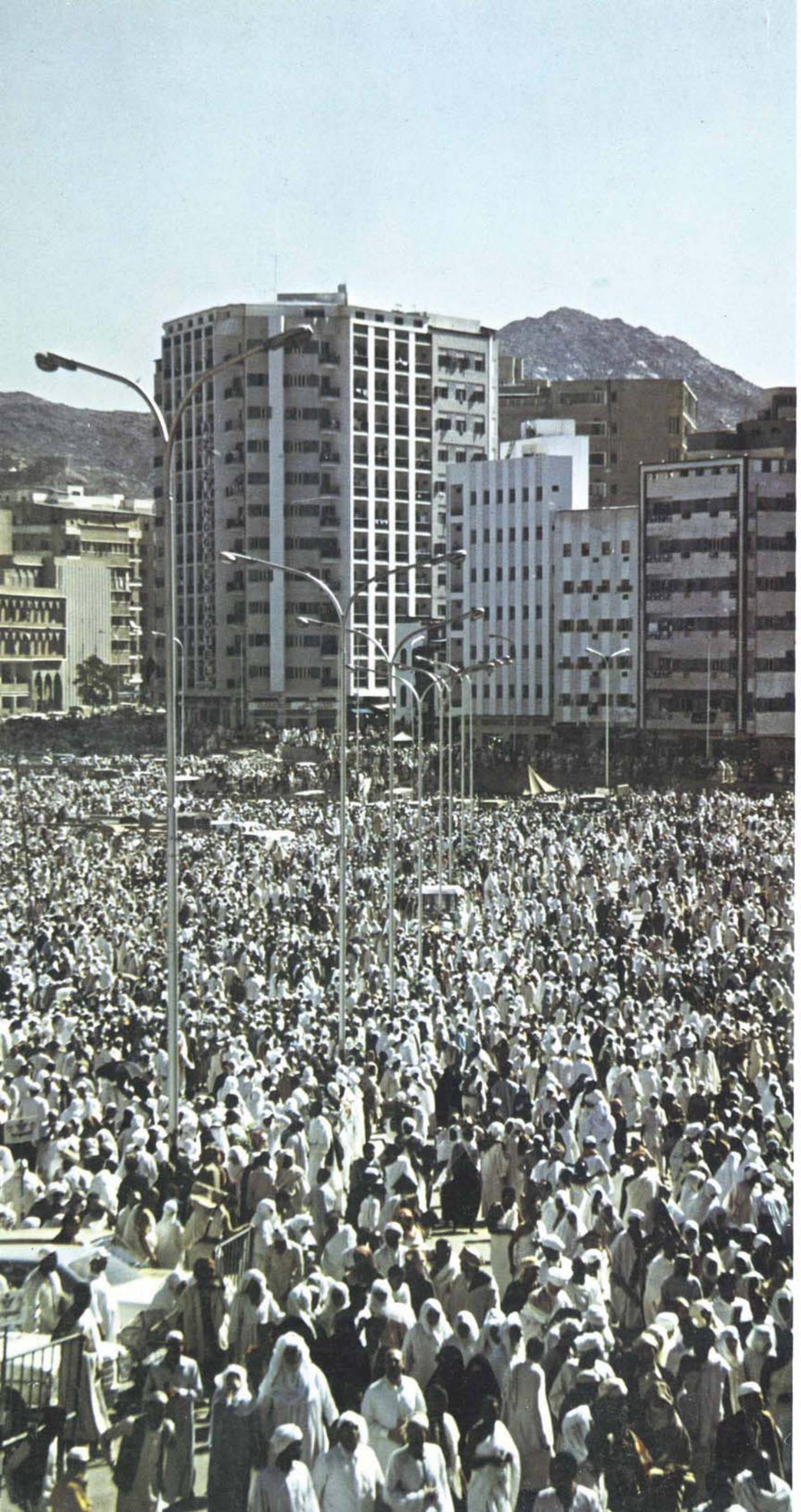

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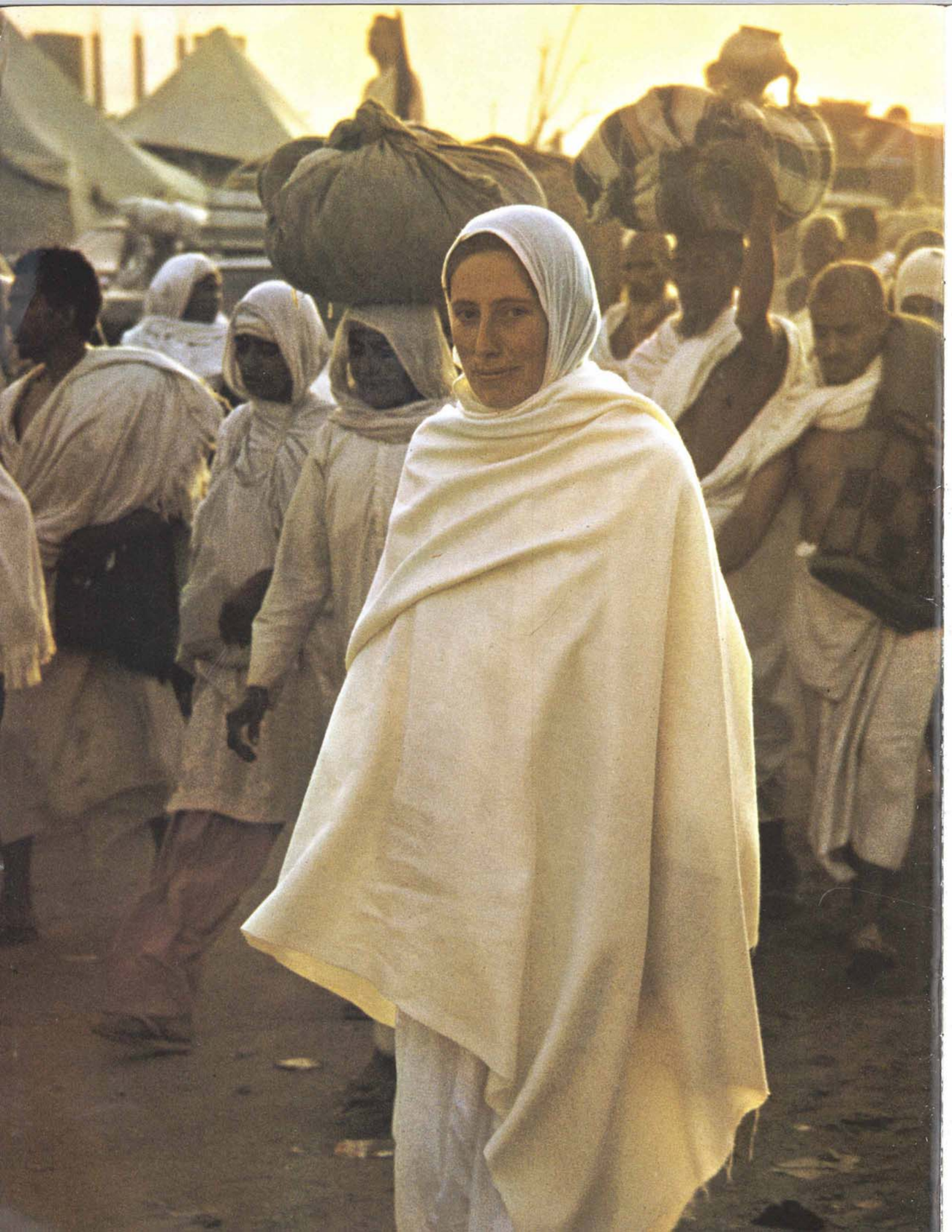
THE HAJJ: A Special Issue



On December 22 more than a million Muslims from every corner of the globe will gather in Saudi Arabia to begin the Pilgrimage to Mecca—what Muslims call the Hajj.

For nearly 14 centuries the Hajj has been one of the most impressive religious gatherings in the world, yet to this day few Westerners have more than a vague appreciation of the importance of the Hajj to the Muslim world and virtually no understanding of its rituals. To Americans and Europeans the sight of millions of Muslims tramping in circles around a large cubical structure in Mecca, kissing a fragment of black rock, hurling pebbles at stone pillars and slaughtering thousands of sacrificial animals was—and often still is—simply baffling.

This is partly because the approach of most writers who have attempted to explain the Hajj has been limited. Although there are notable exceptions on both sides (see p. 17), Muslim writers, while faithful to the spirit of Islam, sometimes overlooked Western insistence on facts, figures and explanations; and Western writers, while faithful to the spirit of objective observation, usually failed to grasp Islam's deeper meanings.

For this issue on the Hajj, therefore, the editors chose and assigned several contributors whose religious, cultural, national and professional backgrounds tended to overcome the limitations that have so often affected other efforts to explain Islam to the West. Ismail Ibrahim Nawwab is a Saudi Arab born in Mecca, who earned his degrees and later lectured at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland. Paul Lunde is an American who grew up in Saudi Arabia, spent three years at the London School of Oriental and African Studies and has since specialized in Islamic studies. Shaikh Muhammad Amin is a Pakistani Muslim who has made the Hajj as both pilgrim and photographer. Above all, there is Michael Elin Jansen, a woman, an American brought up in an Episcopalian family who, after years of study and contemplation, adopted Islam. She is also one of very few Western women, and possibly the first American woman, to make and then write about the Hajj.

How well they have succeeded is, of course, a decision for the reader, but we think that by combining Eastern reverence with Western observation they have provided a viewpoint that is surely unusual and may be unique.

— THE EDITORS

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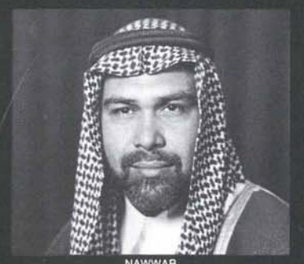

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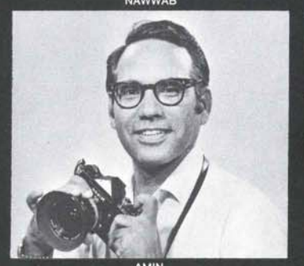

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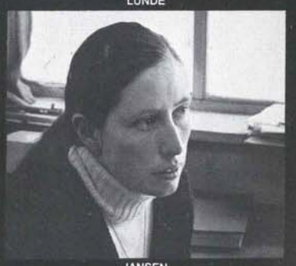


JANSEN

Cover: Pilgrims circle the Ka'bah, the House of God in Mecca. Inside Cover: Michael Jansen, an American pilgrim whose story begins on p. 30. Rear Cover: Muslims from all over the world gather in the plaza before Mecca's Sacred Mosque.

THE HAJJ: An Introduction

The Hajj—the Pilgrimage to Mecca—is essentially a series of rites performed in and near Mecca, the holiest of the three holy cities of Islam—Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem.

As it is one of the five pillars of Islam—that is, one of five basic requirements to be a Muslim—all believers, if they can afford it and are healthy enough, must make this Pilgrimage at least once in their life.

The Hajj must be made between the eighth and the 13th days of the 12th month (called *Dhu al-Hijjah*) of the Muslim lunar year.

Donning the Ihram

In a general sense, the Pilgrimage begins with the donning of the *Ihram*, a white seamless garment reminiscent of the robes worn by the Patriarch Abraham (the same Abraham known to Jews and Christians from the Bible) and Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam. The *Ihram* is also a symbol of the pilgrims' search for purity and their renunciation of mundane pleasures. For men this garment consists of two lengths of white material, one covering the body from waist to ankle, the other thrown over the shoulder. For women it is customarily—but not necessarily—a simple white gown and a headcovering without a veil.

At the moment of donning the *Ihram* the pilgrims enter a state of grace and purity in which they may not wear jewelry or other personal adornment, engage in any disputes, commit any violent acts or indulge in sexual relations.

Uttering the Talbiyah

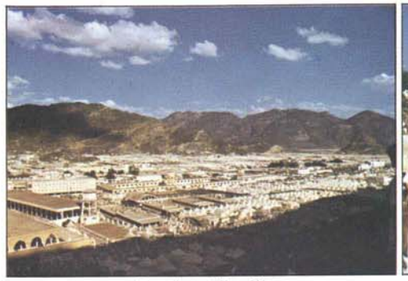
In donning the *Ihram* the pilgrims also make a formal Declaration of Pilgrimage and pronounce a devotional utterance called the *Talbiyah:* "Doubly at Thy service, O God," a phrase which they will repeat frequently during the Pilgrimage as an indication that they have responded to God's call to make the Pilgrimage.

Entering the Haram

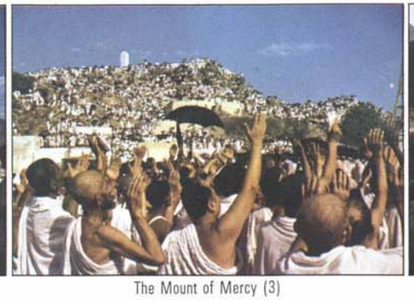
After donning the *Ihram*—and only after—the pilgrims may enter the *Haram*, or Sanctuary (1 on map). In a sense, the *Haram* is merely a geographical area which surrounds Mecca. But because its frontiers were established by Abraham and confirmed by Muhammad, the *Haram* is considered a sacred precinct within which man, undomesticated plants, birds and beasts need fear no molestation, as all violence, even the plucking of a wild flower, is forbidden.

For the duration of the Hajj, Mecca and the Sanctuary that surrounds it have a special status. To cross the frontiers of the *Haram*—which lie outside Mecca between three and 18 miles

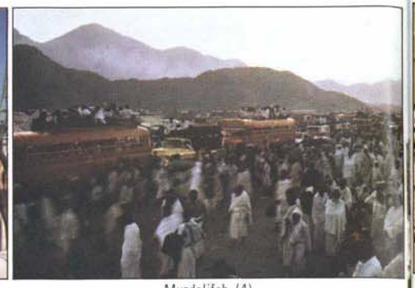
The Sacred Mosque, Mecca (6 on map, next page), with "the Place of Running" (7), at left.



Tent city at Mina (2)

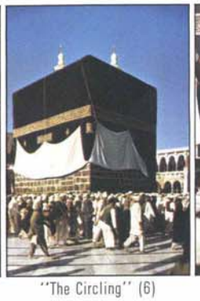


The Mount of Mercy (3)

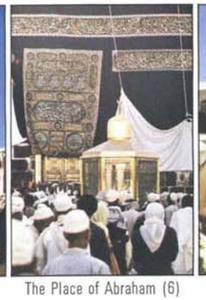


Muzdalifah (4)

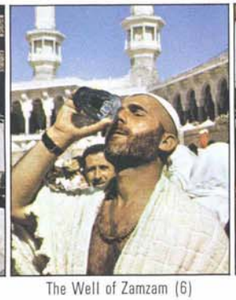
The Stoning (5)



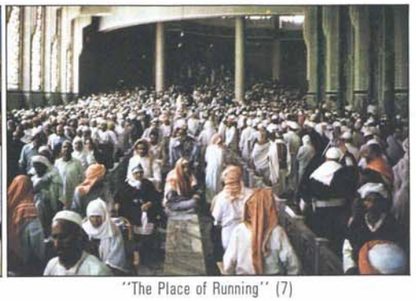
"The Circling" (6)



The Place of Abraham (6)



The Well of Zamzam (6)



"The Place of Running" (7)

from the Ka'bah—pilgrims from outside Saudi Arabia must now have a special Hajj visa in their passports. The visa must be stamped by immigration officials stationed at various check points on roads leading into the *Haram* and it entitles pilgrims to travel *only* within the *Haram* and to certain other places that pilgrims must, or customarily do, visit. Non-Muslims are strictly forbidden to enter the *Haram* under any circumstances.

Going to Mina

On the eighth day of *Dhu al-Hijjah* the assembled pilgrims begin the Hajj by going—some by foot, most by bus, truck and car—to Mina (2 on map), a small uninhabited village five miles east of Mecca, and there spend the night—as the Prophet himself did on his Farewell Pilgrimage—meditating and praying in preparation for "the Standing" (*Wuquf*), which will occur the next day and which is the central rite of the Hajj.

Standing at 'Arafat

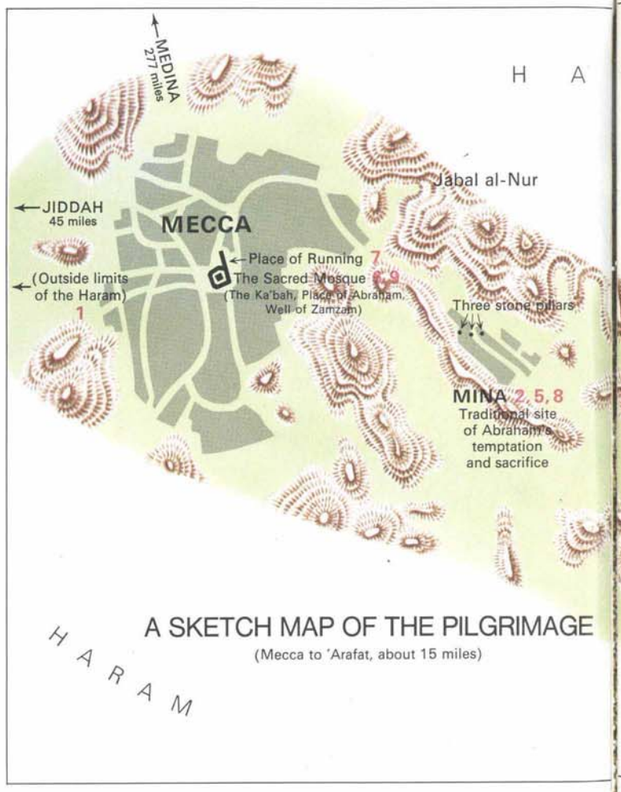
On the morning of the ninth, the pilgrims move en masse from Mina to the Plain of 'Arafat (3 on map) for "the Standing," the culmination—but not the end—of the Pilgrimage. In what is a basically simple ceremony the pilgrims gather on the plain and, facing Mecca, meditate and pray. Some pilgrims literally stand the entire time—from shortly before noon to just before sunset—but, despite the name of the ceremony, are not required to do so. Pilgrims may, and most do, sit, talk, eat, and, although not required to do so, climb to the summit of a 200-foot hill called the Mount of Mercy (Jabal al-Rahmah) at the bottom of which Muhammad delivered his Farewell Sermon during his Pilgrimage.

Going to Muzdalifah

Just after sunset, which is signalled by cannon fire, the pilgrims gathered at 'Arafat immediately proceed en masse to a place called Muzdalifah (4 on map) a few miles back toward Mina. There, traditionally, the pilgrims worship and sleep under the stars after gathering a number of pebbles for use during the rites on the following days. Some gather 49 pebbles, others 70, and still others wait until they get to Mina.

