ مِنْ كُلِّ فَجٍّ عَمِيقٍ
 لِيَشْهَدُوا مَنَافِعَ لَهُمْ وَيَذْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ فِي أَيَّامٍ مَعْلُومَاتٍ عَلَىٰ مَا رَزَقَهُمْ مِنَ بَهِيمَةِ الْأَنْعَامِ فَكُلُوا مِنْهَا وَأَطِعُوا الْبَائِسَ الْفَقِيرَ
 ثُمَّ لِيُقْضَىٰ لَهُمْ أَهْلُهُمْ وَيُؤْتُوا نُذُورَهُمْ وَلِيَطُوفُوا بِالْبَيْتِ الْعَتِيقِ (Quran 22:26-29)

And [remember] when We assigned for Abraham the place of the House, [saying],
 "Ascribe no partners unto Me, and purify My House for those who circumambulate, and
 those who stand, and those who bow and prostrate.

And proclaim the *hajj* among mankind: they shall come to thee on foot and upon all
 [manner of] lean beast, coming from all deep and distant mountain highways,
 that they may witness benefits for them and mention the name of God, during known
 days, over the four-legged cattle He has provided them. So eat thereof, and feed the
 wretched poor.

Then let them be done with their untidiness, and fulfill their vows, and circumambulate
 the Ancient House." (The Study Quran - Nasr, 2017)

The well-known Islamic pilgrimage to Makkah, known as the *Hajj*, is the 5th Pillar of Islam and is obligatory to perform at least once in a Muslim's lifetime for all those possessing the means to do so. Like all religious rites, the Hajj is deeply symbolic and has both an outward form and an inward meaning. Haydar Amuli in his *Asrar al-Sharfa* (tr. Yate, n.d.) describes three levels of the Hajj: an outward level for the exoterists (*ahl al-shariah*), an inner level for those who follow the Sufi path (*ahl al-tariqah*) and the innermost level for those who have attained to the highest Reality (*ahl al-haqiqah*). Much has been written about the outward aspects of the Hajj, its legal prerequisites, and its obligatory, prohibited and supererogatory acts. However, regarding its inner symbolic and spiritual significance, comparatively little information is available in the English language. In what follows, I will attempt to briefly summarize the inner meanings of this profound rite.

The modern world in which we live has largely forgotten the symbolic significance of traditional rites. Consequently, it is necessary to point out that the outer form of a given rite gives access to its inner meaning, and this inner meaning determines the rite's outer form and gives it its purpose. Paying heed to the outward form alone while denying its inward reality is to miss the point. The outward form is sacred and must be respected and upheld. At the same time, the form is to be penetrated to reveal its inner truth. In this regard Rumi states:

"If you pass beyond form, O friends, 'tis Paradise and rose-gardens within rose-gardens. When thou hast broken and destroyed thine own form, thou hast learned to break the form of everything."¹

Thus, awareness of the inward, symbolic aspect of the Hajj rites is crucial. A famous Sufi story attributed to the spiritual master Junaid al-Baghdadi illustrates this:

A man came to visit Junaid al-Baghdadi, whose life reflected no change, even after having performed Hajj.

Junaid asked him: "Where are you coming from?"

"Sir, I have returned after performing Hajj of the House of Allah", was the reply.

"So, have you actually performed Hajj?"

"Yes, Sir, I have performed Hajj", said the man.

"Did you pledge that you would give up sins when you left your home for Hajj?" asked Junaid.

"No, Sir, I never thought of that", said the man.

"Then, in fact, you did not even step out for Hajj. While you were on the sacred journey and making halts at places during the nights, did you ever think of attaining nearness to Allah?"

"Sir, I had no such idea."

"Then you did not at all travel to the Ka'aba, nor did ever visit it. When you put on the *Ihram* garments, and discarded your ordinary dress, did you make up your mind to abandon your evil ways and attitudes in life as well?"

"No, Sir, I had no idea of that."

"Then, you did not even don the *Ihram* garments!" said Junaid ruefully. Then he asked; "When you stood in the Plain of Arafat and were imploring Allah Almighty, did you have the feeling that you were standing in Divine Presence and having a vision of Him?"

"No, Sir, I had no such experience."

Junaid then became a little upset and asked: "Well, when you came to Muzdalifah, did you promise that you would give up vain desires of the flesh?"

"Sir, I paid no heed to this."

"You did not then come to Muzdalifah at all." Then he asked: "Tell me, did you happen to catch glimpses of Divine Beauty when you moved round the House of Allah?"

"No, Sir, I caught no such glimpses."

"Then, you did not move around the Ka'aba at all." Then he said: "When you made *Sa'i* (running) between the Safa and the Marwa, did you realize the wisdom, significance and objective of your effort?"

"Sir, I was not at all conscious of this."

"Then you did not make any *Sa'i*!" Then he asked: "When you slaughtered an animal at the place of sacrifice, did you sacrifice your selfish desires as well in the way of Allah?"

"Sir, I failed to give any attention to that!"

"Then, in fact you offered no sacrifice whatever."

"Then when you cast stones at the *Jamaraat*, did you make a resolve to get rid of your evil companions and friends and desires?"

¹ Perry, Whitall. 2016. *The Spiritual Ascent: A Compendium Of The World's Wisdom*. Louisville: Fons Vitae. P. 721

“No, Sir, I didn’t do that.”

“Then, you did not cast stones at all”, remarked Junaid regretfully, and said:

“Go back and perform Hajj once again, giving due thought and attention to all the requirements, so that your Hajj may bear some resemblance with Prophet Ibrahim’s Hajj, whose faith and sincerity has been confirmed by the Qur’an.”

The Hajj is essentially an enacted symbol that recapitulates the spiritual journey of Man to his true home in God's presence.

إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

“Truly we are God's, and unto Him we return” (Quran 2:156)

In a sense, the life of Man is circular. It proceeds from his Origin with God down an “arc of descent” (*Qaws al-Nuzul*) to his terrestrial existence and then up the “arc of ascent” (*Qaws al-Su'ud*) back to the Divine Presence. Thus, the journey of Man is from God to God. In our pre-terrestrial existence, after God created Adam with His two hands, the progeny of Adam were extracted from his loins and gathered together in God’s presence. God then said to them *alastu bi rabikum*, “am I not our Lord”, and they answered in the affirmative, *qaalu bala shahidna*, “they said yes, we bear witness.” This is known as the “Day of Alast” (from the Arabic *alastu*, “am I not”) - it is narrated in a Hadith in the Musnad of Ahmad that the Prophet (s.a.w.) said, “This oath was taken at 'Arafah”. In any case, the Day of Alast is not a day in the ordinary sense, but a pre-temporal event that took place in the Presence of God. In a sense, this “event” occurred in a “time outside of time” and “a place outside of place”. This supra-temporal and supra-spatial reality is our Origin, and it is where our authentic home lies. The first part of Man's journey is from this home in the Divine Presence down, through the graded levels of existence, to our present terrestrial life.

The destiny of Man born into this terrestrial life is to travel back to the Origin once again, which is his true home in God’s presence. Man, and all of Creation without exception, is destined to return to God.

لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ تُرْجَعُ الْأُمُورُ

"Unto Him belongs sovereignty over the heavens and the earth, and unto God are all matters returned." (Quran 57:5)

وَأَنَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ الْمُنْتَهَىٰ

"That the ultimate end is unto thy Lord" (Quran 53:42)

Traditionally, this is called "the obligatory return" (*al-Ruju' al-Idtirari*), and Man has no choice in this matter and he can do nothing to alter or prevent this return to God. Some, however, can use their free will to make this return journey through God’s names of Beauty and Mercy in felicity, and reaching a state of being satisfied with God and satisfying to God (*radiya mardiya*). This is called the voluntary return (*al-Ruju' al-Ikhtiari*). Those who reject this possibility are in danger

of a return journey through God's Names of Wrath and in a wretched state. The Quran refers to the latter as "people of the left hand" (*Ashab al-Shimal*). Those that have chosen the first possibility voluntarily return to God using their free will and are referred to as "people of the right hand" (*Ashab al-Yamin*). They freely submit their will to the Will of God and follow the Divine Law. They, however, do not necessarily complete the total transformation and perfection of their soul while still in this life, and their journey of realization continues after death in their posthumous existence. Then there are the "foremost" (*Sabiqoon*) who succeed in submitting the totality of their being, including their will, sentiments and intelligence, to God while still in this life. They succeed in realizing the Prophet's (s.a.w) command to "die before you die."

The Hajj is a Rite that symbolizes this inevitable journey of obligatory return to God and also helps to actualize the journey of voluntary return. For most, this journey will start in this life and then be continued after death, but for the chosen few, the spiritual journey will be completed, inwardly and spiritually, in this life according to the Prophet's command "die before you die". Thus, in a sense, the Hajj is a practice of death. The stages that a person will experience at the time of their bodily death, resurrection and posthumous journey in the imaginal and spiritual worlds is symbolically represented by aspects of the Hajj.

We will now deal in more detail with the major Rites of the Hajj, in chronological order, focusing our attention on their inner spiritual significance.