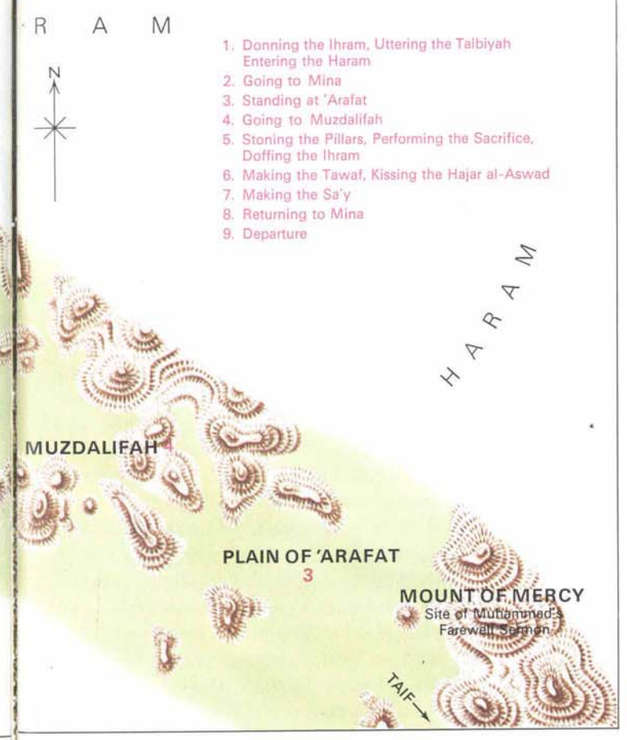
Stoning the Pillars

Before daybreak on the 10th, again roused by cannon, the pilgrims continue their return to Mina (5 on map). There they



A SKETCH MAP OF THE PILGRIMAGE

(Mecca to 'Arafat, about 15 miles)



throw seven of the stones which they collected at Muzdalifah at one of three whitewashed, rectangular masonry pillars. The particular pillar which they stone on this occasion is generally thought to represent "the Great Devil"—that is, Satan, who three times tried to persuade Abraham to disobey God's command to Abraham to sacrifice his son—and the throwing of the pebbles symbolizes the pilgrims' repudiation of evil.

Performing the Sacrifice

Now begins the greatest feast of Islam: the *'Id al-Adha*—the Feast of Sacrifice.

After the throwing of the seven stones the pilgrims who can afford it buy all or a share of a sheep or some other sacrificial animal, sacrifice it and give away a portion of the meat to the poor. The Sacrifice has several meanings: it commemorates Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son; it symbolizes the believer's preparedness to give up what is dearest to him; it marks the Muslim renunciation of idolatrous sacrifice; it offers thanksgiving to God; and it reminds the pilgrim to share his blessings with those less fortunate. But as Muslims everywhere are the same day performing an identical sacrifice—and thus vicariously sharing in the elation of the pilgrims in Mecca—the Sacrifice is also an integral part of a worldwide Muslim celebration that unites those on the Hajj with those elsewhere.

Doffing the Ihram

As the pilgrims have now completed a major part of the Hajj, men shave their heads or clip their hair and women cut off a symbolic lock to mark partial deconsecration. At this point the pilgrims may remove the *Ihram*, bathe and put on clean clothes, but although the period of consecration is now at an end, the prohibitions against intercourse still obtain, for the Pilgrimage is not yet over.

Making the Tawaf

The pilgrims now proceed directly to Mecca and the Sacred Mosque (6 on map), which encloses the Ka'bah, and, on a huge marble-floored oval, perform "the Circling" (*Tawaf*). The *Tawaf* consists essentially of circling the Ka'bah on foot seven times, reciting a prayer during each circuit. It signifies the unity of God and man and reminds believers that the Patriarch Abraham, his son Ishmael and the Prophet Muhammad emphasized the importance of the Ka'bah.

Kissing the Hajar al-Aswad

While circling the Ka'bah the pilgrims should, if they can, kiss or touch the Black Stone (the *Hajar al-Aswad*), which is embedded in the southeastern corner of the Ka'bah (see p. 6) and which is the precise starting point of the seven circuits. Failing this, they salute it. Kissing the Stone is a ritual that is performed *only* because the Prophet did it and *not* because any powers or symbolism attach to the Stone per se.

After completing the last circuit of the Ka'bah, the pilgrims go to the "Place of Abraham," also within the courtyard, and worship on the spot where Abraham himself offered up his devotions to God. That site is now marked by an octagonal metal and crystal structure recently built by the Saudi Arabian Government.

The *Tawaf* after Mina is called the *Tawaf* of the Return and is the last essential ritual. The pilgrims are now fully deconsecrated and are *hajjis*—that is they have completed the Hajj.

Making the Sa'y

Although the key rituals of the Hajj have been completed, most pilgrims also include "the Running" (*Sa'y*), a reenactment of the search for water by Hagar, wife of Abraham. Hagar (known from the Bible as Sarah's rival) was led into

the desert with her infant son Ishmael and left near the present site of Mecca. Frantic for water for the child, she ran desperately back and forth seven times between two rocky hillocks, one called al-Safa the other al-Marwa, until the Angel Gabriel appeared and, stamping the ground with his heel, brought forth water for her and her child. This is the origin of the Well of Zamzam, now enclosed in a marble chamber beneath the courtyard of the Sacred Mosque. Pilgrims drink from the well before starting the *Sa'y*.

In performing the *Sa'y*, the pilgrims enter a spacious enclosed gallery or corridor appended to the Sacred Mosque and called "the Place of Running" (al-Mas'a) (7 on map) and approach al-Safa, one of the original hillocks, now little more than a knoll at the end of the gallery. Facing toward the Ka'bah, the pilgrims declare their intention of performing the *Sa'y*, descend to the Mas'a and walk briskly between the hills seven times.

Returning to Mina

It is also customary for the pilgrims to return to Mina (8 on map) between the 11th and 13th—for the third time—where they cast their remaining pebbles at each of the three pillars, seven stones at each pillar on each of the days they are there, for a total of either 49 or 70 pebbles. They also visit with other pilgrims, and bid farewell to the friends they have made during the Hajj.

Departure

Before leaving Mecca it is also customary to make a final *Tawaf* around the Ka'bah (9 on map) as a means of bidding the Holy City farewell and most pilgrims, if they have time, also take this opportunity to pay a visit to the Mosque of the Prophet in Medina, 277 miles to the north. This is *not* a part of the Pilgrimage, but it is considered meritorious to pray in the mosque which the Prophet himself founded.

The 'Umrah

Upon first entering Mecca, before beginning the Hajj, pilgrims also perform a *Tawaf* and a *Sa'y*. But done then, these two rites—coupled with the donning of the *Ihram* at the border of the Sanctuary—constitute the *'Umrah*, or "the Lesser Pilgrimage."

As some texts often present differing descriptions of the relationship and sequence of the *'Umrah* and the Hajj, it is important to explain certain distinctions.

The *'Umrah* is essentially a mark of respect paid to the city of Mecca upon first entering it—and although it is a requirement for pilgrims arriving from outside Mecca—a necessary prelude to the Pilgrimage—and involves two of the same rites, it is *not* part of the Hajj. It is also required for Muslims who visit Mecca at other times of the year because that was the practice of the Prophet himself. But there is only one Hajj—the ceremony which on those special days of *Dhu al-Hijjah* gathers and unites more than a million of the faithful from every corner of the earth.

— I. I. N.

"... The physical axis of the Muslim world, a focal point toward which Muslims all over the world pray five times a day..."

THE KA'BAH: House of God

Of all the questions asked by Westerners about Muslim beliefs, one of the hardest to answer adequately is: "What exactly is the Ka'bah?"

In purely physical terms, the answer is easy: the Ka'bah is a stone structure about 50 feet high, roughly cubical in shape, which sits in the middle of the vast courtyard of Mecca's Sacred Mosque, its four corners more or less aligned with the cardinal points of the compass. Alongside the northwestern wall of the Ka'bah is an open area—the Hijr—enclosed by a semicircular wall and containing the traditional sites of the tombs of Hagar, wife of Abraham, and Ishmael, their son. Inside the structure there is an empty chamber and in the southeastern corner of the exterior wall there is, embedded in the wall in a silver frame, a fragment of polished black stone called simply the **Hajar al-Aswad**, the Black Stone.

After the rise of Islam it became customary to cover the Ka'bah with a cloth, the color of which varied with the color of the banner of the reigning caliph. Now it is draped with a black cloth—the **Kiswah**—on which are embroidered verses from the Koran in gold thread. Renewed each year, the **Kiswahs** were formerly made in Egypt and sent to Mecca with the annual Egyptian caravan. Now they are woven in a special Saudi Arabian Government factory in Mecca itself. Over 80 craftsmen weave the more than 2,500 feet of material required on handlooms and embroider it with verses from the Koran in magnificent calligraphy. The finished cloth weighs almost 5,000 pounds.

Each year on the eve of the Pilgrimage dignitaries from the Muslim world wash the Ka'bah thoroughly and sweep the chamber. Later, on the 10th of the month of **Dhu al-Hijjah**, during the Pilgrimage, the Ka'bah receives its new draping.

In comparison with the architectural extravagance of Christian cathedrals and basilicas—St. Paul's, Notre Dame, St. Peter's—the simple construction and relatively modest dimensions of the Ka'bah might strike some observers as unimpressive. Yet its very simplicity, as Muhammad Asad (see p. 14) wrote, is its incomparable glory. "There it stood, almost a perfect cube ... entirely covered with

The Ka'bah, in Mecca's Sacred Mosque, is a simple structure with the Black Stone, framed in silver, embedded in one wall. It is covered by the Kiswah, a black cloth with Koranic verses in gold.

black brocade, a quiet island in the middle of the vast quadrangle of the mosque: much quieter than any other work of architecture anywhere in the world. It would almost appear that he who first built the Ka'bah—for since the time of Abraham the original structure has been rebuilt several times in the same shape—wanted to create a parable of man's humility before God. The builder knew that no beauty of architectural rhythm and no perfection of line, however great, could ever do justice to the idea of God: and so he confined himself to the simplest three-dimensional form imaginable—a cube of stone."

In historical and spiritual terms, the answer is more difficult. For the Ka'bah—"the House of God"—is not a temple, not a church, not a shrine. Not, at least, in the usual sense. It is rather the physical axis of the Muslim world, a focal point toward which Muslims all over the world pray five times a day and around which pilgrims to Mecca must perform the **Tawaf**. It is a symbol, as Muhammad Asad wrote, "of God's oneness; and the pilgrim's bodily movement around it is a symbolic expression of human activity, implying that not only our thoughts and feelings—all that is comprised in the term 'inner life'—but also our outward, active life, our doings and practical endeavors must have God as their center."

In the Koran, the significance of the Ka'bah is fundamental—as Sura II, verse 25 makes clear: "Remember We made the House a place of assembly for men and a place of safety; and take ye the Place of Abraham as a place of prayer; and We convenanted with Abraham and Ishmael that they should sanctify My House for those who compass it round, or use it as a retreat, or bow, or prostrate themselves (therein in prayer)."

The Ka'bah is also referred to in the Koran as the "first house established for mankind," meaning, according to the foremost medieval commentator on the Koran, al-Tabari, that it is the first building ever consecrated to the worship of God.

In medieval times popular legend held that the Ka'bah was created before the earth and floated for 1,000 years upon the surface of the waters covering the earth, coming to rest in Mecca only when the waters receded and the earth emerged. Thus the Ka'bah was already in place when Adam and Eve, after their expulsion from Paradise, made the first Pilgrimage as atonement for their sins. Such traditions, however, are rarely given much attention by Muslim historians anymore, and even less credence. To them what occurred before Abraham is of doubtful historicity. As Ismail Nawwab says (see p. 12), "It all begins with Abraham."

There are also varying traditions about the Black Stone, which Muslims on the Pilgrimage either kiss or touch. One legend, widely diffused, states that the Black Stone was a precious jewel taken out of Paradise by Adam and put into the corner of the Ka'bah when he made the first Pilgrimage. Another, noted by al-Azraqi, the oldest historian of Mecca, says that the stone was given to Ishmael by the Angel Gabriel.

Because of such stories, Westerners frequently misinterpret and overemphasize the significance of the stone. To quote Muhammad Asad again: "This Black Stone... has been the cause of much misunderstanding among non-Muslims, who believe it to be a fetish taken over by Muhammad as a concession to the pagan Meccans. Nothing could be further from the truth. Just as the Ka'bah is an object of reverence but not of worship, so too is the Black Stone. It is revered as the only remnant of Abraham's original building; and because the lips of Muhammad touched it on his Farewell Pilgrimage, all pilgrims have done the same ever since."

This misunderstanding is not new. In the year 929 the Carmathians, an heretical sect based in al-Hasa, in eastern Arabia, sacked Mecca and carried the stone off with them in hope of attracting pilgrims to al-Hasa rather than Mecca. But although they held the stone more than 20 years, the attempt failed, as orthodox Muslims attached little significance to the Black Stone itself. As the Caliph Omar said, "I know that you are a stone, incapable of doing good or harm. Had I not seen the Messenger of God kissing you, I would not have done so."

— P. L.

CARAVANS TO MECCA

PAINTING BY TAWFIQ TARIQ
PHOTOGRAPHED BY BURNETT H. MOODY AND KHALIL ABOU EL-NASR

Until the 19th century there were three main caravans to Mecca. The Egyptian caravan set out from Cairo, crossed the Sinai Peninsula and then followed the coastal plain of western Arabia to Mecca, a journey which took from 35 to 40 days. It included pilgrims from North Africa, who crossed the deserts of Libya and joined the caravan in Cairo. The other great caravan assembled in Damascus, Syria, and moved south via Medina, reaching Mecca in about 30 days. After the capture of Constantinople by the Ottoman Turks in 1453, this caravan began in Istanbul, gathered pilgrims from throughout Asia Minor along the way, and then proceeded to Mecca from Damascus. The third major caravan crossed the Peninsula from Baghdad.

The caravans were highly organized. An official, called **Amir al-Hajj**, was responsible for the safety of the pilgrims. He had a troop of soldiers under his command, as well as a phalanx of officials. The caravan was organized like a moving city, with the amir, a judge, two notaries, a secretary and an official charged with the care of the animals, another in charge of provisions, a saddler, a chef with a staff of cooks, and even an inspector of weights and measures. The caravans usually marched at night in order to avoid the heat of the sun, and pitched camp near wells where they could, posting sentries to guard against attack by bandits. Each watering place along the route was provided with a small fortress and a rest house. The pilgrims were grouped in the caravan according to their point of origin—all pilgrims from the same town traveled together—and maintained the same position in the line of march.

From the 13th century on, the Egyptian and Syrian caravans were each accompanied by a **Mahmal**, a kind of wooden litter, sumptuously decorated, that contained a copy of the Koran. The **Mahmal** itself was a symbol of political sovereignty over the holy places of Islam, the Koran inside symbolizing the unity of the religious and secular authorities of Islam. For centuries the Egyptian caravan also bore with it, each year, the new **Kiswah** or draping for the Ka'bah, but this is now prepared in Mecca itself (see p. 6).

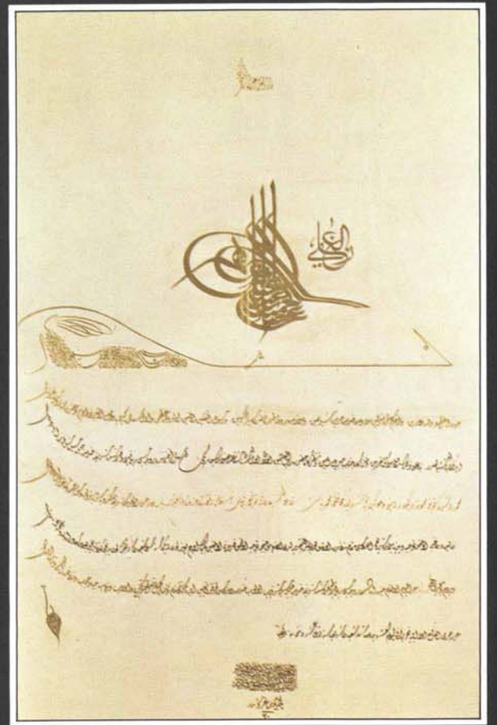
Some of the medieval caravans were very elaborate. Arab historians have preserved the memory of a pilgrimage made by Harun al-Rashid and his wife Zubaydah. They are said to have walked all the way from Baghdad to Mecca wearing the **Ihram**. Rest houses were specially built for them at each stopping place, and the track upon which they walked was covered with carpets.

Ibn Jubayr, a famous traveler during the time of the Crusades, describes the encampment of the Amir of Iraq on the Plain of 'Arafat as follows:

"The encampment of this Amir of Iraq was beautiful to look upon and superbly provided, with large handsome tents . . . and wonderful pavilions and awnings, for it was surrounded by a linen screen like a wall, in form a sort of closed-in garden or an orna-

"Forty easie days journey it is distant from hence: divided by a wildernesse of sand, that lyeth in drifts, and dangerously moveth with the wind..."

The caravan from Egypt (red **Mahmal** at left) and the caravan from Damascus (green, at right) meet at 'Arafat in 1905. Painted from life by Muslim artist Tawfiq Tariq of Damascus, who flourished in the late 19th century and whose work is now being collected by the Syrian Government. From the collection of Dr. Yusuf Ibish, Beirut.



Top: **Firmans** from the Ottoman sultan appointing a leader of the Damascus caravan in the 19th century. Bottom: An elaborately addressed envelope from the Ottoman Government containing instructions to officials of the Damascus caravan to Mecca. Both also courtesy of Dr. Ibish.

mental building. Within this were the pitched pavilions, all black on a white background and dappled and variegated as if they were flowers in a garden. . . . In these wall-like screens were tall doors, like those of lofty castles, through which one entered into vestibules and mazes . . . It is as if this Amir lives in a walled city that moves when he moves and settles when he settles."

One of the most spectacular pilgrimages ever made was certainly that of Mansa Musa, the King of Mali. In 1324 he set off across the Sahara with 500 servitors, each carrying a golden staff weighing six pounds. He was followed by 100 camels, each carrying a load of gold weighing 300 pounds. Mansa Musa was truly pious and very generous—so much so that 12 years after his stay in Cairo, the price of gold had still not recovered. He distributed the bulk of his fortune in charity in Mecca and Medina, returning home practically a pauper, but having assured himself of the praises of posterity.

The return of the pilgrims from Mecca each year was anxiously awaited by their loved ones, and celebrated with great pomp by the citizens of Cairo and Damascus. George Sandys, the remarkable 17th-century poet, traveler and eventual member of the government of Virginia, left a unique description of the return of the Egyptian caravan in 1610, when he was touring Cairo:

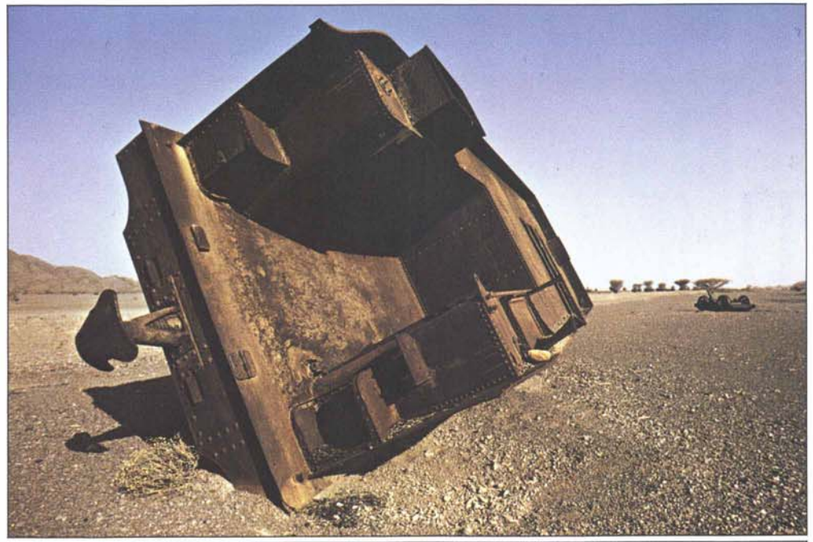
"During our aboad here, a Caravan went forth with much solemnity to meet and relieve the Great Caravan in their return from Mecha; which consisteth of many thousands of Pilgrims that travell yearly thither in devotion . . . every one with his ban-roll (bedding) in his hand: and their Camels gallantly trickt (decorated)—the Alcoran carried upon one in a precious case covered over with needle-work, and laid on a rich pillow . . . guarded by divers companies of souldiers, and certain field peeces. Forty easie (short marches) days journey it is distant from hence: divided by a wildernesse of sand, that lyeth in drifts, and dangerously moveth with the wind: thorow which they are guided in many places by stars, as ships in the Ocean."