Leaving Home for the Journey to Makkah

For the Pilgrim, to set out from home toward Makkah for the Hajj is to journey to God. At the same time it is to move from the peripheral and outward to the central and inner aspect of the world and ourselves and ultimately to the Center itself where the Divine resides. It is the soul's journey from a state of attachment to the passions and senses to a state in which it is attached to the Heart/Intellect. In other words, it is the transformation of "the soul that commands to evil" (*al-Nafs al-Amara bi su'*) to "the soul at peace" (*al-Nafs al-Mutma'innah*). Ibn 'Arabi says:

The descent of the Ka'aba at the time of Adam is an allusion to the appearance of the heart...The fact that it had two doors, eastern and western, is an allusion to the manifestation of the knowledge of origination (*mabda'*) and return (*ma'ad*) to God, as well as the knowledge of the realms of light and darkness. These appeared during the time of Adam; they did not, however, include the science of divine oneness. Adam's journey to it (the Ka'aba) from the land of India is a reference to his turning away from the corporeal realm of nature, through origination (*takwin*) and equilibrium (*i'tidal*), to the station of the heart. His meeting with the angels is an allusion to the attachment of the animal and the vegetative powers of the body and the appearance in it of their effects prior to those of the heart. This was during the forty years during which his constitution was shaped and his clay set. His setting forth toward the Ka'aba is his journey (*suluk*) from the dark realm of the carnal soul to the realm of the heart. His meeting with the angels is his being received by the psychic and corporeal powers and their subordination to him by submitting to the beautiful morals and virtuous qualities. His rising from one

station to the next before his arrival at the station of the heart and his circumambulation of the House all refer to his attainment of the heart. His entry into it means his abiding in it."²

The pilgrimage is also a symbolic passage out of the world of Becoming and a return to the world of Being. The pilgrim leaves the profane flow of time and returns to the Sacred Origin, which is at once both the beginning and the supra-temporal Now - the present moment which gives access to the Eternal. It is for this reason that Salaat in the Holy Mosque of Makkah is rewarded one hundred thousand times more than Salaat at other places.³ Hasan al-Basri (r.a.) used to say:

"Fasting in Makkah for one day is equal to fasting one hundred thousand times elsewhere; to give one dirham in charity there, is equal to giving one hundred thousand dirhams elsewhere. In fact every good deed performed there shall be as if one hundred thousand had been performed elsewhere".

The Ka'aba represents both the Center and the Origin. The Centre of the space towards which all Muslims orient themselves during prayer both physically and spiritually, and the original Primordial House⁴ whose foundation was said to be laid by the first man Prophet Adam (a.s.) himself. Thus to perform the Rite of the Hajj is to reestablish ourselves into the Divine Center and at the Sacred Origin. A state that is embodied by the Perfect Man (*al-Insan al-Kamil*) who, when envisioned from the point of view of his spatial symbolism, is the perfect and central whole of which we are fragmentary parts, and when viewed from the point of view of his temporal symbolism is the perfect Origin (*al-Insan al-Qadim*) of which we represent various stages of decay. The Hajj helps us grow into our true Self in its wholeness, and to return to the primordial perfection into which we were created, our *Fitra* - "we created you in the best of statures, then sent you down to the lowest of the low".⁵ Thus, the Hajj is a journey of Self-discovery in the deepest sense. Shaykh al-Akbar says:

"Then He directed you to the House (Ka'aba) which is your like and of your genus, that is, it is created. So His directing you to the House is His directing you to yourself in His words: "Whoever knows himself knows His Lord." Therefore when you make for the House, you make for yourself. When you reach yourself, you recognize who you are. When you recognize who you are, you recognize your Lord, and at that you know whether you are He or you are not He."⁶

² Ibn al-'Arabī, Aisha Abdurrahman Bewley, and Laleh Bakhtiar. 2009. *Ibn Al-Arabi On The Mysteries Of The Pilgrimage From The Futūḥāt Al-Makkīyah (Meccan Revelations) 86-87*. (Chicago: Kazi Publications Inc., 2009): Great Books of the Islamic World.

³ A Hadith states "One prayer in my mosque is better than one thousand prayers elsewhere, except al-Masjid al-Haraam, and one prayer in al-Masjid al-Haraam is better than one hundred thousand prayers elsewhere." - narrated in Ahmad and Ibn Majah

⁴ The Quran calls the Ka'aba "the first House appointed for men" (3:95) and *al-Bayt al-Atiq*, the Ancient House (22:29)

⁵ لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ
ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَاهُ أَسْفَلَ سَافِلِينَ

"truly We created man in the most beautiful stature, then We cast him to the lowest of the low,"
Quran 95:4-5

⁶ Ibn Al-'Arabī, *On the Mysteries of the Pilgrimage*, 104

To journey to the Ka'aba is to journey to one's heart. Hakim al-Tirmidhi in his "A Treatise of the Heart" draws correspondences between the area around the Ka'aba and the levels of the heart of Man.⁷ He describes four hierarchical levels of the heart: *Sadr* (breast) the outermost layer, the *Qalb* (heart proper) which is within it "as a pearl is within an oyster", then within the *Qalb* is the *Fu'ad* (inner heart), and finally the innermost level called *Lubb* (lit. kernel) which represents the Intellect. These four levels correspond respectively to the sacred area around Makkah, Makkah itself, Masjid al-Haram, and finally, the Ka'aba. Thus, on the Hajj, one's physical journey is simultaneously a spiritual journey from the outer aspects of one's heart to its innermost reality.

As mentioned above, the Hajj is a practice of death. When leaving home on the journey to Makkah one is symbolically leaving behind the temporary earthly home in this lower world (*al-Dunya*) and traveling to his or her place of death, and then from there, through successive stages back to one's true spiritual home in God's presence.

Imam Al-Ghazali says in the Alchemy of Happiness (*Kimiyat Saadat*):

“As of the lessons of the pilgrimage, they are that his journey has been made like a model for the journey of the Hereafter. In this journey, the destination is the House, while in that journey the destination is the Lord of the House. Consequently, one must learn from the preliminaries and conditions of this journey the conditions of that journey. When bidding farewell to family and friends, one should understand that this resembles what that farewell will be during the agonies of death. One must be thus: first, one empties the soul of all ties. Then, one departs (on the journey to Makkah).

At the end of life, the soul is emptied of all things of the world; if not, the journey will be troubled. As the provisions for the road are made up of all kinds of things and all precautions are taken to prevent being destitute in the desert, so one must know that the desert of the Resurrection is longer and more fearsome. More provisions will be needed for that place. And as one does not take anything with one which spoils quickly - for one knows that it will not last and is not suitable for the desert - in the same way, provisions which are mixed with hypocrisy and stinting will not be suitable for the hereafter.”⁸

When setting out for the journey the pilgrim is to leave behind all the material things that attach him or her to "normal life" in this world. Just as he will be forced to do at the time of his bodily death. Like the dying man he must put his affairs in order before leaving this world. He is required to pay off all of his debts. Then he bids goodbye to his family and friends and sets out from his home for another land which is a symbol of leaving this lower world for the higher imaginal and spiritual worlds.

Allah says in the holy Qur'an:

⁷ Heer, Nicholas, Kenneth Lee Honerkamp, Muḥammad ibn 'Alī Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī, Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥusayn Sulamī, and Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥusayn Sulamī. 2009. *Three Early Sufi Texts*. Louisville: Fons Vitae.

⁸ Ibn Al-'Arabi, Al-Ghazali, trans. Aisha Bewley, *Ibn Al-'Arabi On the Mysteries of the Pilgrimage* (Chicago: Kazi Publications Inc., 2009) P. 300

"And take with you provision for the journey; and indeed the best of provision is reverence. And reverence Me, O possessors of intellect."⁹

There are only certain provisions the pilgrim can take with him that will prove useful on his journey. The vast majority of his material possessions become useless for him. Similarly, the provisions that are taken with us into our life after death cannot include our material possessions. It is only what our soul carries within it which can be taken on this journey, and the soul that has been "woven" from a life of good deeds, love and remembrance of Allah will have the necessary provisions for a successful journey in the Hereafter.

In this world, those who are materially rich enjoy conveniences and comforts on the Hajj that are not available to others less fortunate. Similarly, those who have spent their lives in goodness and are therefore spiritually "rich" will journey in the hereafter in peace and relative ease. On the other hand, those that have spent their lives in forgetfulness and rebellion against God will suffer many hardships and difficulties in their posthumous journey.

When leaving home, the pilgrim leaves ordinary profane space and time and gradually makes the transition to another kind of space and time. The location where the Hajj takes place is, in a sense, "a time outside of ordinary time and a space outside of ordinary space". This is a "higher" space and time which is "closer" to the Principle which is the source of both time and space. To enter into this "place" is to enter a spiritual world - a spiritual time and a spiritual space. As mentioned previously, this is why *Salaat* in the Holy Mosque of Makkah is rewarded one hundred thousand times more than *Salaat* at other places.

From another point of view, the Hajj can be seen as a journey of love. It is clear from the Quran that God loves his devoted servants - "He loves them, and they love Him" (Quran 5:54). God commands the Prophet (s.a.w.) to say to the believers: "Say. If you love Allah then follow me and Allah will love you". Those that love Allah long for that love to be reciprocated. It is apparent from the above verse that to be the object of God's Love one must follow the example of the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.). The Hajj was performed by the Prophet (s.a.) and he commanded all Muslims to follow in his footsteps. Thus performing the Hajj is motivated by love for God and the desire for God to love us.

The lover of Allah, being separated from Him, is compelled by love to seek nearness and union with his Beloved. He leaves behind all his possessions, his wealth, family, home, and position which are of little worth to him in relation to his Beloved. For one in this state of love, leaving worldly life behind is easy for his thoughts are constantly preoccupied with ways of approaching his beloved and all his actions are motivated by this goal. True love has the power to detach one from the *Dunya*. So the pilgrim leaves his home and travels to the "House of Allah" (*Baytullah*) to be in His presence. It is said that Majnun used to frequent the buildings that Layla had recently been in, and would cling to their walls. When asked why he did this he replied:

"I pass by these walls, the walls of Layla
And I kiss this wall and that wall

⁹ Quran 2:197

It's not Love of the walls that has enraptured my heart
But of the One who dwells within them"

This is the attitude that the pilgrim has in relation to the Kaaba and this is what compels him to set out on the journey to be in its proximity. Along the way the pilgrim encounters a myriad of difficulties and hardships which at once test his love and also deepen and ripen it. For true love to be actualized it must be tested and proven.

Viewing the pilgrimage as a journey of love does not exclude another perspective which sees the Hajj as a practice of death. When performing the Hajj one is in a sense dying to one's ordinary life and being reborn in the spiritual world. The perspective of love and death meet because love requires sacrifice and every sacrifice is a kind of death. *Amor est mors* - "Love is death" in a manner of speaking. These perspectives of love and fear in fact compliment one another and are equally true but form different points of view.

The journey to Makkah has yet another lesson for us. There are many different routes that pilgrims take toward the Ka'aba depending upon their geographical location in relation to the Ka'aba. These varied roads to Makkah symbolize the multiple paths to God that are referred to in the saying, attributed by some, to the Prophet (s.aw.) "There are as many paths to God as there is sons of Adam (a.s)." Each one views the Ka'aba from a different perspective and approaches it from a different side. As they close in on the Ka'aba the roads converge and ultimately open up upon the one single space of the Masjid al-Haram and, ultimately, one single central goal which is the Ka'aba itself. As in mountain climbing, multiple paths up the mountain lead to one single summit. Various traditional religious perspectives, though outwardly contradictory, converge in their inner reality and lead to their heart centre within which lies one single Reality.

In the words of Mawlana Rumi:

"For some the road is from Rūm [Anatolia], for some from Syria, for some from Persia, for some from China, for some by sea from India and Yemen... once they have arrived at the Ka'ba, it is realised that that warfare (this man saying to that man 'you are false, you are an infidel', and the other replying in kind) was concerning the roads only, and that their goal was one."¹⁰

Entering into the sacred state of *Ihram*

The pilgrims' journey continues until they reach certain appointed locations around Arabia called *Meeqat*. Here the pilgrim is instructed to remove all his regular clothing, headgear, and jewelry and don two simple pieces of white, unsewn cloth. He then utters his intention for participating in this journey - "*Labbayk, Allahumma Hajj*" ("here I am O Allah to perform Hajj"). With this he further disconnects from the world and enters into a sacred state termed *Ihram*, a word (related to *haram*) that carries the double meaning of sacred and prohibited. During this state, acts that

¹⁰ A.J. Arberry (trans.), *Discourses of Rūmī* (London, 1975), p. 109.

are normally allowed become prohibited including the killing of animals and plants, cutting hair, trimming nails, wearing perfume and engaging in sexual relations.

The state of *Ihram* is associated with the idea of Divine transcendence. Ibn Arabi says:

“For the servant, pilgrim sanctity (*Ihram*) is comparable to the transcendence of the Real. Understand! what God said to His Prophet: “And thou hast not thrown when thou hast thrown but God threw” (Quran 8:17), is not because it is futile, but rather that He said that so that you will recognize that you and your likes are the form of the business, however it is. So the sacred state for the servant is like disconnection for God. Rather He said: “There is not like Him anything” (Quran 42:11)... Incomparability is then distance from what is ascribed to Him in the way of spouse and child and other things. Pilgrim sanctity is forbidding and incomparability and distance from intercourse and from other things which the Lawgiver specified be avoided. It is the same as incomparability and mutual distance from it and forbidding the one with this act of worship from being described with it.”¹¹

Numerous verses of the Quran assert God's transcendence: "There is nothing like Him" (Quran 42:11); "Glorified is He above what they ascribe to Him" (Quran 6:100); "He is the Rich and you are the poor" (Quran 47:38). The state of *Ihram* is a reminder for the pilgrim that the Divine Reality is absolutely transcendent vis-a-vis His creation. Man, being a Manifestation of God's Names and Attributes, also is transcendent albeit in a relative and not in an absolute way for he can never be independent from God. Man's relative transcendence takes the form of an independence from the world and a dependance upon God. This relative transcendence is manifested in the spiritual life by a conscious attempt to inwardly detach oneself from the world and to attach oneself to God; to live in such a way as to be "in the world but not of it". Thus the *Ihram* is a symbol of this state that all believers strive to actualize, not just during the Hajj, but throughout their whole lives. For the Sufis this state of inner detachment is an essential step on the Spiritual Path and is accomplished, in part, by ascetic discipline (*Zuhd*).

The unsewn pieces of cloth worn in the state of *Ihram* also symbolize the death shroud. When a Muslim dies, his or her body is washed, perfumed and then wrapped in a single white unsewn cloth and interred. Imam Al-Ghazali says:

“When one prepares the clothing for the Consecration (*Ihram*) as one nears that place where one will take off one's ordinary clothing and don the other - and these are (for the male) two pieces of white cloth like a waist-wrapper - one must think of one's shroud, for one's clothing on that journey, too, will be different from one's usual clothing in this world.”¹²

¹¹ Ibn Al-'Arabi, Al-Ghazali, trans. Aisha Bewley, *Ibn Al-'Arabi On the Mysteries of the Pilgrimage* (Chicago: Kazi Publications Inc., 2009) P. 109-110

¹² Ibn Al-'Arabi, Al-Ghazali, trans. Aisha Bewley, *Ibn Al-'Arabi On the Mysteries of the Pilgrimage* (Chicago: Kazi Publications Inc., 2009) P. 300

If the Hajj is a practice of death and a model for the posthumous journey in the Hereafter then donning the *Ihram* at the *Meeqaat* is to put on one's death shroud. It is recommended that a full ablution (*ghusl*) be taken and the body perfumed prior to putting on the *Ihram* garments, and this recalls the washing and perfuming of the dead body in preparation for burial.

The significance of the sacred state of *Ihram* can also be interpreted from the perspective of love. The pilgrim in the state of *Ihram* is a symbol of a lover in a state of an all-consuming love for God. The thoughts and actions of a true lover are completely consumed by the object of his love and not with himself. As such, he is unaware of his own condition and his concentration is fixed on the sole Object of his adoration. Thus the pilgrim, in recreating this state, is instructed not to be concerned with how he looks to himself or others. Shaykh al-Darqawi once said "He who remembers his Lord forgets himself". Regular clothing that beautifies, indicates social status, or helps one "fit in" with society become irrelevant. The pilgrim is too preoccupied with thoughts of the beloved and the meeting with Him to be cognizant of regular grooming acts. Thus, beautifying oneself by cutting or coming of the hair, clipping the finger nails and applying perfume are prohibited.

Since the lover has only one true object of his love and attention, his Beloved, no others can be a recipient of this love. Therefore, the physical expression of love through the sexual act with another human being is inappropriate and is banned in the state of *Ihram*.

Tawaf around the Ka'aba

After formally entering the state of *Ihram*, the pilgrim must go to Makkah to perform the *Tawaf Qudoom* (the Arrival Circumambulation). He arrives at the Ka'aba, kisses the Black Stone and circumambulates the Ka'aba seven times in a counter clockwise direction. To understand the spiritual significance of this act we must recall the symbolic meaning of the Ka'aba. Physically, the Ka'aba is a simple cube shaped building with an empty interior and stone walls that are draped in a black cloth (called the *Kiswa*). Spiritually, however, its significance is immense for the believing Muslim. It is called the House of God (*Baytullah*) and is a direct symbol (*mithal*) of God's Throne (*al-'Arsh*).

"He it is Who created the heavens and the earth in six days. Then He mounted the Throne." (Quran 57:4)

Shaykh Tabarsi states:

"The House was called *al-Bayt al-Haram* (the Sacred or Forbidden House) because the associators were forbidden to enter it. It was also called *al-Ka'aba* (the Cube) because it is a square structure. It is square because it was modelled on *al-Bayt al-Ma'mur* ('the Frequented House' in the fourth heaven, circumambulated by large companies of angels) which is square. The 'Frequented House' was made square because it was modelled on the Throne, which is also square. The Throne was made square because the words on which Islam is founded are four: glory be to God (*subhanallah*), praise be to God (*al-*

hamdulillah), there is no god but God (*la ilaha illallah*), and God is most great (*Allahu akbar*)"¹³

According to traditional doctrine, this Divine Throne has a reflection both in the Macrocosm (the Cosmos) and the Microcosm (Man). The Macrocosmic reflection is the Kaaba and the Microcosmic reflection is the Spiritual Heart of Man. There is an Hadith Qudsi which states:

"My earth and My heaven do not encompass Me, but the heart of My servant who has faith does encompass Me..."

Often this idea was summarized by Sufis in the briefer formula "The heart of the Believer is the Throne of the All-Merciful." (*Qalb al-mu'min 'Arsh ar-Rahman*). Therefore, there are profound correspondences between the Ka'aba and the Divine Throne, the Ka'aba and the Heart, and the Divine Throne and the Heart.

The angels circle around the Divine throne, some with great speed and some slowly. In the same way, pilgrims circumambulate the Kaaba at varying speeds and, in doing so, participate with the angels in circling the Divine Throne. Tabari relates on the authority of 'Ata' that Adam (a.s.) complained to God, saying:

"O Lord, I no longer hear the voices of the angels (that is, after he was expelled from Paradise)." God answered, "It is because of your sin; still, go down to earth and build a house for me and circumambulate it as you saw angels circumambulating my house which is in heaven."¹⁴

Ibn 'Arabi says:

"The person circumambulating (the Ka'aba) imagines in that act of worship that he is like those that are surrounding the Throne, glorifying the praise of their Lord. So he must glorify in his circumambulation, praise God, say the *Shahada* and the words: 'There is no power nor strength except by God, the High, the Immense.'"¹⁵

These two events - the angels circling the Throne of God in the spiritual world and the pilgrims circumambulating the Ka'aba on earth - have their correspondence in the soul of the human being. The corresponding event being the "circumambulation" by the disparate elements of the soul around their common centre which is the Heart/Intellect, thereby reintegrating and unifying them into their source. When the pilgrim circumambulates the Kaaba he reintegrates the various aspects and levels of his being around his Heart Centre, provided his Heart has been purified of all idols, and all that is other than God. Just as it was essential that the Prophet (s.a.w.) purified the Kaaba of all its idols so that it could once again become the pure "House of God" which is so central to two of the the most important Rites of Islam, i.e. the *Salah* and the *Tawaf*.