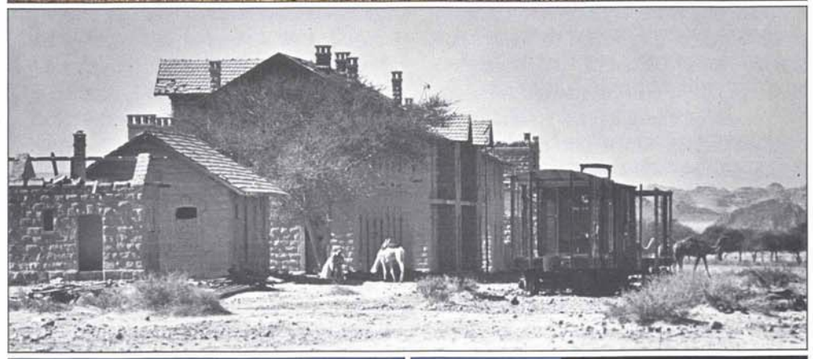
In some areas, caravans continued to flourish through the end of the 19th century. One from Damascus, in whose train marched the famous Charles Doughty, counted 6,000 pilgrims and 10,000 camels. But in Cairo the end was in sight by mid-century. A sea route down the Red Sea, started when the Crusaders blocked the overland track from Cairo, had been luring some pilgrims away since the 12th century and with the introduction of fast, dependable steamships it easily supplanted the overland route. The last major camel caravan set out from Cairo in 1883 with 1,170 pilgrims joining it.

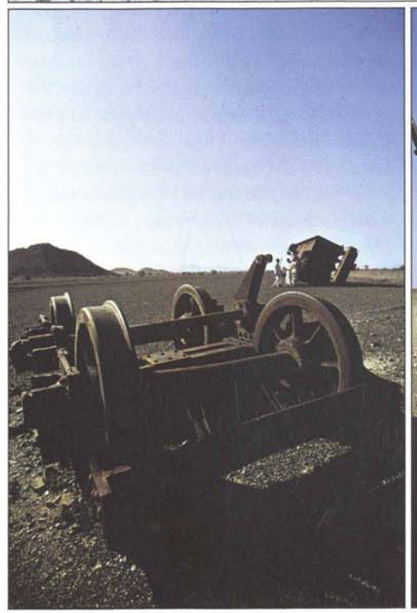
In Syria and Asia Minor the end came with the construction of the Hijaz Railway, an 800-mile project designed to provide pilgrims with cheap fast transport as far as Medina, (**Aramco World**, September-October, 1967). The railway literally supplanted the caravans; the Turkish engineer surveying for the railroad simply followed a caravan from Damascus and mapped the route, reasoning with some justification that after all those centuries the caravan masters would certainly know the best way.

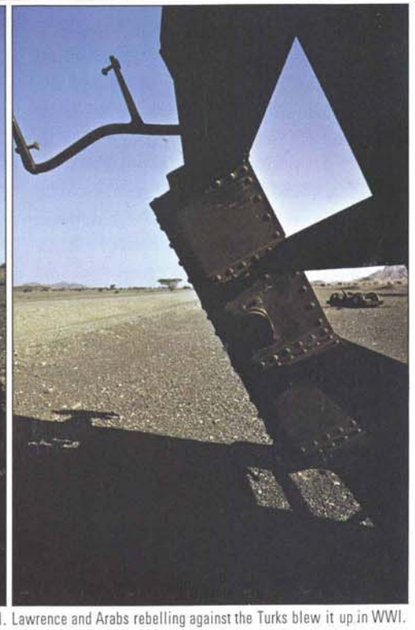
The Hijaz Railway—called the "Iron Camel" by Bedouins—was announced in 1900 by Sultan Abdul Hamid, started a few months later, finished in 1908 and virtually closed down 10 years later by the famous Lawrence of Arabia and his Bedouin raiders after the railway had begun to transport more soldiers than pilgrims. As Great Britain and France were not, in the Mandate period, anxious to promote any form of Arab unity, efforts to rebuild the railroad were quietly but effectively quashed. And when a commission to rebuild the railway excitedly reported in 1956 that reconstruction was feasible, it was too late. Improved roads—asphalted and lined with gasoline stations and food stores —air-conditioned buses, fast cars and booming air travel had made the railroad superfluous. Although a contract was eventually let, no substantial work has been done and immediate reconstruction now seems unlikely.

— P. L.







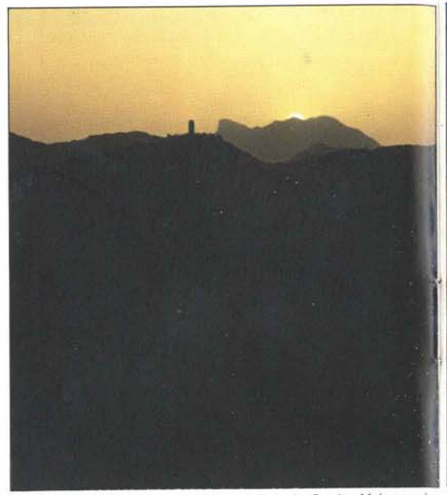


The Hijaz Railway carried pilgrims for only a few years before Col. Lawrence and Arabs rebelling against the Turks blew it up in WWI.

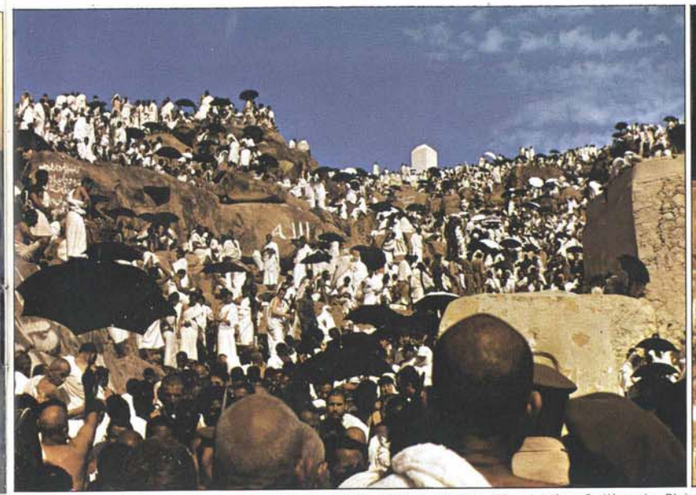
"It all begins with Abraham."

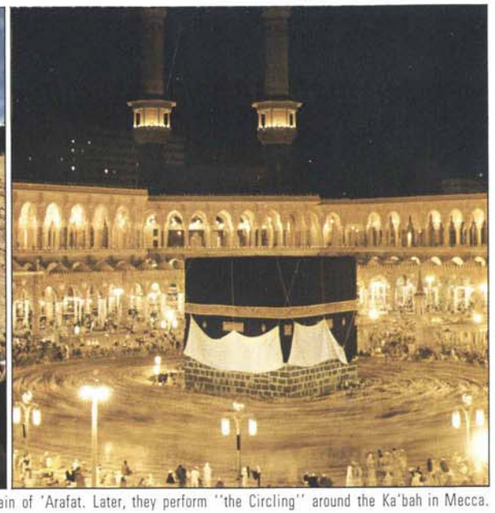
THE HAJJ: An Appreciation

WRITTEN BY ISMAIL IBRAHIM NAWWAB



The sun rises over the Mount of Mercy, where the Prophet Muhammad gave his Farewell Sermon. Here, on the ninth day of Dhu al-Hijjah, pilgrims "Stand before God" on the Plain of 'Arafat. Later, they perform "the Circling" around the Ka'bah in Mecca.





In response to God's injunction to mankind prescribing the Pilgrimage to Mecca (the Koran, Sura III, verse 97), countless followers of Islam, rising yearly from the global ocean of humanity, have sallied forth to make the Hajj for almost 14 centuries. Considering the uniqueness of this phenomenon, with its rich kaleidoscope of symbol and significance, appearance and reality, past and present, and the innate, almost universal barrier to empathy in religious matters, few non-Muslims can be expected to have any inkling of what the Pilgrimage really means to the believer.

What *does* the Hajj mean? Is it a sterile ritual? A formality, perhaps? Or, as one of the five pillars of Islam—that is, one of the requirements imposed on Muslims—is it merely an obligation to be discharged as quickly and perfunctorily as possible?

Nothing could be further from the truth. Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that the Hajj, to the average Muslim, is the emotive goal and the climactic experience of his temporal existence. It is a form of spiritual fulfillment which he shares and simultaneously celebrates with the entire world of Islam. But to explain why—and to attain some understanding of the symbolism and function of the Hajj—one must go back to the historical and sociological highlights of the Islamic traditions in which its origins are embedded.

It all begins with Abraham.

In Islam, Abraham—the same Old Testament Abraham familiar to Judaism and Christianity—plays an important role. He is regarded as a prophet and venerated as a zealous advocate of monotheism, as a relentless foe of idolatry and as builder of the Ka'bah, "the House of God," focal point for Muslim worship of the One God. With respect to the Hajj specifically, Abraham, his son Ishmael and his wife Hagar are central to some of its holiest rites.

But the Hajj only *begins* with Abraham; it is affirmed by Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam, who, in making the Pilgrimage begun by Abraham, found that it had degenerated into a soulless idolatrous ritual and purged it. To Muslims this continuous monotheistic strand holding together the time of Abraham and the era of Muhammad is a symbol of the unity of God which permeates Muslim religious thought. Thus the yearning to behold, at least once in their lifetime, the pivotal Ka'bah, the center of the cosmos and *Qiblah* or focus of all prayer, symbolizes to a Muslim humanity's movement toward unity in the quest for God.

The rites of the Hajj—which are precisely those followed or approved by Muhammad during his Pilgrimage—are few in number, simple in execution, but rich in meaning. The major ones are: Donning the *Ihram*, "the Circling" of the Ka'bah, "the Running" at al-Mas'a and "the Standing" at 'Arafat. Other essential rites include Throwing the Pebbles and the Sacrifice. Since the Prophet of Islam did allow his disciples some flexibility in ritual sequence during the Pilgrimage, the order and even the manner in which these rites are performed can vary. The believer is thus free to follow the sequence most convenient to him as long as he is guided by the practice of the Prophet and his Companions.

The first rite of the Hajj is Donning the *Ihram*, a physical manifestation of the pilgrim's entering into a state of consecration (see p. 2). This act is accompanied by the uttering of the *Talbiyah*. This phrase, "Doubly at Thy service, O God," is a Declaration of Pilgrimage and is frequently repeated during the Hajj.

"The Circling" (*Tawaf*) of the Ka'bah in the vast courtyard of the Sacred Mosque in Mecca signifies that the Muslim's life must focus on unity—the unity of God and mankind. Neither the Ka'bah nor the Black Stone it contains (see p. 6) are objects of worship. Although Muslims do kiss the Black Stone, this is done only to cherish the memory of the Prophet, who planted his kiss on it.

The ceremonial procession, or "the Running," between the hillocks of al-Safa and al-Marwa in Mecca is a reenactment of Hagar's frantic search for water for her infant Ishmael when they were lost in the desert; it commemorates the anguished love of motherhood and the decisive role of womankind in history.

The hours passed at 'Arafat on the ninth day of *Dhu al-Hijjah*, the month of the Pilgrimage, are precious. They are devoted to profound self-examination of the ends and means of a Muslim's earthly existence, to sincere supplication, to genuine repentance for one's sins, and to moving prayers for the dead and the living. At no other place and on no other occasion in his lifetime does the believer feel so intensely and confidently that he is approaching a merciful, responsive and loving God. It is well-nigh impossible to convey the vividness of the experience and the sense of elation of the pilgrim during this essentially *personal* apprehension of Divine presence and grace. At 'Arafat, a Muslim's devotional life reaches its culmination. It is the feeling of many that this is the closest man can come to an encounter with God on earth. Besides, it was on this day that the Prophet delivered the Farewell Sermon by the rocks of the Mount of Mercy to the multitudes who witnessed the first, and last, Pilgrimage made by Muhammad. Often compared with the Sermon on the Mount, the Prophet's address gives glimpses of the religious, moral and legal amalgam so characteristic of Islam.

O People, listen to and understand my words for I do not know whether I shall ever meet you in this place after this occasion . . .

Your life and property are sacrosanct and inviolable until you stand before your Lord on the Day of Judgment, as this day, this month and this place are sacred . . .

All usury is hereby abolished . . .

Satan has despaired of ever being worshipped in this your land, although if he is obeyed in other matters, he will be pleased even with the inconsequential lapses on your part . . .

You have your rights over your wives and they have rights over you . . .

Know that every Muslim is every other Muslim's brother. Nothing belonging to his brother is lawful to a man, unless it be given freely and with good grace. So wrong not yourselves . . .

I have delivered God's message to you and have left with you a clear command: the Book of God and the Practice of His Prophet. If you hold fast to this you will never go astray . . .

The lapidation ceremony—throwing pebbles at three stone pillars in Mina—is another commemoration of Abraham's practices. Some associate it with Satan's efforts to dissuade Abraham from sacrificing his son as commanded by God. By stoning the spots where Satan appeared to the Patriarch, the pilgrim symbolically rejects evil and disobedience to God.

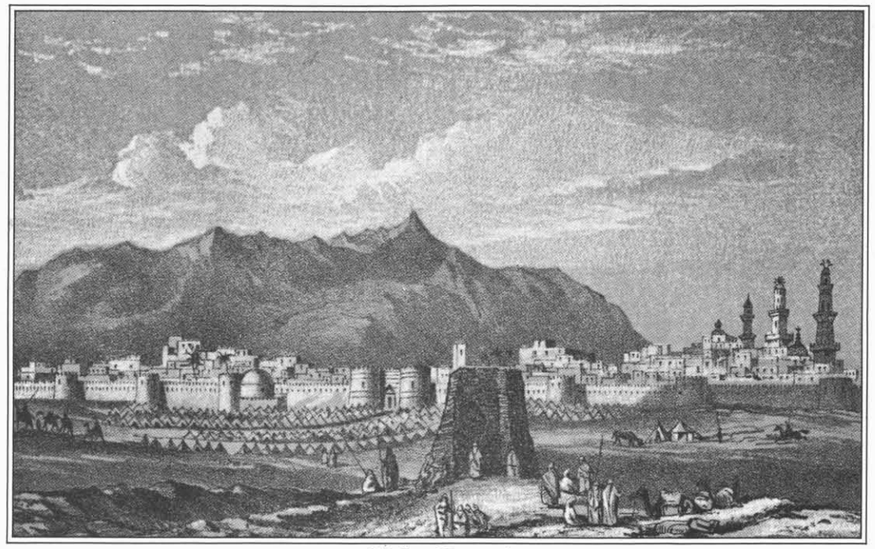
The sacrifice of animals, also at Mina, is in recollection of Abraham's willingness to sacrifice even his beloved son to fulfill God's command. It also symbolizes the Muslim's preparedness to part with what is dearest to him in order to attain God's pleasure. The act of sacrifice is an encapsulation of the spirit of Islam: *submission* to the will of God—which is the literal meaning of the word Islam.

But quite apart from the historical and symbolic significance of the Hajj, the institution of the Pilgrimage serves two main functions for the Muslim, both as an individual and as a member of society.

The unassuming *Ihram* worn by the pilgrim serves a social purpose as well. For at least once in the believer's lifetime, the idea of equality among Muslims becomes a visible fact. Philosopher and fool, patrician and plebeian, millionaire and beggar alike wear this unsewn garment—and become indistinguishable. The social status or privileged rank of the believer are of no consequence in the sight of God. During the Pilgrimage, as a result of this simple sartorial device, neither are they of consequence in the sight of man.

Also on the social plane, the major, unparalleled contribution of Islam is in the area of racial harmony and the brotherhood of the faithful. The Hajj is Islam's key instrument for creating and strengthening fraternal ties among millions of its followers. Pilgrims representing every conceivable color, country and tongue yearly converge upon Mecca. Here, they share common objectives and beliefs, and perform the same devotions. They also get acquainted with one another, and learn of, and grow to care for, the conditions of their brethren in other countries. The Hajj inspires in the believer an unrivalled sense of solidarity, a feeling of identification in a world of alienation. The believer feels himself a part of the whole system of the cosmos. Whether in Mina or Michigan, 'Arafat or Zululand, no man, no woman and no nation is an island. In this reunion, convened annually by God from the time of Abraham, ties of brotherhood and love are forged among people representing the nations of the earth.

"Even scoundrels, apparently, are not immune to the impact of the Hajj."



Medina (Burton)

THE LURE OF MECCA

WRITTEN BY PAUL LUNDE

Peking, Lhasa, Timbuctu, Harrar, Medina, Mecca—these were the forbidden cities that for centuries captured the imagination of the West. One by one they have given up their secrets to intrepid travelers until today all are open to anyone with sufficient patience and the right political credentials. All, that is, but Mecca and Medina—the two holiest cities of Islam.

By law Mecca and Medina are strictly forbidden to non-Muslims. Pilgrims are carefully screened at Saudi embassies and consulates before they leave their homelands and their visas—special visas allowing them to visit only the holy cities and the environs—are inspected at the borders of the holy cities themselves (see p. 2).

But that's now. In the past, although prohibitions were equally strict and although the pilgrimage was long, difficult and dangerous, intruders were not at all uncommon. Between 1503 and 1931, for example, some 25 Westerners visited Mecca and returned to write about it. They included a Renaissance tourist, an English prisoner of war, a Spanish spy, an Italian deserter, a Swiss scholar, the incomparable Sir Richard Burton, translator of the *Arabian Nights*, and an Austrian Jew who, after his conversion to Islam, became Pakistan's Minister Plenipotentiary to the United Nations.

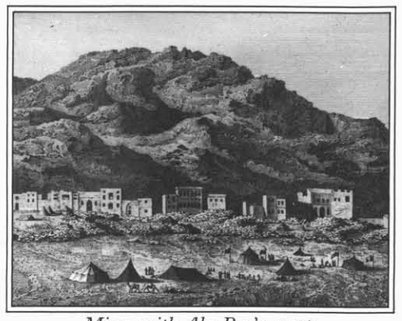
Not all of these men went to Mecca for admirable reasons. Some went in a spirit of scientific inquiry, some sought fame, some adventure. But all went at least nominally as Muslims, most were sincerely interested in Islam and, whatever their original motives, all usually returned moved by what they had seen and experienced.