¹³ Tabarsi, *Majma' al-Bayan fi-Tafsir al-Qur'an*, vol. I, page 459

¹⁴ The History of Tabari, Volume III, page 57-58

¹⁵ Ibn Al-'Arabi, *On the Mysteries of the Pilgrimage*, 118

A circle is created by the pilgrim circumambulating around the Ka'aba in the same way as a circle is drawn by the point of a compass. The circle is a reflection of the centre in the periphery and is considered the most perfect shape in geometry. It is a symbol of the original perfection of the human state (*Fitrah*). There are three possible movements around a centre: centripetal movement or movement towards the centre, centrifugal movement or movement away from the centre, and circular movement or a perfectly balanced movement around the centre. The pilgrim circumambulating the around the Kaaba is, symbolically, in perfect balance between absorption into the Divine Centre (*fana*) and movement away from the Principle towards nothingness (*adam*) - the direction of manifestation. It is as if one subsists (*baqa*) in an intermediary state directly connected to the centre and in a perfect form, the circle being a perfect reflection of its centre point.

From a related point of view, the Ka'aba is two centres at once. On the one hand, it is the centre of the particular revelation that is Islam, and on the other hand, it is a universal centre because it is associated with both Prophet Adam (a.s.) and Prophet Ibrahim (a.s.). The original construction of the Ka'aba is attributed to prophet Adam (a.s.) and it was said to be rebuilt by prophets Ibrahim (a.s.) and Isma'il (a.s.) upon the original foundation laid by Adam(a.s.). Imam al-Ghazali (r.a.) quotes Sayyiduna Ali (r.a.) as saying: "When Allah shall intend destroying the world, he shall first cause the Ka'aba to be demolished. Then shall the world be destroyed." This alludes to the importance of the Ka'aba as the sacred centre of the world. In the Traditional worldview, space - in contrast to the modern Cartesian understanding - is not only a quantitative reality in which the centre is arbitrarily defined, but has objective spiritual and qualitative aspects. Traditional space, therefore, must have a sacred centre which defines and determines all the space around it. In this sense, a space cannot exist without its centre, once the centre is destroyed the ambience will necessarily follow.

Also, according to tradition, the Kaaba on earth corresponds to a house in the heavens called *al-Bayt al-Ma'mur*. In *Surah at-Tur* (The Mount) God swears by this house: "And by the House frequented (*Bayt al-Ma'mur*)" (Quran 52:4). The interpretation of this verse, attributed to both Ali Ibn Abu Talib (r.a.) and Ibn Abbas (r.a.), says:

"It (al-Bayt al-Ma'mur) is the House in the heavens right above the Ka'aba. It's sanctity in the heavens is the same as on earth. Every day 70,000 angels pray there and they never retreat".

Also, Zamakhshari relates:

"God sent down the House (Ka'aba), which was one of the rubies of Paradise having two doors of emerald, one on the east and the other on the west side. God then said to Adam, "I have sent down for you that which must be circumambulated as my throne is being circumambulated". Adam then set out on foot to the House from the land of India. Angels met him on the way, saying, "Blessed be your pilgrimage, O Adam; we too made pilgrimage to this House, two thousand years before you." Adam thereafter performed forty pilgrimages to Makkah on foot from India. The House remained as it was until God took it up to the fourth heaven during the flood. This was the *al-Bayt al-Ma'mur*. God

then ordered Abraham to rebuild it, and Gabriel showed him its location. It is said that he built it of materials taken from five mountains: Mount Sinai, Mount Zaytah (Jerusalem), Mount Lebanon, Mount Ararat, and Mount Hira, from which he took its foundation stone. Gabriel brought him the black stone from heaven"¹⁶

Consequently, there are correspondences between the Ka'aba, *al-Bayt al-Ma'mur*, the Divine Throne and the Heart of Man. In a sense, the Divine Throne is the centre of the spiritual world and its reflection on the lowest plane of the Macrocosm is the Kaaba which the centre of the earthly world. The *al-Bayt al-Ma'mur* is the reflection of the Divine Throne in the intermediary world (The Imaginal World) and it's centre, and in the Microcosm it is the Heart which is the centre and reflects the Divine Throne.¹⁷ The Pilgrim, in circumambulating the Ka'aba, is simultaneously participating in the centre on all of these levels: the corporeal world, the imaginal world, and the spiritual world, and, their corresponding levels in the human being, those of the body, soul and spirit respectively.

Ibn 'Arabi explains:

The descent of the Ka'aba at the time of Adam is an allusion to the appearance of the heart...The fact that it had two doors, eastern and western, is an allusion to the manifestation of the knowledge of origination (*mabda'*) and return (*ma'ad*) to God, as well as the knowledge of the realms of light and darkness. These appeared during the time of Adam; they did not, however, include the science of divine oneness. Adam's journey to it (the Ka'aba) from the land of India is a reference to his turning away from the corporeal realm of nature, through origination (*takwin*) and equilibrium (*i'tidal*), to the station of the heart. His meeting with the angels is an allusion to the attachment of the animal and the vegetative powers of the body and the appearance in it of their effects prior to those of the heart. This was during the forty years during which his constitution was shaped and his clay set. His setting forth toward the Ka'aba is his journey (*suluk*) from the dark realm of the carnal soul to the realm of the heart. His meeting with the angels is his being received by the psychic and corporeal powers and their subordination to him by submitting to the beautiful morals and virtuous qualities. His rising from one station to the next before his arrival at the station of the heart and his circumambulation of the House all refer to his attainment of the heart. His entry into it means his abiding in it.

"The lifting of the House to the fourth heaven during the time of the flood is an allusion to the veiling of the people from the station of the heart by the overpowering caprice of the flood of ignorance at the time of Noah. Its remaining in the fourth heaven, which is the *al-Bayt al-Ma'mur* and which is the heart of the world, and its descent once more to earth at the time of Abraham, is an allusion to the guidance of men through him to the station of the heart. Abraham's raising of its foundation stones and making for it only one door is an allusion to his receiving the heart through his journey from his station to that of the spirit, which is the innermost faculty, and the raising of his stations till he

¹⁶ Zamakhshari, *Al-Kashshaaf 'an Haqa'iq at-Tanzil*, I, page 311

¹⁷ *Qalb al-mu'min 'Arsh ar-Rahman - "The heart of the believer is the Throne of the All-Merciful"*

attained the station of divine oneness. This is because Abraham was the first to whom the Unity of Essence manifested itself, as he says, "I turn my face to Him who created the heavens and the earth, a man of pure faith, nor am I one of the associators" (Quran 6:79)" (Ibn 'Arabi, I page 86-87).

Being the centre of the lower world, the Ka'aba affords a direct connection and access to higher worlds, for it is only by the centre of a particular ontological level that access to higher levels are possible. Thus, in the spiritual journey one must first travel "horizontally" from the periphery to the centre and only from there can one go "upwards" through successively higher levels of reality, and ultimately, to the Divine Reality itself. To put it in another way, one journeys from the outward aspect of one's being towards the heart and then continues "inwardly" through successively deeper levels, and ultimately to the supreme Self. This is seen in the Prophet's (s.a.w.) night journey (*Isra wa Mi'raj*) which was first a horizontal journey from Mecca to Jerusalem (which was the direction of the Qibla at that time)¹⁸, and then a vertical journey up through the seven heavens up to the Divine Throne.

A word should be said regarding why the circumambulations that are performed around the Ka'aba are seven in number. In the traditional world, number is not a purely quantitative reality but has a symbolic and qualitative aspect as well. Seven, in this sense, is a symbolic number and is considered the number of perfection. It is the sum of the number of Heaven (3) and the earth (4). Ibn Arabi says¹⁹ that the seven *tawafs* correspond to the seven heavens, the seven verses of the Fatiha and the seven positions of the *Salaat*: the first standing, the bowing, the second standing, prostration, sitting between prostrations, the second prostration, and the sitting for the tashahhud.²⁰

There are three sets of seven *tawaf* in *Hajj Tamattu'* and *Hajj Qiran*: *Tawaf Qudoom* (the Arrival Circumambulation), *Tawaf 'Ifada* (Circumambulation of Unfurling) and *Tawaf Wada'* (the Farewell Circumambulation). The *Tawaf Qudoom* is performed immediately upon entering Makkah for the first time, and the *Tawaf Wada'* is done as the final act before leaving Makkah to return home. Therefore, they are opposite one another and are like the Divine Names *al-'Awwal* (the First) and *al-'Akhir* (the Last).²¹ The *Tawaf 'Ifada* is done in the middle of the Hajj between the other two. Thus, it is like the centre in of the Hajj, its heart, so it corresponds to the Divine Names *al-Dhahir* and *al-Batin* (the Outward and the Inward respectively). To extend this correspondence further, since the Divine Names the First and the Last are related to time and the Names the Outward and the Inward are related to space, *Tawaf Qudoom* and *Wada'* are associated with time and *Tawaf 'Ifadah* is associated with space.

¹⁸ The direction of prayer began as Jerusalem and was changed to the Ka'aba around 622 A.H.. The prophet's *Isra* and *Mi'raj* likely occurred around 621 A.H.

¹⁹ Ibn Al-'Arabi, *On the Mysteries of the Pilgrimage*, 134

²⁰ One can add that the Shahada consists of seven words "La ilaha ila Allah Muhammad rasul Allah"; According to a Hadith Qudsi, there are 70,000 veils of darkness and light that separate Man from God; There are 7 letters of the Arabic alphabet that do not occur in the Fatiha; there are seven *Lata'if* (subtle bodies) in Sufi spiritual psychology, etc. See Annemarie Schimmel's "The Mystery of Numbers"

²¹ "He is the First, the Last, the Outward, and the Inward" Quran 57:3

At the beginning of each of the seven circumambulations around the Kaaba it is recommended to kiss the Black Stone (*al-Hajrat ul-Aswad*). The Black Stone is considered to be a stone sent down to earth from Paradise. Sayyiduna Abbaas (r.a.) reports that the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.) said: 'The Black Stone descended from paradise, having been whiter in colour than milk. The sins of the sons of men caused it to become black' ²². The heart of the human being is similar and becomes stained black with each sin a man commits. The Qur'an speaks about this in the following verse: 'By no means, but on their hearts is a stain of the (ill) which they do'. (Quran 83:14). Therefore, there is a correspondence that can be made between the Black Stone and the heart of Man. In another Hadith it is related:

"The *Hajar-al-Aswad*, is one of the stones of paradise. But for the fact that sins of evil-doers had touched it, the affliction of the blind, the lame and the sick would have been removed by merely touching it."

Similarly, if the soul of man can be reconnected to its purified Heart centre the Heart's light can shine within the soul and illuminate it. The illuminated soul is then be transformed and cured of all its illnesses.

The Black Stone also symbolically represents the right hand of God and to kiss it is to reaffirm the pilgrim's complete obedience to Him alone and demonstrates our sincere hope in His Mercy. Ibn Arabi says:

"It is the Black Stone, the right hand of God in the earth so that we give homage to every circuit with a homage of pleasure and good news of acceptance of what is from us in every circuit which is for us and against us. So what we owe is acceptance and what is owed us is forgiveness."²³

The kissing of the Black Stone has a further important meaning. It is asserted in the Qur'an:

"And when thy Lord took from the Children of Adam, from their loins, their progeny and made them bear witness concerning themselves, "Am I not your Lord?" they said, "Yea, we bear witness"—lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection, "Truly of this we were heedless,"" (Quran 7:172)

The "day" that Man took this primordial covenant with Allah ta'ala is called *yawm al-alast* or the Day of Alast (*lit.* "the day of 'am I not (alast)"). When the pilgrim kisses the Black Stone, he reestablishes the covenant Man made with Allah *ta'ala* on the "Day of Alast".

From another perspective, that of *mahabbah*, the kissing of the Black Stone and the touching of the Yemani Corner of the Ka'aba (*al-Rukn al-Yemani*) symbolizes the kissing the Hand and touching the Feet of the Beloved out of love and devotion for Him. The famous poem mentioned above, attributed to Majnun, summarizes the attitude of the Pilgrim towards the Ka'aba:

²² Jami` at-Tirmidhi 877: Book 9, Hadith 70

²³ Ibn Al-'Arabi, *On the Mysteries of the Pilgrimage*, 124

"I pass by these walls, the walls of Layla
 And I kiss this wall and that wall
 It's not Love of the walls that has enraptured my heart
 But of the One who dwells within them"

The Prophet (s.a.w.) was seen kissing the black stone for some time until tears rolled down his cheeks. Then he saw Umar (r.a.) standing near him with tears also. Seeing this he said "This is indeed a place where tears are to be shed".

After *Tawaf*, the pilgrim is encouraged to go to the *Multazam* which is the region between the door of the Kaaba and the Black Stone. Here it is recommended to press oneself against the cloth or stones of the Kaaba and make sincere supplications to Allah for His Mercy and forgiveness. This conjures up images of a man guilty of a crime who, while appearing in the court of the king, throws himself against the king's throne and grasps his royal clothing, begging to be pardoned for his crimes. The acts at the *Multazam*, from the point of view of love, reminds one of a lover tightly embracing his beloved in joy and ecstasy.

After this the pilgrim goes to the *Maqam Ibrahim* and prays two units of prayer, reciting in the first unit *Surah Kafiroon* and reciting *Surah Ikhlas* in the second. The Quran states:

"And [mention] when We made the House a place of return for the people and [a place of] security. And take, [O believers], from the standing place of Abraham a place of prayer. And We charged Abraham and Ishmael, [saying], "Purify My House for those who perform Tawaf and those who are staying [there] for worship and those who bow and prostrate [in prayer]." (Quran 2:125).

Ibn Arabi says that God commanded us to take the Station of Ibrahim as a place of prayer in order to obtain what he obtained of friendship with God.²⁴ Prophet Ibrahim is called *Khalilullah* ("the Friend of God"). The Quran states:

"And who is better in religion than one who submits himself to Allah while being a doer of good and follows the religion of Abraham, inclining toward truth? And Allah took Abraham as an intimate friend." Quran 4:125

Maqam Ibrahim is also a stone from paradise given to prophet Ibrahim (as) by an angel upon which he stood while he built the Kaaba. The stone would rise up as the Kaaba grew in height. The Prophet (s.a.w.) said:

"Indeed the corner (Black Stone) and the Maqam Ibrahim are the two jewels from the jewels of Paradise. Allah removed their lights and if their lights had not been removed, then they would illuminate what is between East and West" (Tirmidhi).

²⁴ Ibn Al-'Arabi, *On the Mysteries of the Pilgrimage*, 188

Because of the fall of these jewels from Paradise to earth, their lights have been veiled, and they have become opaque. Analogously, the heart of Man has also been veiled as a result of the fall of Adam from Paradise to Earth. If the traces of the fall can be removed from the heart, it will again shine forth like a jewel.

Sa'y

Upon completion of the prayers at Maqam Ibrahim the pilgrim walks to the nearby hill of *Safa* to participate in the rite of the *Sa'y*. This rite requires the pilgrim to walk (at times with a fast pace and at times with a slow one) seven times between the hills of *Safa* and *Marwa*. On one level, the *Sa'y* is a practice of balancing two complementary spiritual attitudes, that of fear of God's wrath (*khawf*) and hope in His Mercy (*raja'*). The *Sa'y* is a reenactment of Hajar's desperate search for water for her child Ismail (a.s.) after they were both left in Makkah by the prophet Ibrahim (a.s.) acting on a divine decree. When baby Isma'il (a.s.) began to cry from thirst, Hajar, out fear that he would die of dehydration, began to run back and forth between *Safa* and *Marwa* in search of water. Her state at that time was, on one hand that of fear (*khawf*) and of desperation, while on the other hand, she was hoping and praying for Allah's Mercy. At the same time, her act was motivated by love of her son within the context of her love of Allah. Therefore, the *Sa'y* is a rite emphasizing fear of Allah *ta'ala* while never losing hope in His Mercy and Love.

Khawf and *raja'* complement one another and the balance between them is vital to the Spiritual Path. Ibn al-Qayyum al-Jawziyya states that the heart, in its travel to Allah, is like a bird. Love is its head, and *khawf* and *raja'* are its wings. When the head and both wings are sound, the bird is capable and skilled in flying. When one of the wings is not functioning it goes nowhere and if the head is cut off it dies.

This rite of the *Sa'y* is a reminder that, no matter how difficult our situation in life seems, and no matter what our shortcomings are, we must never lose hope in Allah's Mercy for His Mercy will always come. The Quran asserts: "Say: "O My servants who have transgressed against themselves [by sinning], do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Indeed, Allah forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful." (Quran 39:53) and also: "So, verily, with every difficulty, there is relief" (Quran 94:5)

In his discussion of the spiritual states and stations, Imam Qushayri reminds us that what begins as the states of Fear and Hope transform into higher states as one progresses upon the spiritual path. Fear and Hope transform first into Contraction (*Qabd*) and Expansion (*Bast*) then into Awe (*Hayba*) and Intimacy (*Uns*) and then into a direct experience of God's Jalali and Jamali Names. The repeated movement between *Safa* and *Marwa* may also symbolise this progression in spiritual states.

Furthermore, the believers are commanded in the Quran "*Fa firru ila'Llah*" - "Therefore, flee to Allah" (Quran 51:50). This verse contains both the attitudes of fear and of hope; fear of God's Wrath and hope in His Mercy for there is no refuge from God save with God. It emphasizes the urgent nature of the need to "flee" to God's Mercy and avoid His punishment. It is not to be

delayed for the future nor can it be accomplished in the past but only in this very moment and in every moment. The fast paced walking that is recommended in parts of the *Sa'y* and in the first three circuits of the *Tawaf* recall in the pilgrim this attitude of fleeing to God with fear and hope, while simultaneously fleeing away from the suffering attachment to the lower world and the passions of the ego inevitably cause.

It is said in a Hadith that on the day of resurrection the people out of fear will run to the prophets for help. First to Adam, then Nuh, Ibrahim, Musa, Isa (a.s.) and finally to the prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) who will then intercede on their behalf. Some say that the *Sa'y* between Safa and Marwa signifies this event.

Another explanation is given for the meaning of fast paced walking in the valley between Safa and Marwa. It is said that the bottom of valleys are the dwelling places of Satans. Ibn 'Arabi explains:

"Then he (the pilgrim) trots between the two slopes, which is the bottom of the valley, and the bottom of valleys are the dwelling places of the satans. This is why it is disliked to pray in them. It is related that when the Prophet (s.a.w.) overslept in the bottom of the valley beyond the time of *Fajr* prayer he said: "Go higher. It is a valley with a *Shaytan*". In it they are subjected to a trial (*fitna*) and so he trots at the bottom of the valley to quickly escape from the satanic attributes and to be free of his company."²⁵

Interpreted from the point of view of love, the running between Safa and Marwa recalls the ardor that the lover feels when running to meet his beloved; his state being one of intense fervour. Or it can be seen as a desperate search for the lost beloved.

Some say that when Adam (a.s.) and Hawa' (a.s.) were expelled from Paradise they landed on earth in two different geographical areas, Adam (a.s.) in Sri Lanka and Hawa' (a.s.) in Jeddah. They met in Makkah at Safa and Marwa. Before they were allowed to be together Adam (a.s.) was made to stand atop Safa and Hawa' on Marwa. Only after some time had passed did the angel Jibreel (a.s.) instruct them to go to each other. The implication of this traditional story is that Safa represents the masculine pole of existence and Marwa the feminine pole. Masculinity and femininity (or activity and passivity) being the first and principle duality of the cosmos.²⁶ In the microcosm, masculinity and femininity are a complementary duality that must be harmonized for the original unity of the primordial soul (*Fitrah*) to be reestablished. As one walks or runs between Safa and Marwa during the rite of *Sa'y*, the pilgrim reunites these two poles within himself or herself. Duality is thereby reintegrated into Unity.

Ibn al-'Arabi points out that the hills of Safa and Marwa are rocks, and rocks, among the natural signs, have the most eminent degree of servanthood (*'ubudiyyah*). Participating in the rite of *Sa'y* is to try to realize the state of perfect servanthood, or annihilation. He says:

²⁵ Ibn Al-'Arabi, *On the Mysteries of the Pilgrimage*, 148.