If we except the confused account of a 15th-century German pilgrim, the first known European to enter Mecca was an Italian named Ludovico de Varthema, a contemporary of Vasco da Gama and Leonardo da Vinci. Nothing is known of his early life and education except that he was born about 1465 and, as the preface to his book of voyages suggests, possessed the curiosity and love of adventure typical of the Renaissance man. "Not having any inclination (knowing myself to be of very slender understanding) to arrive at my desire by study or conjecture, I determined, personally, and with my own eyes, to endeavor to ascertain the situations of places, the qualities of peoples, the diversities of animals, the varieties of fruit-bearing and odoriferous trees of Egypt, Syria, Arabia Deserta and Felix [that is, northern and southern Arabia], Persia, India, and Ethiopia, remembering well that the testimony of one eye-witness is worth more than 10 hear-says."

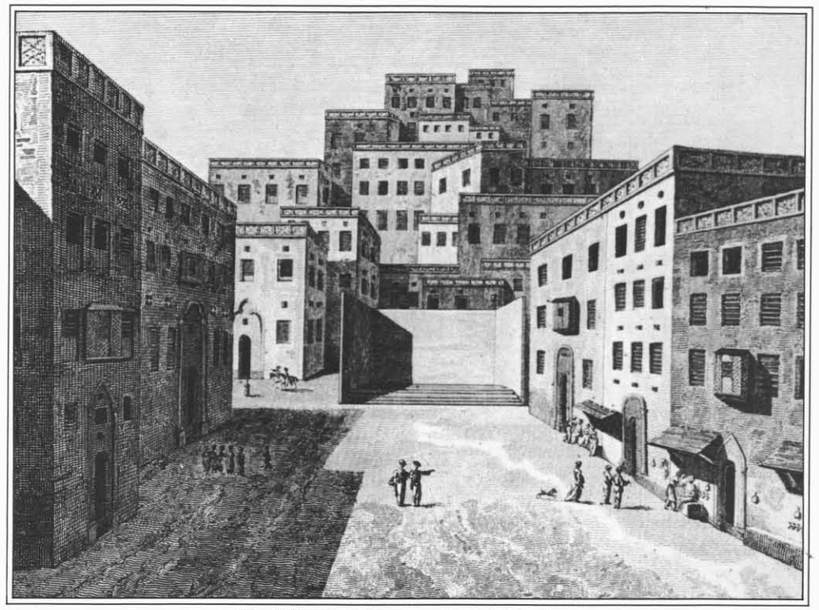
In the year 1500, De Varthema sailed from Venice to Alexandria. After a short stay in Cairo, he sailed along the coast to Beirut and eventually made his way to Damascus, where he spent two years studying Arabic. On April 8, 1503, masquerading as a Syrian, he joined a pilgrim caravan bound for Mecca. It was a harrowing journey—many pilgrims perished along the way—but when the caravan reached Mecca, De Varthema was much impressed. He found the markets crammed with the luxury goods of the East—silks, jewels, spices, frankincense and myrrh—and compares the houses favorably to those of his native Italy and the Sacred Mosque, which encloses the Ka'bah, to the Colosseum. He was also astounded by the vast size of the crowd of pilgrims—Muslims from Ethiopia, India, Persia, Egypt and Syria—"Truly I never saw so many people collected in one spot as during the 20 days I remained there."

De Varthema provides the first description in a Western language of the rites of the Pilgrimage. He describes the Ka'bah with its *Kiswah*, or draping of black cloth. He gives an account of the *Tawaf*, the seven circuits around the Ka'bah, notes the kissing of the Black Stone and comments upon the brackish taste of the water from the Well of Zamzam. He also categorically refutes the widespread medieval notion that the tomb of Muhammad was at Mecca (it is in Medina, 277 miles to the north), and dismisses as nonsense the medieval European legend that the tomb of the Prophet of Islam is suspended in mid-air by lodestones. He had the added good fortune to see two "unicorns"—possibly oryx, a form of antelope—tethered in the courtyard of the Sacred Mosque. "The older is formed like a colt . . . and he has a horn in the forehead, which horn is about three braccia (six feet, two inches) in length . . . The color of the said animal resembles that of a dark bay horse, and his head resembles that of a stag . . . his legs are slender and lean like those of a goat . . . truly this monster must be a very fierce and solitary animal."

After visiting Mecca, De Varthema joined a caravan to Aden, where he was imprisoned as a Portuguese spy, set free through the good offices of the sultan's wife (thereby hangs a tale), traveled extensively in the Yemen (he was the first European to do so), and then set off for the Far East. He finally returned to Europe, after circumnavigating Africa, and died in Rome in 1517, the year the Ottoman Turks captured Egypt. It was to be 170 years before another European would provide a description of Mecca to rival that of De Varthema.



Mina, with Aly Bey's camp.



The hillock al-Marwa, Mecca (Aly Bey)

Joseph Pitts was an English sailor. Unlike De Varthema, Pitts had no interest in "odoriferous trees" or anything else. He was a prisoner of war and all he wanted was to go home.

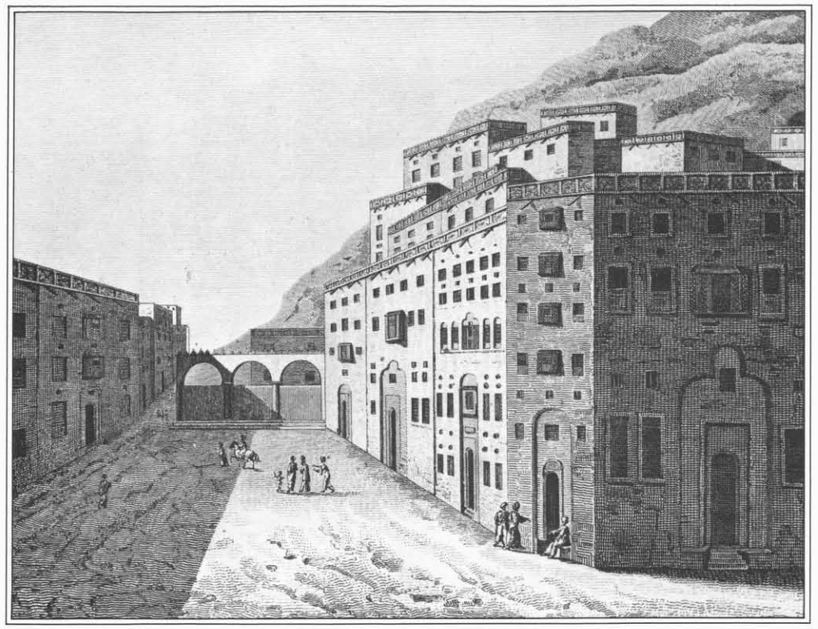
At 17 Pitts had been captured by Barbary pirates, then the scourge of the Mediterranean, and as a prisoner of war became the property of an Algerian soldier, who treated him well and set him up in business. In time Pitts became a Muslim and in 1680 accompanied his master to Mecca. He was not as enthusiastic about the physical appearance of the city as De Varthema—he describes the buildings as "ordinary" and the inhabitants as "poor"—but gives a similar account of the Ka'bah, and the ceremonies of the Pilgrimage. He also describes the trade in precious stones, Chinese porcelain, and musk that made Mecca one of the great emporiums of the time.

From Mecca, Pitts went on to Medina, still in the company of his master, and visited the mosque and tomb of Muhammad. On the way he met an Irishman who, like Pitts, had been captured at an early age by pirates. Raised as a Muslim, he had been recaptured by Christian pirates and enslaved, but eventually escaped. He was making the Pilgrimage in order to thank God for delivering him out of "hell on earth" (meaning Europe) and bringing him into "heaven on earth," viz. Mecca.

Pitts eventually escaped from his Muslim captors but like the Irish *hajji* he had met, he may have wished he had stayed with Islam. On his first night back in England, he was impressed into His Majesty's Navy. He was freed later, however, and immediately wrote an account of life among the Muslims which he filled with what, in 17th-century Christian Europe, were conventional denunciations of Islam, which, he said, he was forced to embrace. Indeed, few accounts of the subject have been so critical. But with respect to the Hajj, this wholly unsympathetic observer was so moved by the assembly of pilgrims at 'Arafat that he wrote: "It was a sight indeed, able to pierce one's heart, to behold so many thousands in their garments of humility and mortification, with their naked heads, and cheeks watered with tears; and to hear their grievous sighs and sobs, begging earnestly for the remission of their sins, promising newness of life, using a form of penitential expression, and thus continuing for the space of four or five hours."

After Pitts, it was 127 years before another European entered Mecca. This was the mysterious Spanish traveler, Domingo Badia y Leblich, alias Aly Bey, who introduces the account of his travels with the following, somewhat equivocal, words:

Engravings from Travels in Arabia, Karsten Niebuhr, Amsterdam, 1774; Travels of Aly Bey, London, 1816; A Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage, Sir Richard Burton, London, 1855-1856.



The hillock al-Safa, Mecca (Aly Bey)

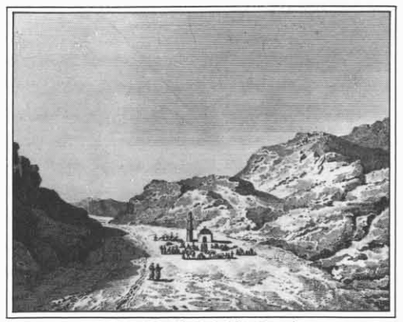
"After having passed many years in the Christian states, studying there the sciences of nature, and the arts most useful to man in society, whatever be his faith or the religion of his heart, I determined at last to visit the Mohametan countries, and, while engaged in performing a pilgrimage to Mecca, to observe the manners, customs, and nature of the countries through which I should pass, in order that I might make the laborious journey of some utility to the country which I might at last select for my abode."

Aly Bey was born in 1766, but all that is known of his early life is what he himself chooses to tell us in his travels. As a young man, he says, he applied himself to the study of Arabic, apparently with success since, in 1803, in setting off, he assumed the identity of a scion of the House of Abbas, which produced the Caliph Harun al-Rashid himself.

Aly Bey began his travels in North Africa. He journeyed from Morocco to Cairo, providing detailed descriptions of the countries along the way. In Cairo, Aly Bey joined the pilgrim caravan to Mecca, arriving in the Holy City on January 23, 1807, where he was impressed by the clean, sanded streets, the high stone houses, the terraces and the *mashrabiyas*, the latticed balconies still a feature of some Arab cities (*Aramco World*, July-August, 1974).

He was also impressed by the ceremonies of the Hajj, which he himself performed; his description is much more detailed and extended than the descriptions provided by De Varthema or Pitts. Aly Bey was even able to gain access to the inner chamber of the Ka'bah, and in his character of a descendant of the Abbasids, was given the signal honor of sweeping its floor.

Aly Bey was powerfully moved by his first sight of the Ka'bah. "We had already traversed the portal or gallery, and were upon the point of entering the great space where the house of God, or El Kaaba, is situated, when our guide arrested our steps, and pointing with his finger towards it, said with emphasis, '*Schouf, Schouf, el beit Allah el Haram!*' (Look, look, the house of God, the Prohibited!) The crowd that surrounded me; the portico of columns half hid from view; the immense size of the temple; the Kaaba, or house of God, covered with the black cloth from top to bottom, and surrounded with a circle of lamps or lanterns; the hour; the silence of the night; and this man speaking in a solemn tone, as if he had been inspired; all served to form an imposing picture, which will never be effaced from my memory."



Muzdalifah (Aly Bey)

The travels of Aly Bey, when they were published upon his return to Europe, were studiously neglected by his contemporaries —which is unfortunate but understandable. For although his account was a sympathetic, tolerant and up-to-date description of Middle Eastern lands and politics it came from a man whose motives were distrusted. For Aly Bey was a spy, secretly in the employ of the French Government and the main purpose of his travels was to report upon the political and economic status of the Middle East to the government of Napoleon Bonaparte.

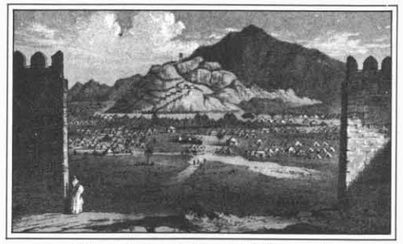
In return for his services, Aly Bey, when he returned to Spain, then under French domination, was made governor, first of Cordova, then of Seville. When the French were driven out of Spain, Aly Bey was forced to flee with the retreating French army and lived in exile in France. He later undertook another mission to the Middle East, once again disguising himself as a descendant of a noble family. But he had tempted fate once too often and died in Aleppo in suspicious circumstances, his cover apparently blown at last.

Of all the Western travelers to Mecca, Giovanni Finati is the only out-and-out scoundrel—as the two-volume account of his travels, published in 1830, makes perfectly clear. Even Burton, by no means a prude, disapproved of Signor Finati, and it is not hard for the modern reader to see why.

Giovanni Finati began his career at the age of 18—by deserting from the Napoleonic troops then occupying Italy. Arrested and condemned to death, he was saved by the fortuitous arrival of Napoleon, who decided to free all deserters and send them to Albania to fight the Montenegrans. As the Montenegrans were formidable foes, the prudent Giovanni decided to desert again and eventually wound up, with 16 companions, joining the Turkish Army, which quickly put him to work in a quarry. Finati, however, embraced Islam and after several scrapes, enlisted in still another army: a contingent of Albanian mercenaries on their way to Cairo to take part in Muhammad Ali Pasha's wars against the Mamelukes. This time he stayed long enough to participate in Muhammad Ali's massacre of the Mamelukes in 1811, then joined the Egyptian army just as it was setting out for Arabia.

At the great battle of the Jadida Pass, the strategic spot that controlled the caravan route from Egypt, the Egyptians were virtually annihilated, but Giovanni escaped and returned to Cairo. Growing restless, he joined a second expedition to Arabia during which—as the Egyptians suffered reverses—he deserted again, made his way to Mecca and went into hiding until he could escape.

As that summary suggests, Giovanni's life had not left him too much time to cultivate his sensibilities. Yet this is what he later wrote of his entrance into Mecca:



The Plain of 'Arafat (Burton)

"Exulting in my escape, my mind was in a state to receive very strong impressions, and I was much struck with all I saw upon entering the city; for though it is neither large nor beautiful in itself, there is something in it that is calculated to impress a sort of awe, and it was the hour of noon when everything is very silent, except the muezzins calling from the minarets." Even scoundrels, apparently, are not immune to the impact of the Hajj.

The same year that Finati went into hiding in Mecca another—and far more important—Westerner arrived. This was Johann Ludwig Burckhardt, discoverer of Petra, and one of the more illustrious Western visitors to Mecca.

Johann Burckhardt was born in Lausanne in 1784, and studied in Leipzig, Gottingen and Cambridge. Hoping to settle what was then one of the burning questions in geography—the true course of the Niger River—he applied to the Association for Promoting

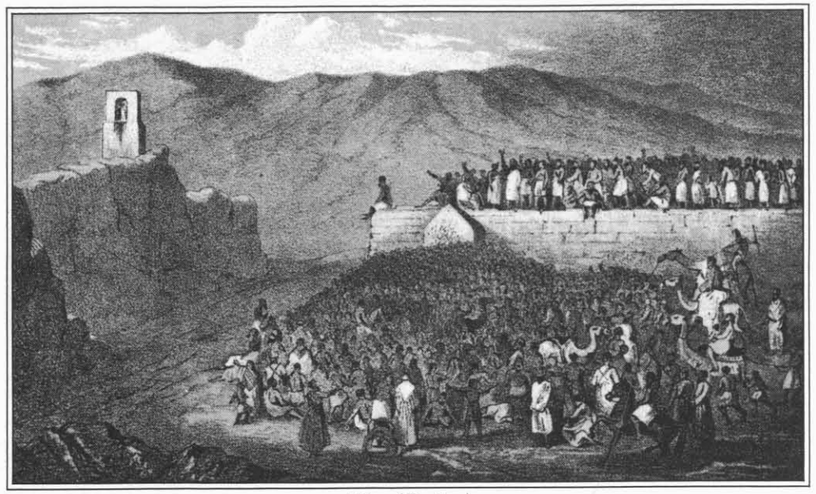
THE HAJJ: A Recollection

Virtually all of the travelers who visited Mecca were deeply moved by the Hajj. None of them, however, wrote more lyrically than Muhammad Asad, who was among the last of the pilgrims to make the Hajj by camel and from whose book *The Road to Mecca* this passage is taken.

"*And as I stand on the hillcrest and gaze down toward the invisible Plain of 'Arafat, the moonlit blueness of the landscape before me, so dead a moment ago, suddenly comes to life with the currents of all the human lives that have passed through it and is filled with the eerie voices of the millions of men and women who have walked or ridden between Mecca and 'Arafat in over thirteen hundred pilgrimages for over thirteen hundred years. Their voices and their steps and the voices and the steps of their animals reawaken and resound anew; I see them walking and riding and assembling—all those myriads of white-garbed pilgrims of thirteen hundred years; I hear the sounds of their passed-away days; the wings of the faith which has drawn them together to this land of rocks and sand and seeming deadness beat again with the warmth of life over the arc of centuries, and the mighty wingbeat draws me into its orbit and draws my own passed-away days into the present, and once again I am riding over the plain—riding in a thundering gallop over the plain, amidst thousands and thousands of* Ihram*-clad Bedouins, returning form 'Arafat to Mecca—a tiny particle of that roaring, earth-shaking, irresistible wave of countless galloping dromedaries and men, with the tribal banners on their high poles beating like drums in the wind and their tribal war cries tearing through the air:* 'Ya Rawga, ya Rawga!' *by which the Atayba tribesmen evoke their ancestors' name, answered by the* 'Ya Awf, ya Awaf!' *of the Harb and echoed by the almost defiant,* 'Shammar, ya Shammar!' *from the farthest right wing of the column.*

"*We ride on, rushing, flying over the plain, and to me it seems that we are flying with the wind, abandoned to a happiness that knows neither end nor limit . . . and the wind shouts a wild paean of joy into my ears: 'Never again, never again, never again will you be a stranger!' . . .*

"*The smell of the dromedaries' bodies, their panting and snorting, the thundering of their innumerable feet; the shouting of the men, the clanking of the rifles slung on saddle-pegs, the dust and the sweat and the wildly excited faces around me; and a sudden, glad stillness within me.*"

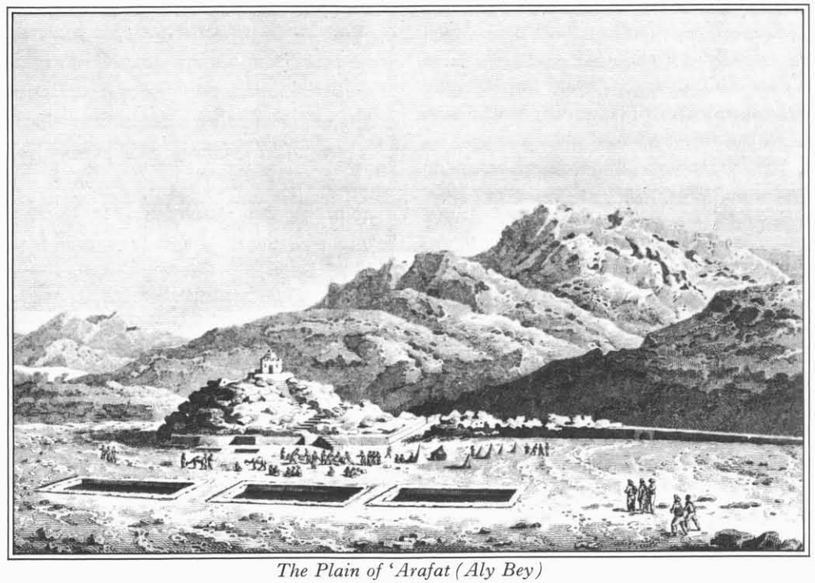


Mina (Burton)

the Discovery of the Interior of Africa for a grant. His application accepted, Burckhardt set off in 1809 for Aleppo in Syria to perfect his knowledge of Arabic and Islam—in the belief that he could travel in Africa more easily as a Muslim. Later he made a series of exploratory trips through the Middle East during which he discovered Petra, the fabulous rock-hewn city in Jordan that had been "lost" for almost 1000 years (*Aramco World*, September-October, 1967). This discovery in itself would have satisfied a lesser man, but Burckhardt, determined to carry out his exploration of the Niger, went to Cairo planning to join a caravan to Fezzan, in Libya. When the caravan was delayed, Burckhardt, hating to remain idly in Cairo, sailed down the Nile to explore Nubia, and then decided to cross the Red Sea and make the Pilgrimage to Mecca. There he so exhaustively described the rites of the Pilgrimage, the Ka'bah, the Sacred Mosque, the history of Mecca, the surrounding holy places as well as the customs and dress of the various classes of Meccan society, that he left little for later travelers to do. Even Burton reprinted Burckhardt's description of the Ka'bah and the Sacred Mosque as an appendix to his own travels.

Burckhardt had the advantage of an extended stay in Mecca—he was there three months—so he had an opportunity for investigation that previous travelers had not. He mapped the city, gathered information from a wide variety of informants about the virtually unknown southern and eastern parts of the Arabian Peninsula and went on to Medina, where he stayed another three months, amassing a great deal of valuable information. But he was also taken ill and had to return to Cairo, where in 1817, worn out by disease and hardship, he died at the age of 33 on the eve of the departure of the long awaited caravan to Fezzan. In 1830, 13 years after Burckhardt's death, Richard Lander finally discovered the true course of the Niger River.

Unlike some travelers, Burckhardt was a modest and self-effacing man whose careful accounts of his travels in Syria and Arabia are classics, and whose conversion to Islam was apparently sincere. He was greatly admired by Burton, who made a point of visiting his tomb outside Cairo before embarking upon his own Pilgrimage to Mecca.



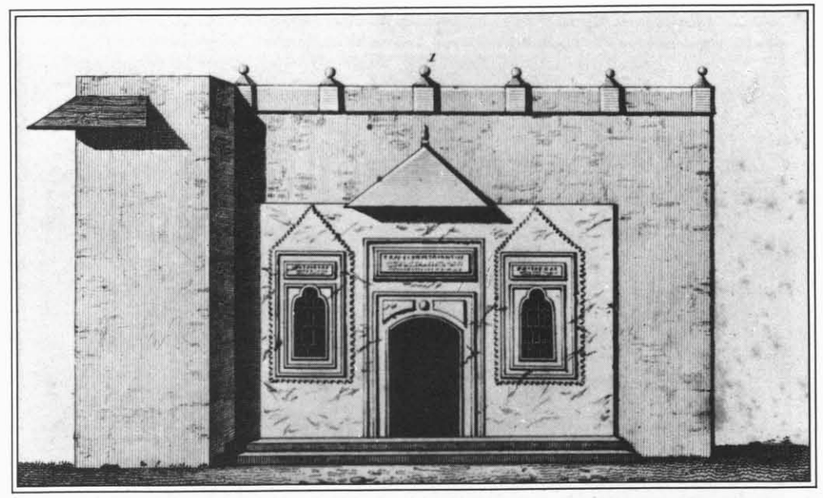
The Plain of 'Arafat (Aly Bey)

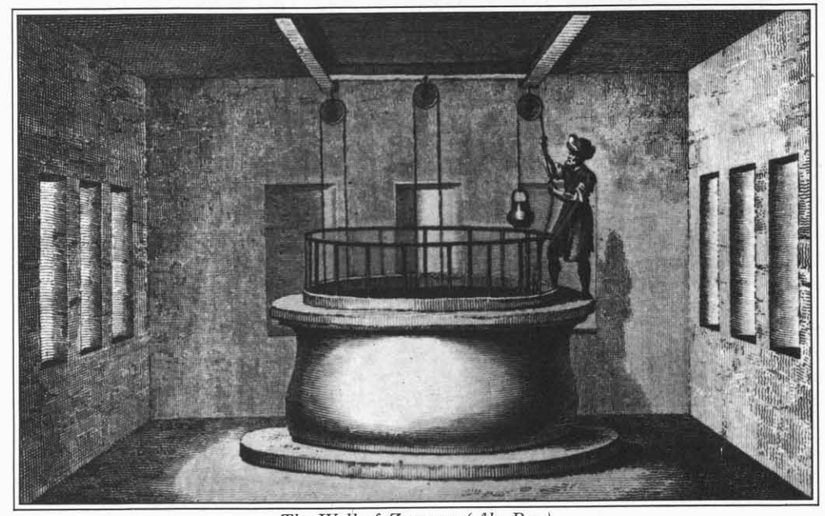
The most famous Western traveler to Arabia, of course, was Sir Richard Burton, who in 1853 set off on the Pilgrimage, his knighthood and his fame as the translator of the *Arabian Nights* still far in the future.

At 32, Burton had reached a stage in his life when he felt he must do something spectacular to win the official recognition of his abilities which he had always felt to be his due. When, therefore, the Royal Geographical Society refused him a grant to explore Arabia (on the grounds that it was too dangerous) he decided to go anyway. As he confided to his journal, "What remained for me but to prove, by trial, that what might be perilous to other travelers was safe to me?"

Burton originally intended to use Mecca merely as a jumping-off place to cross the Arabian Desert, explore the as-yet-unknown Eastern Province, take a quick look at that great blank on the map, the Empty Quarter (which would not be crossed by a Western traveler until 1931), investigate the possibility of opening up a market for Arabian horses in order to improve the breed used by the Indian cavalry, settle the vexing question of the hydrology of the Hijaz, and, finally, perform certain anthropological researches among the inhabitants of the Arabian Peninsula. Instead he produced one of the greatest travel books ever written—*A Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah and Meccah*. The word "Personal" in the title is no misnomer; the book reveals as much about Burton as it does about the two holiest cities of Islam.

To get to Mecca, Burton disguised himself as an Afghan holy man and set off on the grueling ride across the desert to the port of Suez. At Suez he booked passage on a 50-ton ship, spent 12 days sailing to Yanbu' on the Arabian Red Sea coast, where having injured his foot by stepping on a sea urchin, he hired a *shuqduf*, a kind of closed litter carried on the back of a camel, to facilitate his journey. En route the caravan was ambushed by bandits, but Burton, with his customary aplomb under fire, merely took the opportunity to make some minor repairs to his *shuqduf*. His companions regarded him as insane.





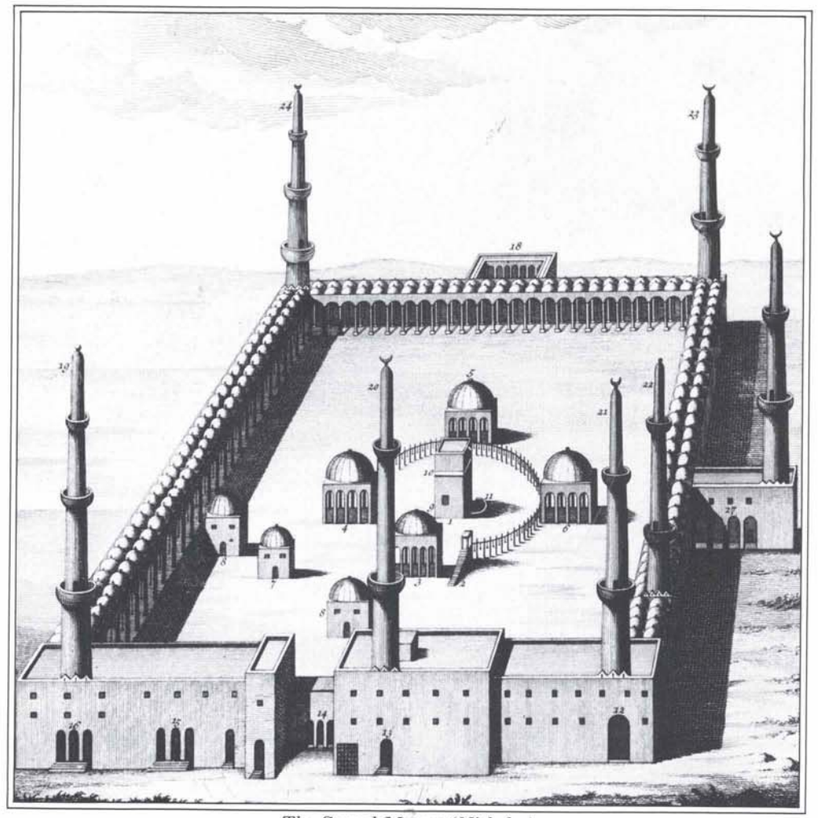
The Well of Zamzam (Aly Bey)

On July 25, the pilgrims caught their first glimpse of Medina, the last resting place of the Prophet Muhammad. "We halted our beasts as if by word of command. All of us descended, in imitation of the pious of old, and sat down, jaded and hungry as we were, to feast our eyes with a view of the Holy City." Burton spent a month in Medina. He adds a great deal to Burckhardt's account, for illness had prevented the Swiss scholar from visiting the environs of the city.

When the pilgrim caravan from Damascus arrived in Medina on its way to Mecca, Burton joined it. He was excited by the prospect of following the inland route from Medina to Mecca, for this was the route taken by Harun al-Rashid, and no European had taken it since the time of De Varthema, 350 years before. Unfortunately, the caravan traveled at night in order to avoid the summer sun, and Burton was unable to make any but the most cursory observations of the route. Balked in that direction, Burton turned his lively curiosity on his fellow pilgrims. He succeeded in ingratiating himself with the Bedouins who accompanied the caravan by reciting Arabic poetry—always a sure way to the heart of the desert Arab. Then, just before reaching Mecca, caught in a narrow pass, the caravan was again attacked by robbers. Several pilgrims lost their lives, and the camel in front of Burton was shot through the heart. A detachment of troops who were guarding the caravan swarmed up the sides of the canyon and after a fierce battle drove the bandits away.

The pilgrims entered Mecca late the same night, and Burton had to wait until the next morning for his first sight of the Sacred Mosque and the Ka'bah. This was the culminating point of his journey—"There at last it lay, the bourn of my long weary pilgrimage, realizing the plans and hopes of many and many a year. The mirage medium of Fancy invested the huge catafalque and its gloomy pall with peculiar charms. There were no giant fragments of hoar antiquity as in Egypt, no remains of graceful and harmonious beauty as in Greece and Italy, no barbarous gorgeousness as in the buildings of India; yet the view was strange, unique—and how few have looked upon the celebrated shrine! I may truly say that, of all the worshippers who clung weeping to the curtain, or who pressed their beating hearts to the stone, none felt for the moment a deeper emotion that did the hajji (pilgrim) from the far-north."

Profoundly moved not only by the sight of the Ka'bah, but by the devotion of the pilgrims, Burton went through the complicated ceremonies of the Hajj, describing in detail the actions and prayers which accompany the various rites. He measured the Ka'bah, entered its interior chamber and sketched a plan of it on the hem of his white pilgrim's garb. He visited all the places of interest in the country around Mecca,



The Sacred Mosque (Niebuhr)

made copious notes on the customs and dress of the inhabitants of the Hijaz and at last took passage to Bombay to write his famous three-volume work considered by many to be the classic English account of the Hajj.

The last great 19th-century European traveler to Mecca was the Dutch scholar Snouck Hurgronje, who spent a year in Mecca in 1884. His two-volume work on the history and ethnography of Mecca is the classic scientific account, and a mine of information about all aspects of the Hajj, particularly about pilgrims from the former Dutch possessions in the East Indies.

All the European travelers who made the Pilgrimage to Mecca, from De Varthema to Hurgronje, had dressed in native costume and concealed their original nationality. The first European to enter the Holy City without disguising himself in any way was an English Muslim named Herman Bicknell. Unfortunately, although Bicknell must have had some intriguing encounters, dressed as he was in trousers and boiled shirt, until he put off his English identity with the assumption of the *Ihram*, he has left no account of his Hajj. But he is important in any survey of Western visitors to Mecca, for he marks a turning point in the relations of the West with the world of Islam. He is representative of the increasing number of Europeans who embraced Islam in the latter half of the 19th century—and embraced it sincerely.

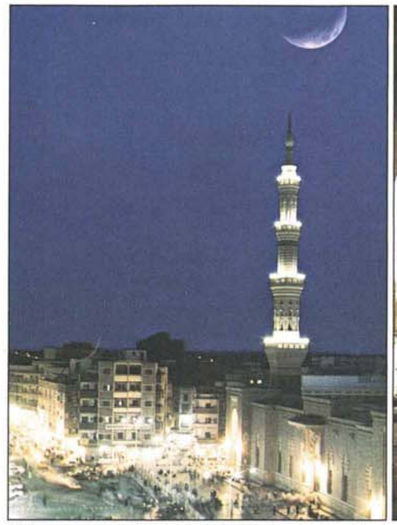
The 20th century abounds in sympathetic accounts by Western Muslims of their Pilgrimages to Mecca—those of Eldon Rutter, Harry St. John Philby, Lady Evelyn Cobbold—perhaps the first European woman to make the Hajj—and, just a few years ago, Thomas Abercrombie, a *National Geographic* photographer and writer who embraced Islam and later recorded the Pilgrimage for the magazine. But the most interesting modern pilgrim of all is Leopold Weiss, who made five Pilgrimages between 1927 and 1932.

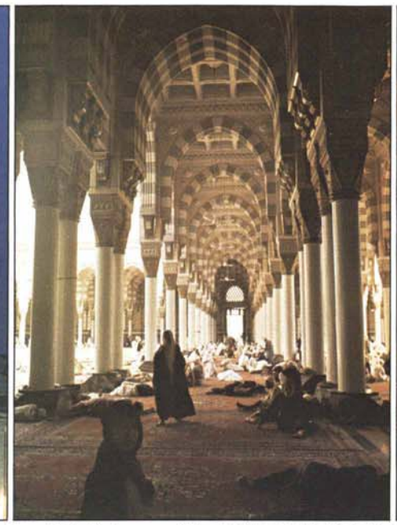
Leopold Weiss was born of Jewish parents in the Polish city of Lwow—then under Austrian domination—and after an adventurous early life became the Middle East correspondent for the prestigious German newspaper, the *Frankfurter Zeitung*. In 1926 he embraced Islam, adopted the Muslim name of Muhammad Asad, and went to Saudi Arabia, where he became a close friend of King 'Abd al-'Aziz ibn Sa'ud. His autobiography—*The Road to Mecca*—makes fascinating reading. Within the framework of a journey by camel across the Arabian Desert, from Tayma to Mecca, Muhammad Asad reflects upon the events of his former life and how they led ineluctably to his own Pilgrimage to the Holy City: "It was during those twenty-three days that the pattern of my life became fully apparent to myself."

After some six years in Saudi Arabia, Muhammad Asad went to India where he met Muhammad Iqbal, the spiritual founder of modern Pakistan. He devoted himself to the establishment of that Islamic state, and in 1947 became the Director of Pakistan's Department of Islamic Reconstruction. Other government posts followed, culminating in his appointment as Minister Plenipotentiary to the U.N.

But in 1932, as he performed the *Tawaf* around the Ka'bah, only one of thousands of pilgrims, these honors lay far in the future. "I walked on and on, the minutes passed, all that had been small and bitter in my heart began to leave my heart, I became part of a circular stream—oh, was this the meaning of what we were doing: to become aware that one is a part of a movement in an orbit? Was this, perhaps, all confusion's end? And the minutes dissolved, and time itself stood still, and this was the centre of the universe . . . "

Muhammad Asad was the last European pilgrim to arrive in Mecca on the back of a camel—the old caravans, with all their aura of romance, are now a thing of the past. But although the modern pilgrim now arrives in Saudi Arabia by plane, bus or car, and although everything possible is done by the Saudi Government to facilitate his stay in Mecca during the month of the Pilgrimage, the ancient and holy ceremonies of the Hajj have remained unchanged. And Mecca and Medina are still the last of the "forbidden cities"—forbidden, that is, to all but those who share the faith that was nurtured there, and has since spread across the world.





Pilgrims are not required to visit Medina, but most do. There they visit the first mosque of Islam (right) and in the Prophet's Mosque (left and center) invoke God's blessings on the Prophet.

MEDINA: The Second City

Medina, the second holiest city of Islam, is the city of visitation as Mecca is the city of pilgrimage. Almost without exception, pilgrims to Mecca also visit Medina, where they pray in the mosque built by Muhammad and invoke God's blessing on the Prophet.

The trip to Medina carries the pilgrims through the early heroic years of Islam. It starts as soon as they turn inland from the Red Sea and approach the small village of Badr, where the Muslims, then a numerically weak religious sect, fought and won the battle that eventually sent them westwards to North Africa and Spain and eastwards to India.

After Badr the pilgrims wind through ranges of steep, wind-weathered hills and then descend to the outskirts of Medina where, in Kuba, there stands the first mosque of Islam. Now a simple whitewashed building, it was originally a structure of wattle and clay built by the Prophet himself and his fellow exiles.

Those early years are present in all the suburbs of Medina. Opposite Kuba, on the far side of Medina, the rusty red shape of Jabal Uhud looms over the palm groves stretching along the watercourse at the foot of the mountains. At Uhud the Prophet's tiny army was defeated by the Meccans—but survived to challenge them again and, at the Battle of the Trench two years later, break their power forever. Also in the outskirts of Medina is the Masjid al-Fath (the Mosque of Victory), originally built at the time of the Prophet to mark the spot where he prayed for, and was vouchsafed, victory.

Not far away is the Masjid al-Qiblatayn (the Mosque of the two Qiblas) with two prayer niches, one facing Jerusalem (Aramco World, July-August 1974), towards which the Prophet had originally instructed the believers to pray, the other facing Mecca.

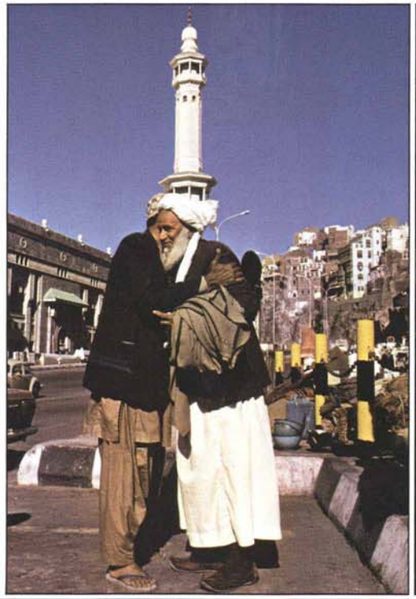
In Medina proper stands the Prophet's Mosque, a low, brown brick enclosure with delicate soaring minarets. Here the visitors chant the "unity," the chapter of the Koran affirming the Unity and uncreatedness of God and calling upon God to bless the Prophet Muhammad. The tomb chamber, which encompasses the dwelling of the Prophet's wife Aisha—the site of his death—was later incorporated into the Mosque when it became necessary to enlarge it. The chamber is of heavy iron filigree painted green and decorated with burnished brass inscriptions from the Koran. A drape of dark green silk totally enshrouds the Prophet's tomb and those of Abu Bakr and Omar, the first and second Caliphs. Above the chamber rises a green dome and adjoining it there is an enclosure marking the house of Fatimah, the Prophet's daughter.