²⁶ وَمِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَا زَوْجَيْنِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ And all things We have created by pairs, that haply ye may reflect. Quran 51:49

“We have previously shown you that the mineral is, amongst the natural signs, the one that has the greatest knowledge through Allah as well as the most eminent degree of servanthood. The more perfect man’s nothingness, the more perfect Allah’s attributes are manifested. ‘*At-Tawhid sir al-‘ubudiyah*’ - realization of unity is the secret of servanthood.

"There is nothing higher in man than the inanimate. This relates to the principle of inverse analogy 'the lowest is the most direct reflection of that which is highest.' The Quran says: 'And truly of the rocks there are some that rivers gush forth from them' (2:74). God made stones the place of manifestation of the waters. The highest is reflected and manifested in the lowest.

“So the one who runs between Safa and Marwa, which are stones, obtains what the reality of stoneness accords him of fear and life and knowledge of God, and firmness in their position. Whoever runs and finds the like of these attributes in himself in the state of his running, has run and obtained the result of his running. So he moves from his running, alive of heart with God, with fear of god, knowing His power and what He had and what God has. If he is not like that, he has not run between Safa and Marwa.”²⁷

The Sa’y also can symbolize the Spiritual Path (*al-Tariqa*) itself. Each passing from Safa to Marwa is the passing of one *maqam* (spiritual station) to the next. The pilgrim begins at Safa and then walks to the top of Marwa and pauses there in a state of stability, as if inhabiting a spiritual *Maqam*; the *Maqam* being a permanent realization and not a temporary state or *Hal*. However, despite the *Maqam* being a significant spiritual achievement, it is not the ultimate goal of the Path. The ultimate goal is Allah Himself. The *faqir* must build upon this achievement and attempt to reach a higher station so that the journey can progress towards the goal of the Ultimate Reality. Thus the pilgrim leaves Marwa and walks again toward Safa, and so on. The Sa’y progresses through the *maqamaat* (stations) in this way and ultimately to the realization of perfect Servanthood (*‘ubudiyah*) or annihilation (*fana*’).

Throughout this process the traveller experiences various transient spiritual states (*ahwaal*). There are times that walking the Path feels difficult and spiritual progress is a struggle. This is symbolized by the pilgrim's uphill climb to the top of the hills of Safa or Marwa. Other times, traveling seems almost effortless and this is represented by the relatively effortless descent down the same hills. The Path require the traveller to alternate between more active and passive spiritual modes. This is represented by alternating faster paced with slower paced walking that takes place at determined points between Safa and Marwa.

The Sa'y can also be interpreted in light of the traditional cosmological science of Alchemy. In Islamic Alchemy, the human soul is believed to possess a masculine and a feminine element. These two powers of the soul are represented by the substances Sulphur and Mercury. Sulfur representing the active, masculine power of the soul and Mercury the passive, feminine power.²⁸ The mountain of Safa represents sulphur and Marwa represents Mercury. Sulfur has the dual power of volatilization and of fixation. Mercury has the dual powers of coagulation and

²⁷ Ibn Al-'Arabi, *On the Mysteries of the Pilgrimage*, 150-151.

²⁸ See Upton, Charles, "Dimensions of Alchemy" 139-140. In *The Science of the Greater Jihad (San Rafael: Sophia Perennis, 2011)*

dissolution. In the soul, in its state of primordial perfection, the volitization aspect of sulfur marries the coagulation aspect of mercury; and the fixation aspect of sulfur marries the dissolving aspect of mercury. When the soul is in its fallen state, volitization of sulfur is married to the dissipative aspect of mercury and fixation of sulfur is married to the coagulative aspect of mercury. This produces "hardness of heart" on the one hand and a dissipated concupiscuous soul on the other. In the rite of Sa'y one walks between these two poles of sulfur and mercury first undoing the "troubled marriage" of the fallen soul and then uniting sulfur and mercury back into their ideal union, reestablishing the soul in its primordial perfection.

After the Sa'y, the lesser pilgrimage (*Umrah*) is complete, and the pilgrim removes himself from the state of Ihram, and then awaits the days of the greater pilgrimage (Hajj).

Mina

The Hajj proper begins on the 8th of *Dhul Hijja* with the re-donning of the Ihram in Makkah followed by an immediate journey to *Mina* which is a valley just south of Makkah half way between Makkah and Arafat. *Mina* means desire, hope, longing, and thus represents a station of desire and longing to return to Allah's presence.

To understand the spiritual significance of *Mina*, we must recall that, according to traditional Sufi metaphysics, Reality consists of gradations or levels which are in an hierarchical order. The terminology and exact descriptions used to describe these levels vary depending on perspective of a particular author or school. One such well known description is the so-called "Five Divine Presences" (*al-Khams al-Hadarat al-Ilahiya*):

1. *Alam al-Nasut* - the level of the lower world or *al-dunya*. It is the world of gross formal manifestation.
2. *Alam al-Malakut* - also referred to as *Alam al-Khayal* (the Imaginal World), or *Alam al-Mithal*. This is the psychic world populated with psychic beings (jinn) and angels. It is the world of subtle formal manifestation.
3. *Alam al-Jabarut* - the archangelic world or the spiritual world. It is the world of supra-formal manifestation.
4. *Alam al-Lahut* - the level of God's Names and Qualities.
5. *Alam al-Hahut* - the level of God in His Essence.

Symbolically, *Mina* represents the intermediary world *Alam al-Malakut* which is between the *Alam al-Nasut* the centre of which is the Kaaba, and the higher spiritual world *Alam al-Jabarut* which is represented by Arafat.

Once the pilgrim completes the horizontal journey from the periphery to the centre represented by the journey from one's home to the Kaaba, he can begin the vertical journey up through the higher ontological levels to the Divine Reality Itself. The first phase of this vertical journey is the travel through the *Alam al-Khayal* or the Imaginal world which is represented in the Hajj by *Mina*.

This higher world, which is one step removed from the material world of ordinary cause and effect, has its own laws of time and space. Reflecting this, when the pilgrims congregate to pray Dhuhr, Asr, Maghrib, Isha and Fajr prayers they do so in their proper times but in shortened form. Dhuhr, Asr and Isha prayers are decreased to 2 units from their usual 4, and Maghrib and Fajr prayers remain the same. Being a world of subtle formal manifestation, emphasis is placed on less formal acts of worship; therefore, outside of the the shortened formal prayers, the pilgrim is encouraged to spend the rest of his or her time in non-formal acts of worship such as dhikr, reading the Quran, making du'a, seeking forgiveness for past sins, etc.

'Arafaat

After offering the Fajr prayer at Mina, on the morning of the 9th of Dhul Hijja, the pilgrim travels to the plain of 'Arafaat which is located south west of Makkah. This marks the furthest point away from the Kaaba that the pilgrim will travel during the Hajj. The entire day from Dhuhr to sunset is spent at 'Arafaat in worship.

On one side of 'Arafaat is a valley named *Urana* and, it is said, this is were *Iblis* stands and weeps on the day of 'Arafah observing God's forgiveness descend upon the pilgrims making dhikr. It is related that the Prophet (s.a.w) slept through the Fajr prayer while in the Urana valley, he ascended out of the valley and then said "this is a valley with a satan" because it was he that lulled Bilal to sleep and so he was not able to make the call to Fajr prayer. This valley and *Iblis* are subject to the authority of the Divine Name *al-Ba'eed* (the Far) whereas, in contrast, 'Arafaat and the pilgrims therein are subject to the Name *al-Qarib* (the Near) because they are very near to the Divine Mercy. In fact there is a mountain in 'Arafaat called *Jabal al-Rahma*. According to some traditional reports, this is the place that Adam (a.s.) and Huwa (a.s.) were reunited after they were expelled from Paradise, and thus, this place represents the final unification of masculine and feminine principles discussed above. When at the *Jabal al-Rahma* the vertical spiritual journey culminates with the entry into the Divine Presence Itself.

The day of 'Arafah is well known to be the most important part of the pilgrimage. The Prophet (s.a.w) said "*al-Hajju 'Arafah*", "the Greater Pilgrimage is Arafah". In a sense, the Kaaba is goal and culmination of the 'Umrah (Lesser Pilgrimage), but the goal of the Hajj (Greater Pilgrimage) is 'Arafah. The word 'Arafah comes from the arabic root "'ARF" which has as its main meaning, "to know". Al-Hujwiri called 'Arafah "*Arafatu 'l-Ma'rifah*" (the 'Arafah of knowledge). It symbolizes, among other things, the spiritual station of supreme knowledge of Allah, or more accurately, "knowledge through Allah" as well as the state of the *Waliullah* (Friend of God) who is a "knower through Allah" or "knower by Allah" (*al-'Arif billah*). It is related in the Usul al-Kafi that Sayyiduna Ali (r.a.) said 'Know God through God, the Messenger through the Messengerhood, and the Wali al-amr by his commanding to what is right (*amr bil-ma'ruf*), his justice and kindness."²⁹

²⁹ Usul al-Kafi, i, 4, "*kitab al-tawhid, bab annahu la yu'arafu illa bih*," Hadith 1

Furthermore, 'Arafah symbolizes both our pre-terrestrial and our post-terrestrial lives. Before we were sent on to earth for our present life, we were created by God and then gathered altogether in His presence. The Quran states:

"When thy Lord drew forth from the Children of Adam - from their loins - their descendants, and made them testify concerning themselves, (saying): "Am I not your Lord (who cherishes and sustains you)?"- They said: "Yea! We do testify!" (This), lest ye should say on the Day of Judgment: "Of this we were never mindful". (Quran 7:172)

According to tradition, 'Arafaat is the place that Allah gathered all of humanity after their creation and asked "Am I not your Lord?". After death we will leave the lower world of al-dunya, be resurrected, and then gathered altogether once again in God's presence for the final judgement. Some say that this final gathering and judgment will also take place at 'Arafaat. In any case, the sea of pilgrims standing in dhikr at 'Arafaat recalls the seen of the final gathering of humanity in God's presence on the Day of Resurrection. Imam Al-Ghazali explains:

“As for the standing at 'Arafaat and the congress of different kinds of people from all quarters of the world with their supplications in many languages, it resembles the fields of the Resurrection upon which all peoples will have been assembled, each person preoccupied with himself and dumbfounded between rejection and acceptance (by God).”³⁰

As mentioned above, there are two phases to the spiritual journey. There is, first of all, a “horizontal journey” from the periphery to the centre and then a “vertical journey” from the centre up to the Principle itself. According to some, the Perfect Man is one who has reached the end of the horizontal journey and the one who reaches the end of the vertical journey is referred to as the Universal Man. The Perfect Man has reached the centre of his being, perfected his individuality and connected it with the Universal order via the centre. The Universal Man, on the other hand, has transcended his individuality altogether and achieved Universality. These two phases are seen in the Prophet’s *M’iraj* (s.a.w.). The horizontal journey being from Makkah to Jerusalem. The vertical journey is from Jerusalem up through the seven heavens to the Divine Throne which marks the upper limits of the created cosmos. In the Hajj these two journeys are seen, first, by the journey from one's home to the Kaaba which represents the horizontal journey from the periphery to the centre, and second, the journey from Makkah to 'Arafaat representing the vertical journey from the horizontal centre up to the Divine Throne. The Kaaba representing the centre of the world of formal manifestation (*Alam al-Nasut*), and 'Arafaat the centre of the world of supra formal manifestation (*Alam al-Jabarut*).

Being in the supra-formal world, 'Arafah is outside of ordinary space and time and beyond the individual soul and therefore "supra-individual". Thus, the formal aspects of religious practice are minimized and essentialised. There are no legally prescribed Rites performed at 'Arafah apart from Dhuhr and Asr prayers which are shortened and combined. It is dhikr, du'a and recitation of the Quran which is emphasized during the pilgrims stay at 'Arafah. The highest emphasis is

³⁰ Ibn Al-'Arabi, Al-Ghazali, trans. Aisha Bewley, *Ibn Al-'Arabi On the Mysteries of the Pilgrimage* (Chicago: Kazi Publications Inc., 2009) P. 301

placed on the heart of all religious practice which is the *dhikr*. Shaykh al-Alawi has said that fasting, prayer and the pilgrimage exist in order to remember God (*dhikrullah*) which is the heart and *raison de être* of these Rites.

Arafa is, in a sense, an extension of the interior of the Ka'aba. *Arafa* is spatially oriented in relation to the Kaaba through its corner that contains the Black Stone. As noted above, the Black Stone is a symbol of the right Hand of God. The Black Stone juts outward from the Ka'aba and represents an aspect of the Divine Reality which is "inside" the Ka'aba. Clearly, the Divine Reality does not "dwell in" the Ka'aba the way that one thing is contained in another thing. Allah is utterly transcendent and cannot be limited by anything, "*Laysa Kamithlihi shay*". Symbolically however, the inside of the Ka'aba represents the higher spiritual worlds up to, and including, the Divine Presence itself. The inside of the Ka'aba "opens up" through the Black Stone to the higher spiritual world, and thus leads to 'Arafah which represents this spiritual world.

Muzdalifah

The pilgrims' stay at 'Arafaat is called *wuqoof al-'Arafah*, which literally means "the standing of 'Arafah", because they were standing stationary while immersed in dhikr and supplications. After sunset on the 9th of Dhul Hijjah, the pilgrims begin to move out of 'Arafaat back towards Mina through a narrow valley called Muzdalifah where they are instructed to stay overnight and continue their dhikr before leaving for Mina at dawn.

فَإِذَا أَفَضْتُمْ مِنْ عَرَفَاتٍ فَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ عِنْدَ الْمَشْعَرِ الْحَرَامِ وَاذْكُرُوهُ كَمَا هَدَاكُمْ وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ لَمِنَ الضَّالِّينَ * تَمَّ أَفِيضُوا
مِنْ حَيْثُ أَفَاضَ النَّاسُ وَاسْتَغْفِرُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

"Then, when you pour out (*afadtum*) from Arafat, remember God at the sacred ground. And remember Him as He guided you, though formerly you were of those astray. Then surge onward (*afeedu*) whence the people surge onward, and ask God for forgiveness. Truly God is Forgiving, Merciful." (Quran 2:198-199)

The words used in this verse translated as "depart" are from the Arabic root *faada* which has as one of its meanings "overflowing" such as an overflowing of water. Pilgrims were stationary at 'Arafaat and then, as if a dyke is broken, a deluge of pilgrims flows out of 'Arafaat in the direction of Muzdalifah. This symbolizes the transition from the unchanging world of Being, represented by 'Arafaat, to the constant flow and change of the world of becoming, represented by Muzdalifah and Mina. Thus, symbolically speaking, the pilgrim, when leaving 'Arafaat, re-enters the formal cosmos again and the first part of this journey is symbolized by Muzdalifa.

Until recently, Muzdalifah was a tight and narrow place between 'Arafaat and Mina which was empty³¹. The exit of pilgrims from 'Arafaat goes through this empty passage and occurs at dawn and represents the move from the world of supra-formal manifestation (night) to the world of

³¹ In relatively recent times, Muzdalifah has been widened and now contains some permanent buildings such as toilets.

subtle formal manifestation (dawn). The descent of the spiritual into the formal always requires a relative emptiness of the formal container. Water cannot be poured into a cup full of mud. The night represents the supra formal world which is relatively "empty" of forms,³² and dawn represents the higher formal world of subtle manifestation.

At Muzdalifah stones are collected that will be used in Mina to cast at the pillars representing the Shaytan. It is interesting that the objects used by the pilgrim to fight the Shaytan come from this "higher world" represented by Muzdalifah. Likewise, the spiritual traveller must fight Shaytan to advance on the Path and the tools used to repel the Shaytan come from this relatively "higher" part of the created cosmos which is in close contact with the spiritual world. Only the higher can defeat the lower. An individual cannot battle with the Shaytan using the lower powers of his or her *nafs* alone; fire is not fought with fire but with water. Similarly, the *nafs al-ammara bisu'* (the soul that commands to evil) cannot overcome itself; only something higher, and of a spiritual substance, can accomplish this victory.

Back to Mina

After spending the night at Muzdalifah, the pilgrim then continues his descent back into the world of formal manifestation by moving from Muzdalifah to Mina. The Shaytan does not have any power in the Divine Realm and little power in the spiritual realm, but once the lower cosmos is reentered, the Shaytan's influence again becomes a reality and must be contended with. Thus *Mina* is the place of three pillars called the *Jamaraat* which represent the various powers of the Shaytan. When returning from 'Arafaat and Muzdalifah to Mina, the Pilgrim stones only the largest of three pillars and not the other two. After returning from the Tawaf al-Ifada, on the days of *Tashriq*, all three pillars are stoned. The three *Jamaraat*, according to tradition, commemorate the three locations that the Shaytan manifested himself in the form of an old man to prophets Ibrahim(a.s.) and Isma'il(a.s.). When prophet Ibrahim(a.s.) was taking Ismail(a.s.) to be sacrificed in accordance with the command of Allah, the Shaytan tried to distract and dissuade them from fulfilling Allah's command. Prophet Ibrahim(a.s.) threw 7 stones at him and repeated this act at three different places until the Shaytan finally disappeared. These three pillars are called "the first" (*al-Ula*), "the middle" (*al-Wusta*) and "the last" (*al-Aqabah*) or "the smallest" (*al-Sughra*), "the middle" (*al-Wusta*) and "the largest" (*al-Kubra*). The stones collected at Muzdalifah are cast at these pillars as a symbolic repudiation of Shaytan and his influence.

Mina is a place where the presence of the Shaytan is physically felt. During the stoning rite, some pilgrims are overcome by his negative influence and commit transgressions against other pilgrims. People have been pushed, shoved and stepped on during the stoning rite, and occasionally, there have been fatal stampedes.

Why are there three pillars to stone and what is their symbolic significance? From one point of view, the act of stoning represents the negation (*nafy*) of the *Shahada*. The *Shahada* consists of two parts, the negation (*nafy*) "*La ilaha*" which negates any false idol or, in other words, negating

³² This is the secret to why the Quran was revealed during the "night of power" (*laylat ul-qadr*) and not a "day of power".

any false attribution of divinity to anything other than God or the attribution of the qualities of divinity to anything other than God, and the affirmation (*ithbat*) which affirms only the Divine Reality as possessing Divinity and Divine Attributes. The stoning is a symbolic Rite in which the pilgrim acts out the negation of the "*La ilaha*" (and by consequence the affirmation of the "*illa Allah*") and thereby, helps to actualize this negation in the heart and soul of the Pilgrim.

Traditionally, God is often spoken about on three "levels": His Essence (*al-Dhat*), His Names and Attributes (*al-Asmaa' wa al-Sifaat*), and His Acts (*al-Afal*). Negating false attributes from the Divine Reality can thus be on these three levels and these are symbolized by the three pillars of the Jamarat. In speaking about the three pillars Ibn Arabi says:

"They are three idols. It is like that with the Divine Presence which is opposite the three meanings: the Essence, Attributes, and Acts. Stoning the idols is like the proofs and indications of negation, like the presence of the essence, or affirmation, like the presence of the attributes of the meaning of ascriptions or relationships is like the presence of actions."³³

The stoning of the three *Jamarat* correspond to the negation of false associations with the Divine reality in its Essence, Attributes and Acts respectively.