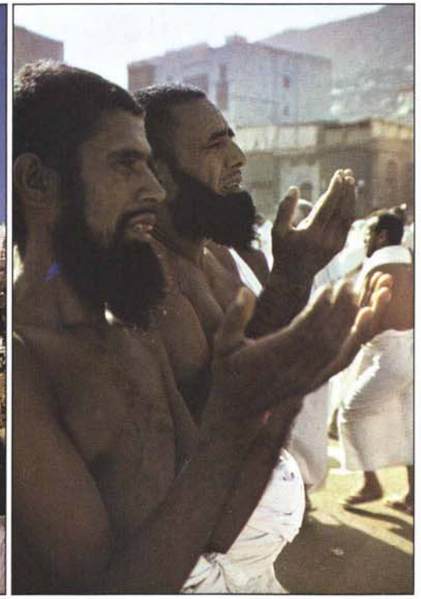
The Prophet's Mosque is simple, with high, pointed arches and a sunny courtyard. It was in this Mosque that Abu Bakr, Muhammad's beloved Companion, said after the Prophet's death to the grief-stricken Muslims assembled there: "O men, if anyone worships Muhammad, let him know that Muhammad is dead. But he who worships God let him know that God is living and undying."

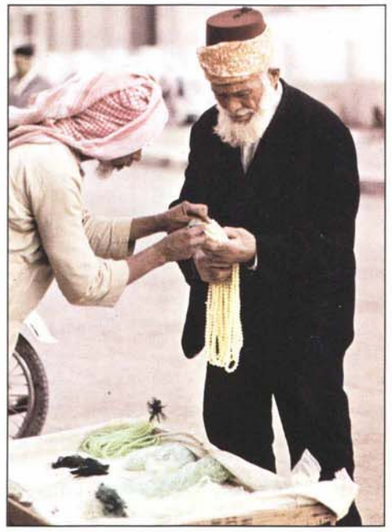
— M. J.

THE HAJJ: An Impression

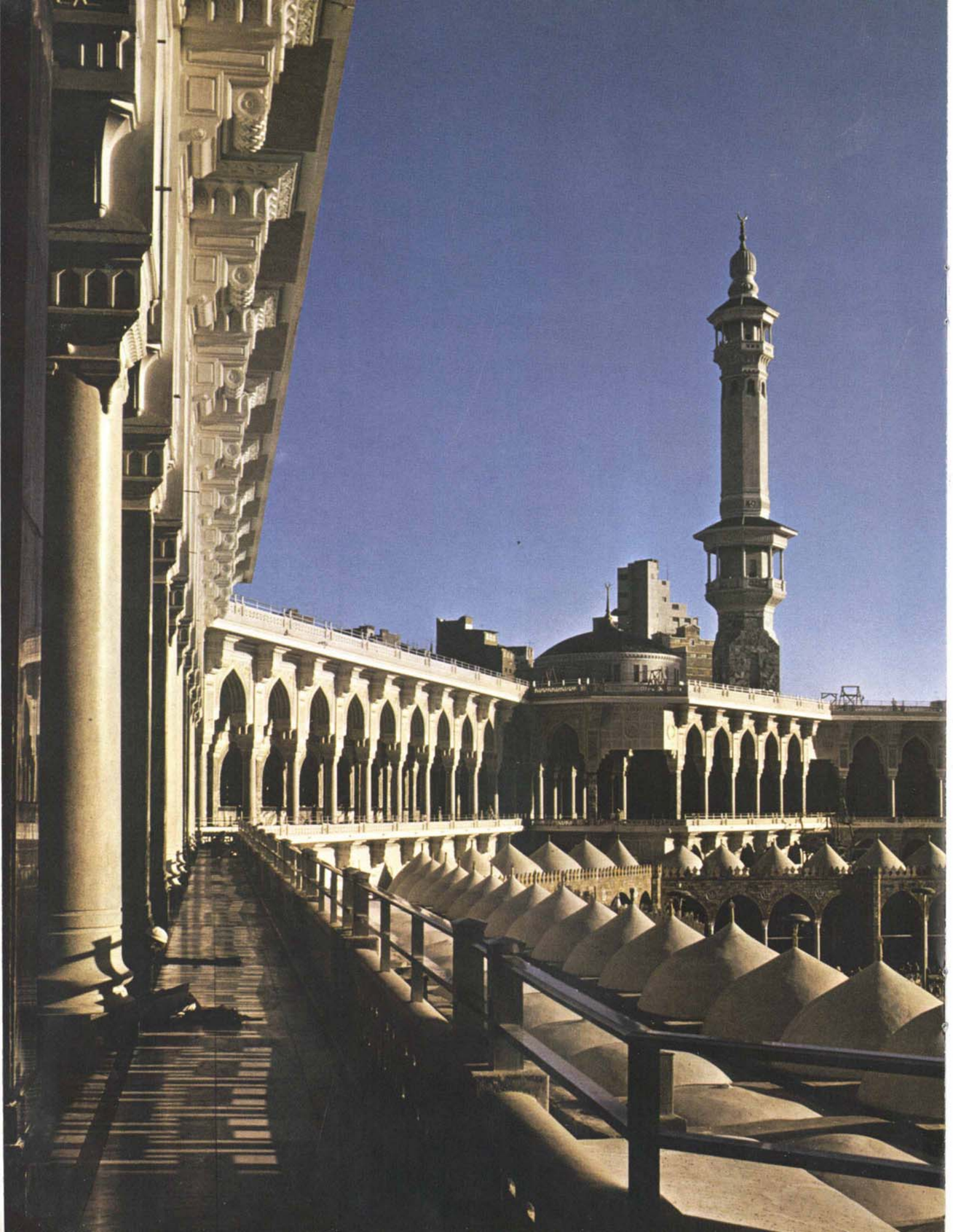
PHOTOGRAPHED BY S. M. AMIN

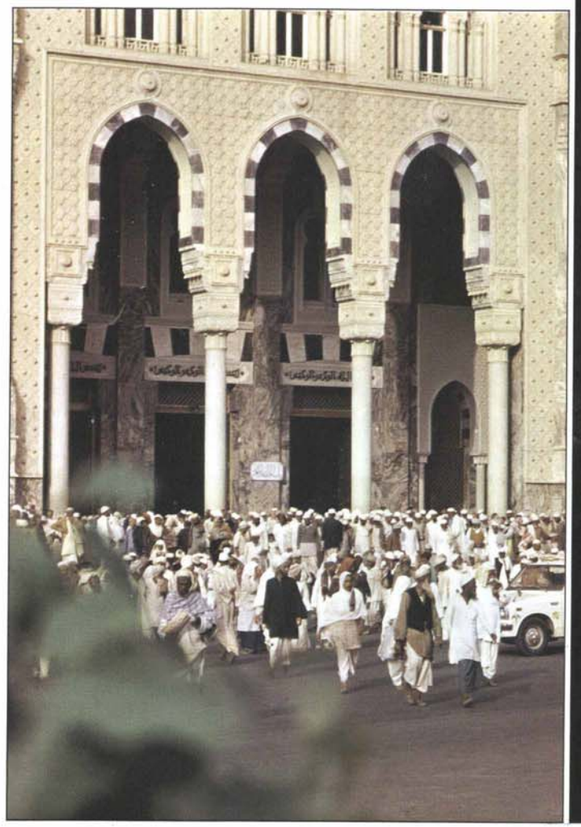


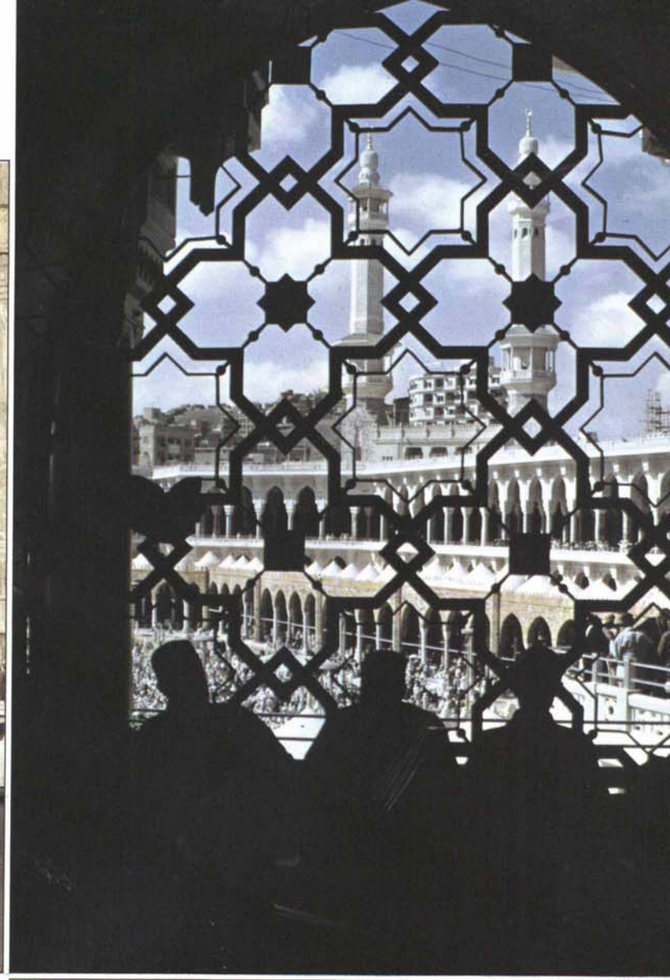


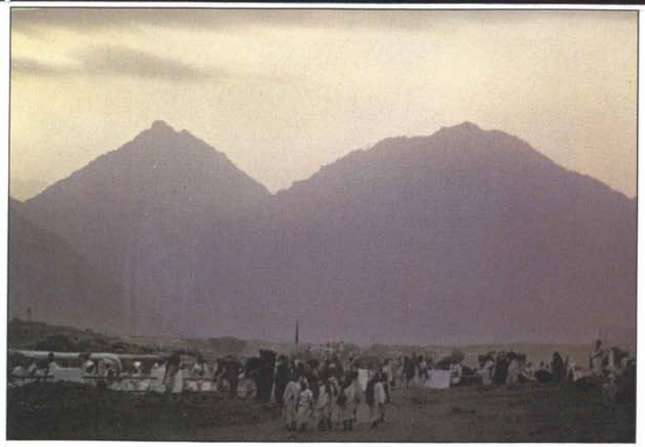


Above, clockwise from top left: the Pilgrimage strengthens fraternal ties among Muslims everywhere; pilgrims pray at Mecca's Sacred Mosque; an elderly pilgrim chooses prayer beads to carry home; the hours passed at 'Arafat are precious, a culmination of the Muslim's devotional life. Opposite page: pilgrims bow united in prayer facing the Ka'bah, a symbol of God's oneness and His centrality to all endeavor.

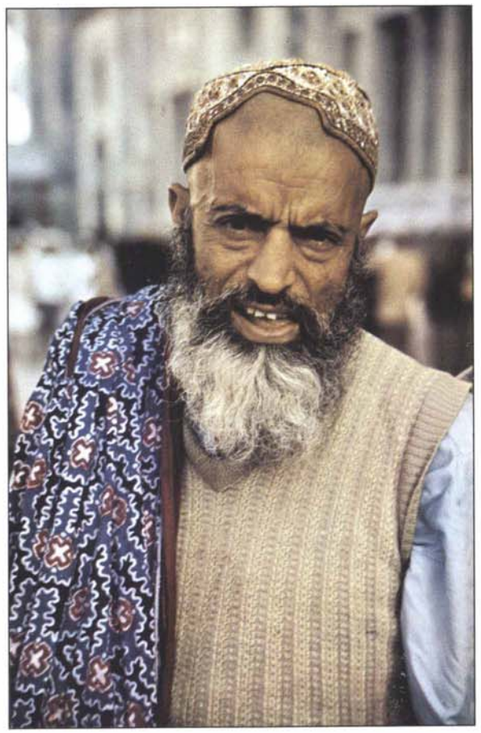


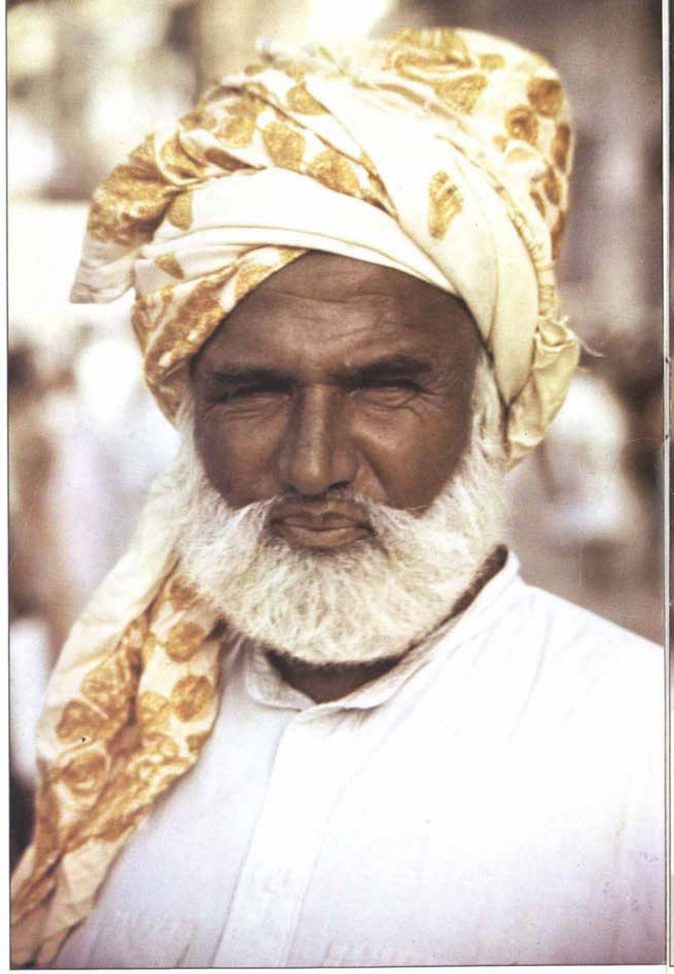


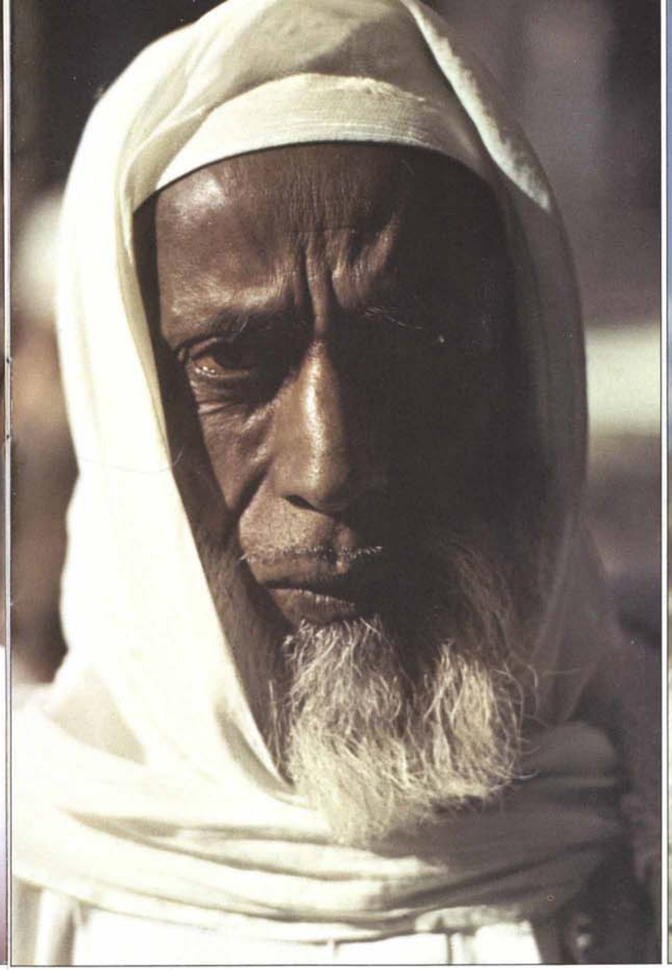


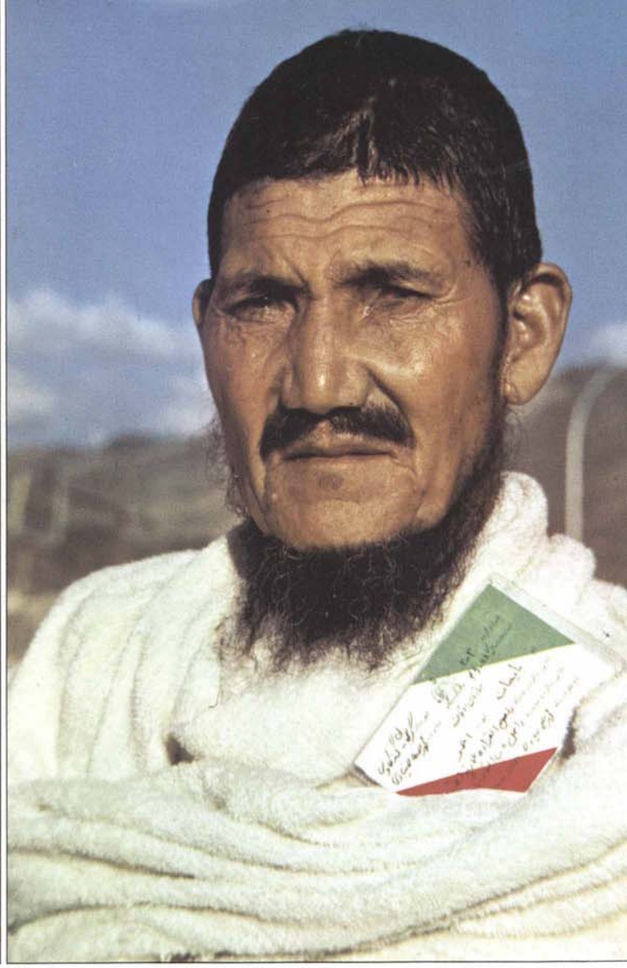


Opposite page: late sunlight gilds the upper colonnade of the enlarged Sacred Mosque and the domes of the smaller, earlier structure. Above, clockwise from top left: pilgrims leave the Sacred Mosque; three pilgrims rest and meditate in a shadowed colonnade; the multitude of faithful moves at dawn from Muzdalifah to Mina; His Majesty King Faisal arrives to welcome pilgrim delegations.