Seven stones are cast at each pillar. At the first pillar these stones represent the negation of false associations with the Divine Essence. According to Ibn Arabi the first set of seven stones represent the negations of, respectively:

- 1) the body
- 2) the *Nafs al-Amara bi' su'* (Quran 12:53) - the soul that commands to evil.
- 3) the *Nafs al-Lawwamah* (Quran 75:2) - the self accusing soul
- 4) the *Nafs al-Mulhima* (Quran 91:8) - the inspired soul which has become more good than bad.
- 5) the *Nafs al-Mutma'innah* (Quran 89:27) - the soul at peace with God
- 6) the *Nafs al-Radiyah* (Quran 89:27-28) - the soul satisfied by God
- 7) the *Nafs al-Mardiyyah* (Quran 89:27-28) - the soul satisfying to God

According to the Sufis, these are the stages the soul goes through on its journey from its fallen state back to its original primordial perfection (*fitrah*) in the presence of the Divine Reality.

The seven stones cast at the middle pillar represent the negation of the seven attributes that belong to God alone:

- 1) Life
- 2) Power
- 3) Knowledge
- 4) Will
- 5) Hearing

³³ Ibn Al-'Arabi, Al-Ghazali, trans. Aisha Bewley, *Ibn Al-'Arabi On the Mysteries of the Pilgrimage* (Chicago: Kazi Publications Inc., 2009) P. 183

- 6) Seeing
- 7) Speaking

The seven stones cast at the largest pillar represent the negation of false attribution on the level of the Divine Acts, i.e. the negation of:

- 1) the idea that the physical world subsists by itself
- 2) the four elements, namely earth, water, air, and fire, which are the pillars of the physical world
- 3) the heavenly sphere which brings the four elements into existence
- 4) the Forms
- 5) the Primordial Substance - *haylula*
- 6) the Guarded Tablet - *Lawh al-Mahfudh*
- 7) the First Intellect - *al-'Aql al-Awwal*

After all these negations, there remains only God. The Prophet (s.a.w.) said: "Allah was, and there was nothing with Him...", to which Ibn 'AtaAllah al-Iskandari adds "It is now as it always was." Thus, the stoning stops for there is nothing left to stone and no one left to perform the stoning. The pilgrim having negated his separative personhood cannot offer personal supplications, and this may be the reason why a du'a is not offered after stoning the third pillar, wa Allahu a'lam.

According to Junayd al-Baghdadi, the throwing of stones at Mina symbolizes the throwing away of whatever sensual thoughts a pilgrim has. It may also be considered an act that serves to "throw away" the blameworthy character traits and vices from our soul which, though created in purity and goodness, was reduced to "the lowest of the low." (Quran 155:5) By virtue of this casting away of vice, the soul regains its original purity. We "throw" our vice towards the Shaytan, who is the embodiment of all vice, because of the metaphysical principle of congenity (*jinsiyat*) which states, in Rumi's words, "Each kind goes toward its own kind."³⁴ But to throw something away, one must first possess it, and therefore, before the stoning at Mina, the pilgrim spends time searching for and collecting pebbles from the ground. Similarly, one must first identify and control the blameworthy traits of the nafs before one can cast them away. The stones can also symbolize the spiritual tools that the soul requires to overcome Shaytan's influence successfully. It is significant to note that it is in Muzadilafah that the pilgrim is encouraged to collect these stones and not in Mina where they will be used. Muzdalifah is a relatively "higher" place than Mina, and only the higher can vanquish the lower. Likewise, the soul requires something "higher" than it to overcome its vices and only power from the spiritual realm will do. Ultimately, it is the Divine Names and formulas made available by revelation that the spiritual traveller "casts" over his soul to vanquish his vices.

From the perspective of love, the stoning of the pillars at Mina signifies the casting aside of everyone and everything that could come between the lover and the Beloved. It is also the destruction of anything that can tear them apart, or prevent them from their ultimate goal of union. All the forces in the universe, and in ourselves that tend to separate lover from Beloved

³⁴ Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, and William C Chittick. 1983. *The Sufi Path Of Love*. Albany: State University of New York Press. 97

are symbolized and personified by this pillar that the Pilgrim stones. Alternatively, the stones themselves can symbolize all that comes between the lover and the Beloved which are cast away bringing about nearness, intimacy and ultimately union.

After the pilgrim completes the rite of the stoning he must remove himself from the state of Ihram which he accomplishes through a series of stages. First, he slaughters an animal. A sacrificial act that frees the animal's spirit from its restrictive earthly cage so that it may return to the freedom of its spiritual home and which corresponds to the Pilgrim becoming freed from the restrictions of Ihram. Up until this point, the lover has sacrificed his material possessions, job, home, family, friends, position, etc. Now the soul itself, after having been purified through tests and trials and having proved its love to be pure and true, can be sacrificed for the Beloved. The animal sacrifice thus symbolizes the sacrifice of man's soul, as *al-nafs al-muṭma'innah*, at the altar of God, seen as the Name *al-Qahhār* (the Victorious), the Name that signifies the total annihilation (*fanā'*) of man.

Second, the pilgrim's hair is shaved (or partially cut) symbolizing the removal of all stains of human attributes from the essential Spirit breathed into the body by God. Shaving of the head symbolizes the final removal of all of the Pilgrim's own attributes which, formerly, the Pilgrim falsely claimed as his or her own. The true lover is then completely free of possessing any of his or her attributes but instead exists by and through his Beloved and is the perfect mirror in which the Divine attributes are manifested.

After cutting the hair, the pilgrim is partially removed from his sacred state of Ihram which indicates a partial return from the spiritual world to the purely earthly one.

Tawaf Ifadah, Sa'y then back to Mina

Now, the Pilgrim moves back to Makkah to perform another Tawaf around the Ka'aba called *Tawaf al-Ifada* or "The Tawaf of Unfurling." The word *ifadah* is from the same root as the words used in the Quranic verses describing the departing of pilgrims from 'Arafaat to Muzdalifah quoted above, i.e. *faada* - "flowing out", "unfolding" or "unfurling". The Tawaf al-ifadah continues the "flowing out" of the pilgrim from the spiritual center, represented by 'Arafaat, outwards back towards the periphery which is the lower world of gross manifestation. The periphery is the Dunya, the world of trials and tribulations and ongoing alternations between states of fear and hope. The Sa'ee between Safa and Marwa, which is then repeated, represents the ongoing alterations between the states of hope and fear that characterize life in the Dunya.

The Dunya is the world in which the persistent presence of the Shaytan is a reality that must be confronted. The struggle to resist the deceits and stratagems of the adversary are not over with the completion of the Hajj and it must continue for the duration of life. Therefore, the Pilgrim returns again to Mina for the "days of *Tashreeq*", and there, he continues the ongoing battle with the Shaytan represented by the stoning of the Jamaraat. This time, the stoning is not a one-time event but is repeated daily for the duration of the Pilgrim's stay at Mina, reminding the Pilgrim that the struggle must continue even after the Hajj has ended and "ordinary" life resumes again.

Final Tawaf

After spending 2 or 3 days at Mina the pilgrim returns one final time to Makkah to perform the Tawaf al-Wida' or "The Farewell Circumambulation". This Rite must be the last act the pilgrim performs prior to leaving Mecca for the journey home. Its inner significance is explained by Mawlana Ali Ashraf Thanvi:

“The Prophet has said that there are two stations behind the Throne of God—one of belief and the other of unbelief. The former creates a white veil and the other a dark veil between the slave and the Lord. The dark veil is removed when, along with the physical journey, a pilgrim succeeds in completing his spiritual journey. The other veil is removed when the final circumambulations of the Ka‘bah are performed. If man’s pilgrimage has been completed both externally and internally and his realizations are as depicted above, then he must once again go seven times around the Ka‘bah, feeling this time as if he is going around the Throne of God. He is then entitled by God to enter into the station of nearness to the Almighty, Whose vision he achieves. It is to this achievement of direct vision of the Lord that God refers when He says, “And He made them drink the purest of drinks” (LXXVI, 21). This is symbolized externally by the drinking of the water of the holy well Zamzam after the completion of the circumambulation. When a person attains to this stage of consciousness, all veils are removed and he talks to the Lord without any veil between them.

The final stage of the ḥajj is the ṭawāf al-wadā‘ (circumambulation of farewell) or ṭawāf al-ṣadr (circumambulation of the breast) and return to one’s homeland. The pilgrim’s real homeland is, of course, the place of his spiritual origin, about which God has said that He made man in the best of forms and then cast him to the realm of the lowest of the low (XCV, 5). This ṭawāf symbolizes man’s detachment from the lowest region and his journey to that region which is the highest of the high, his real homeland.

Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir Jīlānī describes this aspect of pilgrimage as Ḥajj al-ṭarīqah (the pilgrimage in the spiritual path). This is the real significance of the various rites about which God says in the Quran, “Such is the pilgrimage. Whoever honors the sacred rites of God, for him it is good in the sight of his Lord” (XXII, 30).”³⁵

As we have seen, the Hajj can be interpreted on different levels and from various points of view. In essence, the Hajj is a symbolic recapitulation of the spiritual journey of Man from his earthly exile back to the Divine Presence from which he issued and which represents his real home. It is

³⁵ Nasr, Seyyed Hossein. 2016. *Islamic Spirituality: Foundations*. London and New York: Routledge. 257-258

equally an inward journey of Man from himself to his true Self, from the outward illusory aspects of his being to his Heart/Intellect and ultimately to the Supreme Self.

In the words of Mawlana Rumi:

"O people gone on Hajj Pilgrimage
Where are you? Where are you?
The Beloved is right here
Come on back, come on back!

Your Beloved is your next-door neighbour
-Wall-to-walls -
Why are you wandering in the Arabian deserts?

If you take a really good look at
Beloved's faceless Face,
You will get to see that
The Master, the Holy House, and the Kaaba
Are all in reality You!

You've already journeyed ten times
On the path of Hajj Pilgrimage
To visit that Holy House.
For once,
Also climb up to the roof of your own house
That Holy House is indeed magnificent

You've already talked about its many wonders. But from the Master of that House,
Did you get its correct address?

Where is your flower bouquet
If you've seen that Divine Garden?

Where is your soul's pearly essence
If you now belong to the Ocean of God?

Well, despite of it all, May all your sufferings turn into your treasures.
Alas, you are always veiling your own treasures."

Wa Allahu a'lam.

Min al-faqir ila Rabihi,

Zafer Mian