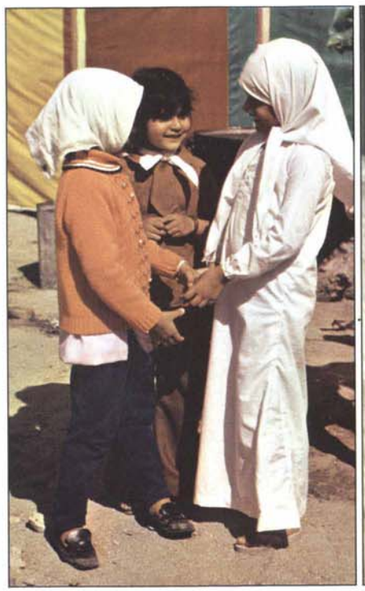


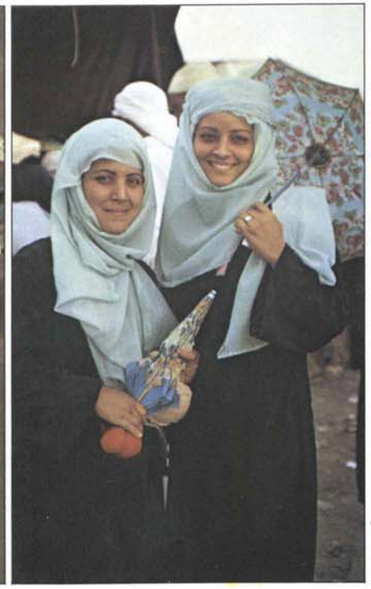


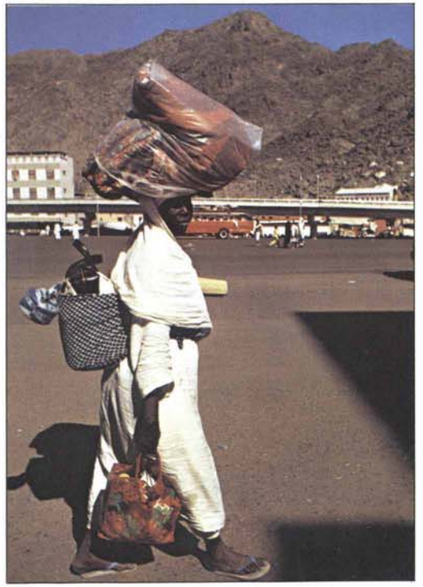


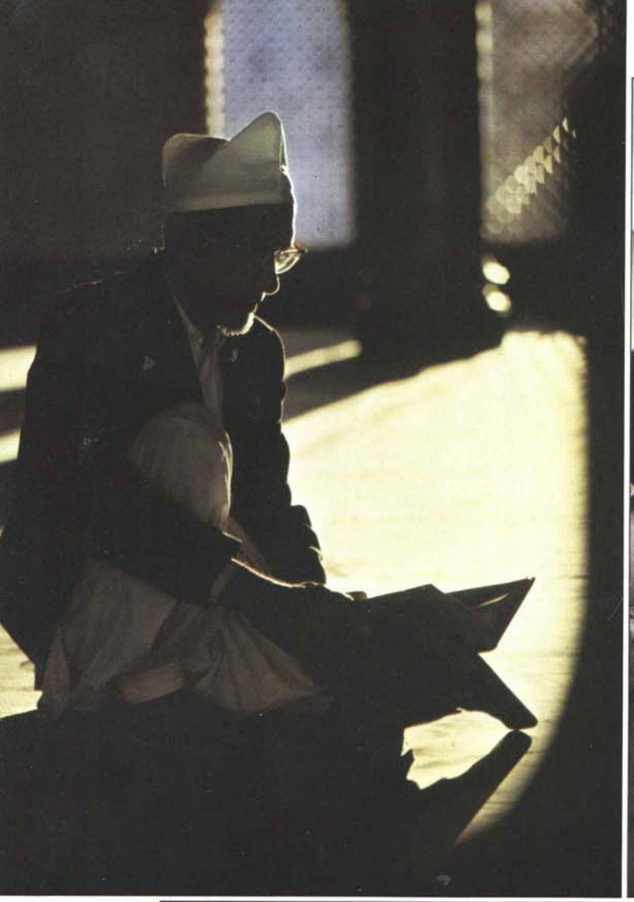


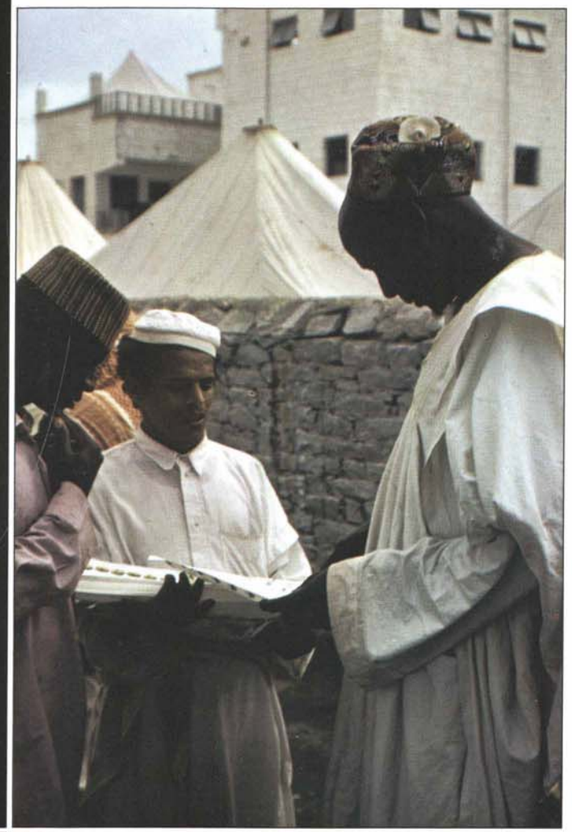
The Pilgrimage brings together the world of Islam in brotherhood. On these pages, recognizable by their features or distinctive regional costumes, are pilgrims from Afghanistan, the Punjab, Saudi Arabia, Eritrea, Syria and West Africa.

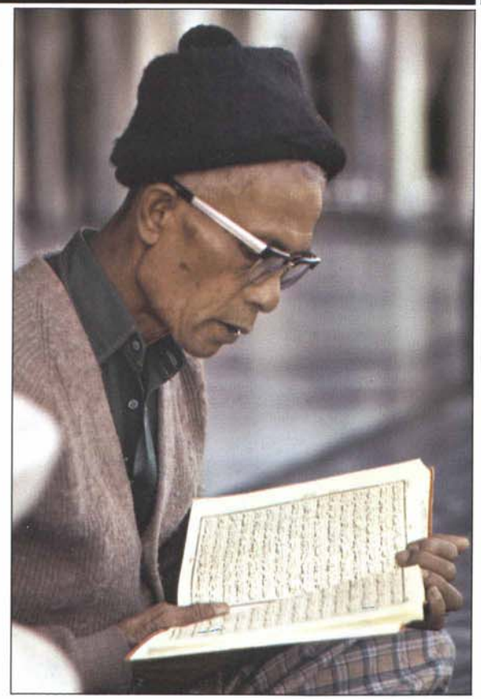


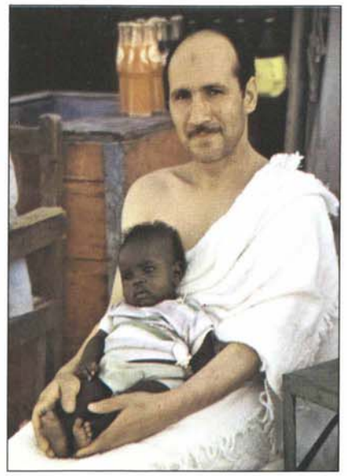












Away from the multitudes pilgrims from Bengal (top left), Indonesia (bottom left) and Pakistan (opposite page) read from the Koran. A West African examines a copy of the Holy Book and a man wearing Ihram, the white, seamless garment of the pilgrim, sits with a child.

From Michigan to Mecca...

AN AMERICAN GIRL ON THE HAJJ

WRITTEN BY MICHAEL E. JANSEN

I was in Mecca at last.

Before me was the Ka'bah, a great black cube partly submerged in a torrent of white-robed pilgrims circling round and round. Around us, like a great dam containing the torrent, stood the massive walls and the seven slim minarets of the Sacred Mosque. High above, the muezzin began the evening call to prayer: "*Allahu Akbar!*... God is Most Great!"

Up on the hills the thin reedy voices of the muezzins in the smaller mosques joined in, each voice picking up the call in a fugue of prayer soaring into the golden crest of the afternoon.

In response, the crowds circling the Ka'bah slowed and stopped while new thousands flooded into the courtyard. In unison we bowed, fell to our knees and touched our foreheads to the earth, the familiar words of the prayer filling the courtyard and cloisters with a hoarse whisper that spilled out into the streets of the hushed city.

Indeed the very air vibrated in anticipation of the days to come. In the morning I would embark on the last miles of a journey that had begun years before and far away. It was not, certainly, comparable to the trans-continental trek of the African Muslim, or the long sea voyage faced by the believer in Asia, or even to the former caravan journey from Damascus. Yet in a sense it was an even longer journey. For my journey had begun not only in another culture, but in another religion.

I have deep roots in America. Some of my father's forbearers migrated to the Virginia Colony in 1609, and on my mother's side are ancestors who fought with Washington and Lincoln and a great-grandfather who was a Pony Express rider. Until I was 16, I myself had had an upbringing generally regarded as typically American: Midwestern, middle class and Protestant. I grew up in Bay City, Michigan, belonged to the Episcopal Church, went to Sunday School and sang in the church choir.

At 16, however, I discovered the Koran. I was attending a high-school journalism seminar at the University of Michigan and

Michael Jansen, dressed in Ihram, bids her daughter farewell.

I met some students from Iraq. We somehow began to discuss the Koran. I decided to read a translation and, one evening shortly after, opened a copy to the first chapter: "All praise is due to God, the Lord of the Worlds, the Beneficent, the Merciful; the Master of the Day of Requital; Thee do we serve and Thee do we beseech for help; Guide us on the Right Path, the Path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed favor, not of those on whom wrath is brought down, nor of those who go astray."

Those words, simple and direct, expressing ideas I had always held, so impressed me that I immediately set out to memorize them. Indeed, they drew me into Islam, an example perhaps of the Prophet Muhammad's assertion that everyone is born a Muslim and made a Jew or a Christian by his parents.

From that time forward I charted my life in the direction of Mecca. I studied Islamic history at Mount Holyoke College; I spent the summer of 1961 working with Palestinian refugees in Beirut; I earned a graduate degree at the American University of Beirut; I married and put down new roots in the Lebanese village of Shemlan. Finally, one bright December morning in 1967, with a descendant of the Prophet's family as my witness, I formally declared my adherence to Islam.

Like every Muslim, I was theoretically on the road to Mecca from that moment on. I had not envisaged making the journey so soon, however, and when the opportunity to go to Mecca unexpectedly arose in 1973 I was completely unprepared. I had to find out, for example, where to buy the *Ihram*, where to book accommodations, how to engage a *mutawwif* and so forth. Officials, acquaintances and even friends who had made the Hajj proved to be mines of misinformation. Airline reservations clerks, for example, said there was no need to book far ahead, but three weeks before the Hajj was due to begin I learned there were almost no seats left and was barely able to get one. One presumably knowledgeable person said I would not be able to go on the Hajj at all because I had not assumed an Arabic name when I made my declaration. This was especially upsetting, first because my name, Michael, appears in the Koran (Sura II—verse 91), but also because, as I said, I had never considered myself as a "convert." I had simply considered myself as someone who had recognized where she belonged. (Later, I learned that it was *customary* to take an Arabic name, but not necessary.)

The actual journey to Mecca began on the fifth of *Dhu al-Hijjah*, 1393 (the 29th of December, 1973, according to the Gregorian calendar), at Beirut International Airport, but it was not until the afternoon of the seventh that I donned the *Ihram* and drove along on the road from Jiddah to Mecca. The road was crowded with cars, buses and trucks all packed with pilgrims chanting the Hajj refrain, the *Talbiyah:*

Labbayk, Allahumma, Labbayk!
Labbayk, la sharika laka, Labbayk!
Inna-al-hamda, wa an-ni'mata laka wa'l mulk!
La sharika laka, Labbayk!

Here I am, O God, at Thy Command,
Here I am!
Thou art without associates
Thine are praise and grace and dominion
Thou art without associates, Here I am!

As we drove along I had joined in, sometimes at the beginning, sometimes in the middle, "*Labbayk . . . Labbayk!*" echoing over the stony plain. "*Labbayk . . . Labbayk!*" a tunnel of sound from Jiddah to Mecca, reaffirming with each mile the directness of the relationship between God and man that is fundamental in Islam.

At the end of the tunnel the car plunged into choked city streets, crept down the steep side of the bowl that holds the Holy City and stopped at the Mecca Hotel, directly across the street from the Masjid al-Haram, the Sacred Mosque. There I alighted, suddenly aware, amid the torrent of white-robed pilgrims that I was about to embark on an even more momentous journey than the one I had already accomplished.

Like most pilgrims, I could barely resist the desire to pay my formal respects at the Ka'bah immediately, but the crowds were so dense that I thought it wiser to wait. In the interim I stood in the arched cloisters and looked out at the marvelous spectacle taking place in the great courtyard before me.

The center of the spectacle, of course, was the Ka'bah, shrouded in black silk, with a wide band of golden calligraphy two-thirds of the way to the top. Just that morning the Ka'bah had received its ceremonial washing and, as is customary, the corners of the covering had been raised for the duration of the Pilgrimage, exposing the dark-gray blocks of Mecca stone of which it is constructed, roughly cemented together.

Around the Ka'bah, following their *mutawwifs* (see p. 40) and repeating the customary prayers, swirled men and women of every race and nation, from every corner of the earth. There were brown men, black men, yellow men and white men; some young, some old; some with the bearing of ancient patriarchs, others with the faces of medieval peasants and warriors, many with the clean-shaven look of modern businessmen. It was as if the sea had risen in a great tide around the world and swept us all to Mecca and into the whirlpool spinning about the massive black cube.

After a short time I realized that the crowds were not going to diminish, and decided to delay no longer. Leaving the cloisters, I walked along one of the nine broad stone walks that lead to the wide marble oval pavement which surrounds the Ka'bah and tucked my sandals (which I had removed before entering the mosque) into the gravel near a bench. Then I engaged a *mutawwif* and, left shoulder to the Ka'bah, edged into the current.

Although this first ceremony is a moving experience for a pilgrim, the *Tawaf*, or "the Circling"—that is making seven circuits around the Ka'bah—is not, at that point, considered part of the Hajj. Along with the *Sa'y*, or "the Running," it comprises the *'Umrah*, or "Lesser Pilgrimage" (see p. 2), which is a gesture of respect to the Holy City made by the pilgrim on his first visit. It begins, traditionally, with the pilgrim kissing or touching the Black Stone (see p. 6), but on that night there was no question of my getting near enough to touch it. The throng, gently but firmly, had carried me off.

In spite of its size, the Hajj multitude is surprisingly gentle. Occasionally, as one group or another would attempt to cross the mighty stream, there would be an angry wave of pushing and jostling, but even that was understandable. To many pilgrims, who may never have gone further than the next village before making the Hajj, getting lost or separated was an experience too terrifying to contemplate.

On the seventh circuit the *mutawwif* steered me from the center of the stream to the outer bank and found a place for us to perform a *Salah*—the recitation of a prayer while bowing, kneeling and touching the forehead to the earth. This *Salah*, which completed "the Circling," is performed near the Place of Abraham, a spot where Abraham prayed.

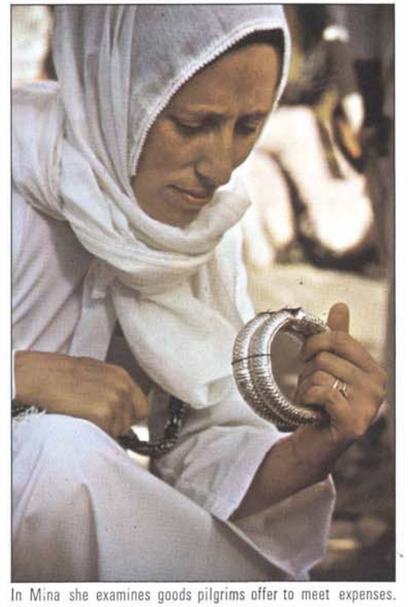
Before Mecca's Sacred Mosque, Michael chooses a Holy Koran.

For the next rite I mounted the small rocky hillock called al-Safa, turned toward the Ka'bah, raised my hands in salutation and declared my intention to perform the rite of *Sa'y*, or "the Running" (see p. 2). Then, descending from al-Safa, I entered the Mas'a, a spacious promenade bisected lengthwise by two narrow, railed pathways for the wheelchairs of the infirm, and joined another throng of believers, walking briskly to al-Marwa, another hillock, in the first of seven "Runnings" between the hills.

This throng, I found, was more relaxed than the crowds outside. Although there were occasional groups of determined peasants from the Anatolian steppes or the plains of the Punjab, who, arms firmly interlocked, swept other pilgrims aside as they rushed at a headlong pace down the Mas'a, most were exceptionally considerate. Children unconcernedly followed their parents, proud fathers bore infants in their arms and on their shoulders; the old, the blind and the crippled, who either could not afford or would not countenance wheelchairs, slowly but safely made their way.

After the *Sa'y*, I visited the Well of Zamzam, where Hagar, the mother of Ishmael, found water. I descended the white marble steps to a large divided chamber with a long pipe equipped with brass spiggots running along its back and side walls. Crowding round the taps were ample Egyptian women, who wept as they splashed themselves and everyone else with the warm water, which I found had a slightly brackish smell but little or no taste. At the top of the steps I saw two men wringing out a long white piece of material: "A burial shroud," someone said, explaining that some simple folk bring their shrouds to Zamzam because they believe that a shroud bathed in its waters will help them gain entrance to Paradise.

Although by then it was long past midnight I was not disposed to leave, and quietly drifted around the cloisters and galleries. The Gregorian New Year—1974—was an hour old before I recalled that elsewhere people would be celebrating New Year's Eve. But on that night I was not of that world. I was in a very special world where dates and hours, mundane duties and appointments did not impose themselves—a world in which my time belonged to God alone.



In Mina she examines goods pilgrims offer to meet expenses.

In the dark corners of the mosque, pilgrims slept wrapped in blankets, shawls and even prayer rugs. During the Pilgrimage, the Sacred Mosque becomes a part of the daily life of the pilgrims as well as a center of Pilgrimage. This may seem surprising to Westerners, but to a Muslim religion is a part of living; it is not folded up like a churchgoer's Sunday best until the next service. A prayer rug may serve as a bed, blanket, shawl or turban, as well as for devotions. Only the Koran is kept apart, wrapped carefully in a cloth and placed respectfully on top of one's goods.

As I walked on, the peace and serenity of the mosque crept into my heart. At the rail of the dim gallery above the cloisters, a man sat facing the Ka'bah transfixed, a Koran in his lap, and an Iranian woman stood alone quietly weeping. In the courtyard, where great throngs still circled the Ka'bah, the sedan chairs of pilgrims unable to perform the *Tawaf* on foot bobbed above the heads of the multitude like boats plying through waters. "How far I've come," I thought. "How far I've come."

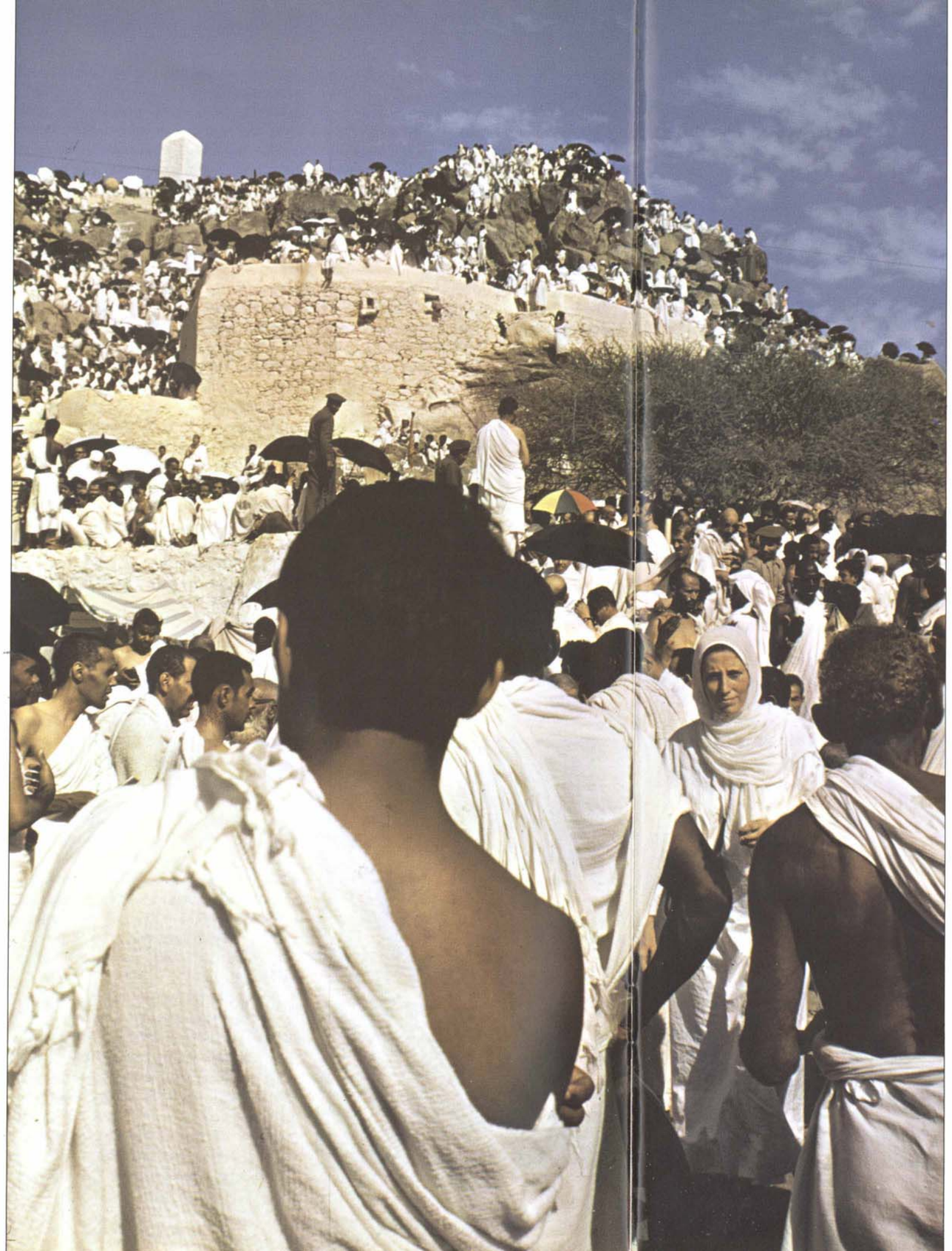
The next morning, with the thunderous refrain, "*Labbayk, Allahumma, Labbayk*!" the Pilgrimage began. Thundering through the streets of Mecca the crowds swept out of the city in a great river that flowed along

the broad road to Mina and past Jabal al-Nur, "The Mountain of Light."

For many, the Pilgrimage begins with this first glimpse of Jabal al-Nur, where Muhammad received his first revelation. To them, the mountain where the Prophet was summoned to God's service finally becomes a reality. Here Muhammad was commanded, "Read: In the name of thy Lord Who createth; createth man from a clot. Read: And thy Lord is the Most Bounteous, Who teacheth by the pen, teacheth man that which he knew not." Here, with these words spoken in this place, Islam began, and here we joyfully responded, "*Labbayk, Allahumma, Labbayk!*", knowing that God was indeed with us in this lonely inhospitable valley. The sky was a hard ice blue and the air like crystal, sparkling with the rising dust. Yes, this was indeed a place fit for revelation, an intense solitary place, brown and blue and filled with white-robed believers as far as the eye could see.

With new understanding in our hearts, we streamed into the little desert town of Mina, where Muhammad and his Companions spent the night on their way to 'Arafat. Following in his footsteps we halted at Mina, set in a steep-sided wadi, barren and brown, only three quarters of a mile across on the Mecca side but widening into the plain of Muzdalifah. At the narrow end of the wadi stand the three stone pillars, the *Jamarat*, which represent the three attempts made by Satan to prevent Abraham from sacrificing his son. As the wadi broadens there are streets of pastel-painted buildings, three to four stories high, in which pilgrims are housed. At the edge of the built-up area are the Mina field hospital, the public bathhouse, blocks housing the Hajj Administration and the vast tent city, sprawling as far as you can see, filling the wadi, creeping up its rugged sides and spilling forth upon Muzdalifah.

In the building in which I stayed I found that I had six Pakistani women and seven children as roommates. As their blankets and mattresses were already spread out and their baggage stowed I could just find a slice of floor large enough for the narrow foam-rubber mattress I had bought in the Jiddah *suq*. It was a clean, cool and pleasant room, with gaily striped rugs on the floor and a propeller fan for ventilation. I have no idea how old our hostel was—or how



"Standing" at 'Arafat

long *hajjis* have been settling into similar buildings—but I do know that there were such khans at Mina when the Swiss traveler Burckhardt performed the Hajj in 1814.

I immediately set out to explore Mina and and found it fascinating. Stalls selling iced drinks, cloth, ready-made clothing, toys and strings of beads lined the streets. There were goods from the world over: watches from Japan, bananas from Guatemala, apples from Lebanon, citrus fruits from Jordan, bolts of cloth from Hong Kong and India, dresses and shirts from Africa, chocolates from Switzerland, sandals from China, an accumulation of goods as heterogeneous in origin as the pilgrims themselves.

In the afternoon I also explored the tent city where most of the pilgrims live—and found that it was a city in every sense of the word, with broad avenues and narrow streets, sanitation facilities and running water. Along the highway I saw free dispensaries, first-aid tents, a small Swiss plane spraying the area against fleas and flies, and some helicopters hovering overhead to help ambulance teams find pilgrims in need of medical attention. The tents were of all shapes and sizes, and for many purposes. There were striped tents and flowered tents and muticolored tents; soaring pavilions with beautiful patterns inside and long low halls with partitioned rooms; tents for sleeping and tents for eating; privy tents and bathing tents.

In the evenings as I lay on my little mattress, I could look out the window at the curious apparition of the building across the street which had green and pink sugar-icing towers and was decorated with geometric designs and flower motifs. How lovely I thought, drowsily, that a place devoted to spiritual pursuits should be decorated with flights of fancy—how lovely and human . . .

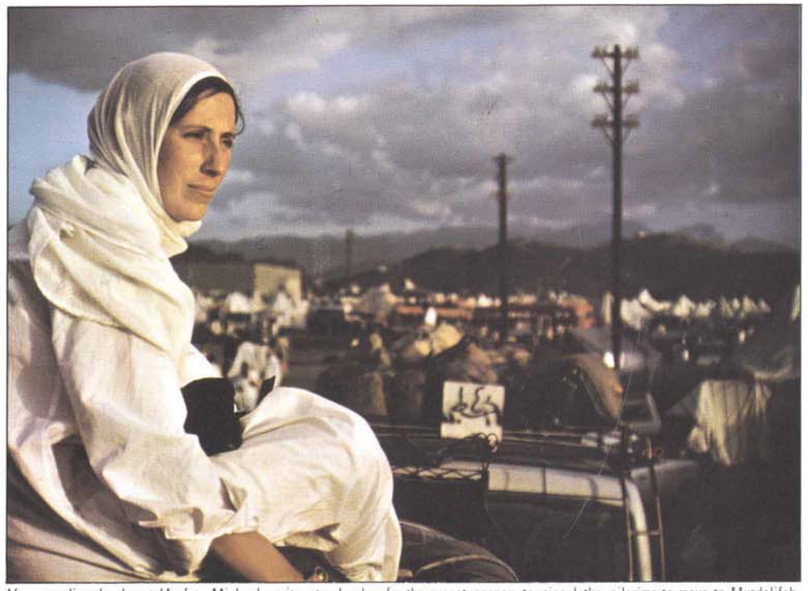
Before dawn the next day—the ninth of *Dhu al-Hijjah* and the second day of the Hajj—I rose to the call of prayer, made my ablutions and performed the *Salah*, and opened my Koran to the introduction to refresh my memory on the life of the Prophet, particularly on his Farewell Pilgrimage, which Muslims have ever since tried to emulate. Thus, it became my practice during the Pilgrimage to turn to the Koran, or to a book on the meaning of the Prophet's message, whenever I felt puzzled or when I had a problem.

At about eight o'clock I tossed my gear onto the roof of one of our *mutawwif's* little coaster buses, climbed up and made myself comfortable among the bedrolls and bundles of the pilgrims within. The street was jammed with cars, buses and trucks brimming with *hajjis* and their goods waiting for the signal to begin the journey to 'Arafat. The din of the engines drowned out this signal—but there must have been one, for in one instant we all were moving, sailing smartly and smoothly above the traffic, waving gaily to other happy passengers, all part of the mighty river flowing from Mina to 'Arafat. "*Labbayk, Allahumma, Labbayk*!" cried a group of Africans from the back of a small truck, and the multitude joined in, each nationality responding in its own accent, to the Divine call issued more than 13 centuries before: "And proclaim unto mankind the Pilgrimage. They will come to thee on foot and on every lean camel; they will come from every deep ravine" (the Koran, Sura XXII, verse 27).

At 'Arafat I set out at once for Jabal al-Rahmah, the Mount of Mercy, where, at the foot of a dark granite hill on the edge of the plain, the Prophet had stood to deliver the sermon during his Farewell Pilgrimage. At the base many pilgrims stood, eyes uplifted to the dazzling white pillar erected near the top of the 200-foot slope. Some prayed, others sat on mats talking, family groups had their photographs taken and a knot of Africans crowded beneath a striped beach umbrella chanted "*Labbayk.*" One *mutawwif*, leading a long line of Turks, exhorted them through a loud-speaker. Television cameras scanned the goings-on from a scaffold, perched high above our heads. Keeping pace with me was an obviously sophisticated pilgrim, chatting animatedly to his wife, apparently oblivious of where he was and what was happening around him. But then he looked up and, seeing the Mount just before him, stopped in his tracks and burst into a flood of tears.

As I began to ascend the Mount a tall African generously shared the shade of his green silk umbrella with me and I recalled the Prophet's word: ". . . Above all else, never forget that each Muslim is the brother of all others: for all Muslims in this world form one race of brothers."

Back in the tent I found that the



After spending the day at 'Arafat, Michael waits atop her bus for the sunset cannon to signal the pilgrims to move to Muzdalifah.

Pakistani ladies—now part of my group—had not visited the Mount of Mercy. Instead they sat on their bedrolls, reading their Korans. For me the meaning of those words was enhanced outside in the streets of 'Arafat, at the foot of the Mount and on the barren plain enclosed by stark azure mountains on three sides. I went out and walked alone until I found a place I could peacefully stand and gaze at the Mount, in my own private commemoration of the *Wuquf* or "the Standing" of the congregation for the Prophet's sermon. There were many of us who stood in the streets of 'Arafat that day, under the noon sun, recalling that God had given His last revelation to Muhammad at 'Arafat: "This day I have perfected your religion for you, completed My favor upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion" (the Koran, Sura V, verse 4). When they heard those words, the Prophet's Companions wept, for they knew that he would not remain with them long, and every pilgrim who has "stood" at 'Arafat since has felt the same sense of loss.

After the noon prayer, the multitude at 'Arafat seemed to heave a great sigh of relief and the atmosphere changed from grave devotion to lighthearted serenity. There is a lovely story about the Prophet which explains the transformation at 'Arafat, a story which few pilgrims know, but the essence of which they all feel in their hearts.

While he was at Mina during his Farewell Pilgrimage, Muhammad seemed glum, but his Companions, who felt his mood, hesitated to ask him why. At 'Arafat the next day, however, the Prophet's face glowed with happiness. One of the Companions asked him what had happened, why his spirits had changed from gloom to gaiety. The Prophet replied that the day before he had been depressed because he had asked God to forgive the pilgrims all their sins and God had replied that He could forgive only the sins against Himself. He could not forgive the sins they had committed against one another. But now He had said that He would forgive all the sins of the pilgrims at 'Arafat. And from that day onward pilgrims have left 'Arafat free men and women, reborn and without sin, for there is no concept of original sin in Islam.

Back in our compound, I found the magic of 'Arafat had made everyone serenely happy. A picnic atmosphere had swept across the plain. In our tent we were served enormous dishes of lamb and chicken cooked in spices with rice, and a sweet saffron-rice pudding.

After lunch the streets filled with people, long trains of pilgrims marching behind banners proclaiming their nationalities, families gathering in the shade of little striped awnings attached to their cars, men and women sipping tea in refreshment tents. I passed one youth in his *Ihram* who was encased in plaster from his ribs down to one ankle and I wondered if he had had a skiing accident. I came across the "Children's Lost Tent," manned by patient Boy Scouts who had a supply of toys to divert their crying wards until their parents claimed them.

As the sun dropped toward the horizon, the multitude at 'Arafat began to stow their things on top of the buses, to strike their tents and pull up poles and stakes. I reclaimed my place on top of my bus and found that I had been joined by a Pakistani businessman, Mr. M.M. Ahmad, and his wife who, I learned in the course of our conversation, had made the Hajj 17 times.

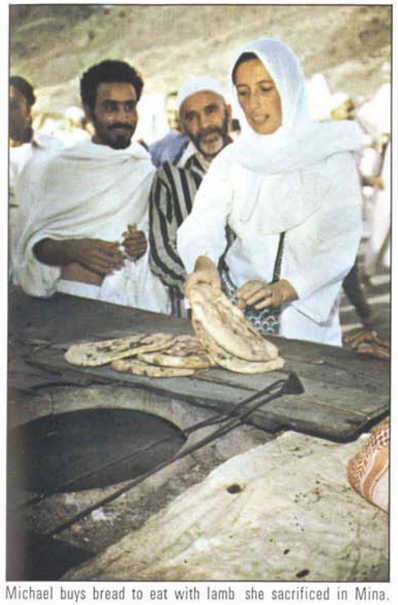
"But why?" I asked. "I thought most people made the Hajj just once."

"Well," he replied thoughtfully. "We don't always plan to come, my wife and I . . . but then the time for the Hajj comes round and we cannot stay away."

As we talked—we were discussing the four schools of Islamic jurisprudence and sipping sugared tea—the sunset cannon boomed and the vast happy caravan began the slow journey to Muzdalifah with a thunderous shout of "*Labbayk!*"

At Muzdalifah, where traffic police, wearing belts of flashing lights across their chests and carrying red torches, directed us to a camping site, we gathered 49 stones, stumbling over the rugged hills of Muzdalifah in the dark, and then I shared a supper

Meals were quiet times shared with friends in each tent.



Michael buys bread to eat with lamb she sacrificed in Mina.

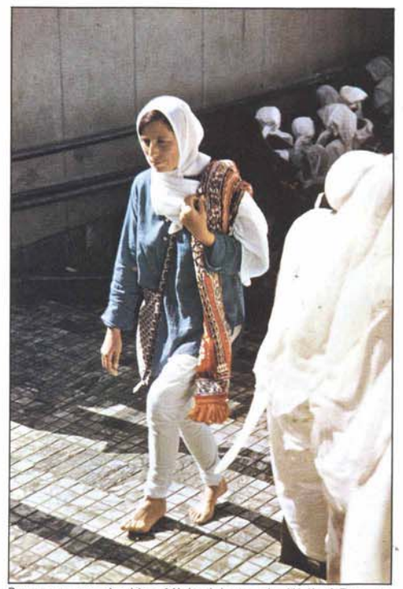
of delicacies with the Ahmads which had been brought all the way from Pakistan for the occasion. Later, we stretched out under the cold, distant stars to sleep and as the hum of the multitude died down to a whisper, dropped off to sleep one by one, released by God from the weight of of our transgressions and filled with the joy of 'Arafat.

At dawn cannon announced the morning prayer. In the chill mist that blanketed the plain, I began to walk from Muzdalifah to the pillars at Mina. In order to keep their little groups together, some *hajjis* had raised distinctive standards on long poles: teapots and paper bags, rags and plastic bottles, posters and flags were solemnly held aloft. The problem of losing *hajjis* was solved by the *mutawwifs* in various ways. Some gave their charges little cards with their addresses at Mina which a lost *hajji* could present to the nearest Boy Scout or policeman so he could be sent to the correct tent. Desert tribesmen traveled in tight little rings, women and children on the inside, men forming an elastic outer circle. But it was the Iranians who had devised the most ingenious way of keeping track of their ladies, they simply stitched their addresses onto the back of the billowing white cloaks in which the women enveloped themselves from top to toe.

Nearing Mina we met two smiling men carrying a cleaned and dressed lamb in a basket between them. They had completed the Sacrifice and were on their way home to roast the *Adha* lamb. "*Hajj mabrur!*" —"May your Hajj be acceptable to God!"— passersby called in greeting. As we met more and more people carrying meat from the Sacrifice, I began to feel uneasy. Since I have not completely outgrown the tenderheartedness I had known as a child, I had balked at the idea of the Sacrifice long before being confronted with it—and now the time had come to do it. What was I to do? As a girl I had cared for lost dogs or stray cats, adopting any fledgling that had fallen from its nest, splinting a bird's broken leg with a matchstick and feeding injured butterflies on sugar syrup. But a companion had been adamant. "You must do the Sacrifice. There is no question of your not being able to afford it." Yet I now felt even more oppressed because my sense of kinship with animals had been revived by a renewed respect for all life generated by the prohibition against harming undomesticated plants or animals while wearing the *Ihram*.

Back at our building at Mina I turned to the Koran. I found that the Sacrifice has many meanings: it commemorates Abraham's offering of his son's life and God's rejection of this sacrifice in exchange for Abraham's submission to God's will; it marks the end of idolatry among the Arabs; it is an offering of thanksgiving to the God of Creation, Who has been so benevolent to mankind; and it teaches the well-to-do to

Key rituals completed, a friend snips a lock of Michael's hair.



Prayer rug over shoulder, Michael leaves the Well of Zamzam.

share their blessings, to "eat thereof (the Sacrifice) and feed the beggar and suppliant" (the Koran, Sura XXII, verse 36).

As I pondered what I had read, a great weight was lifted from my conscience. I suddenly saw that the Sacrifice *upholds* the sacredness of life, that it, in fact, constitutes a pledge by the pilgrim that he will slay for sustenance only. And where I had felt reluctance before I now felt eagerness to fulfill *all* the requirements of my Pilgrimage. But before the Sacrifice there was the Stoning.

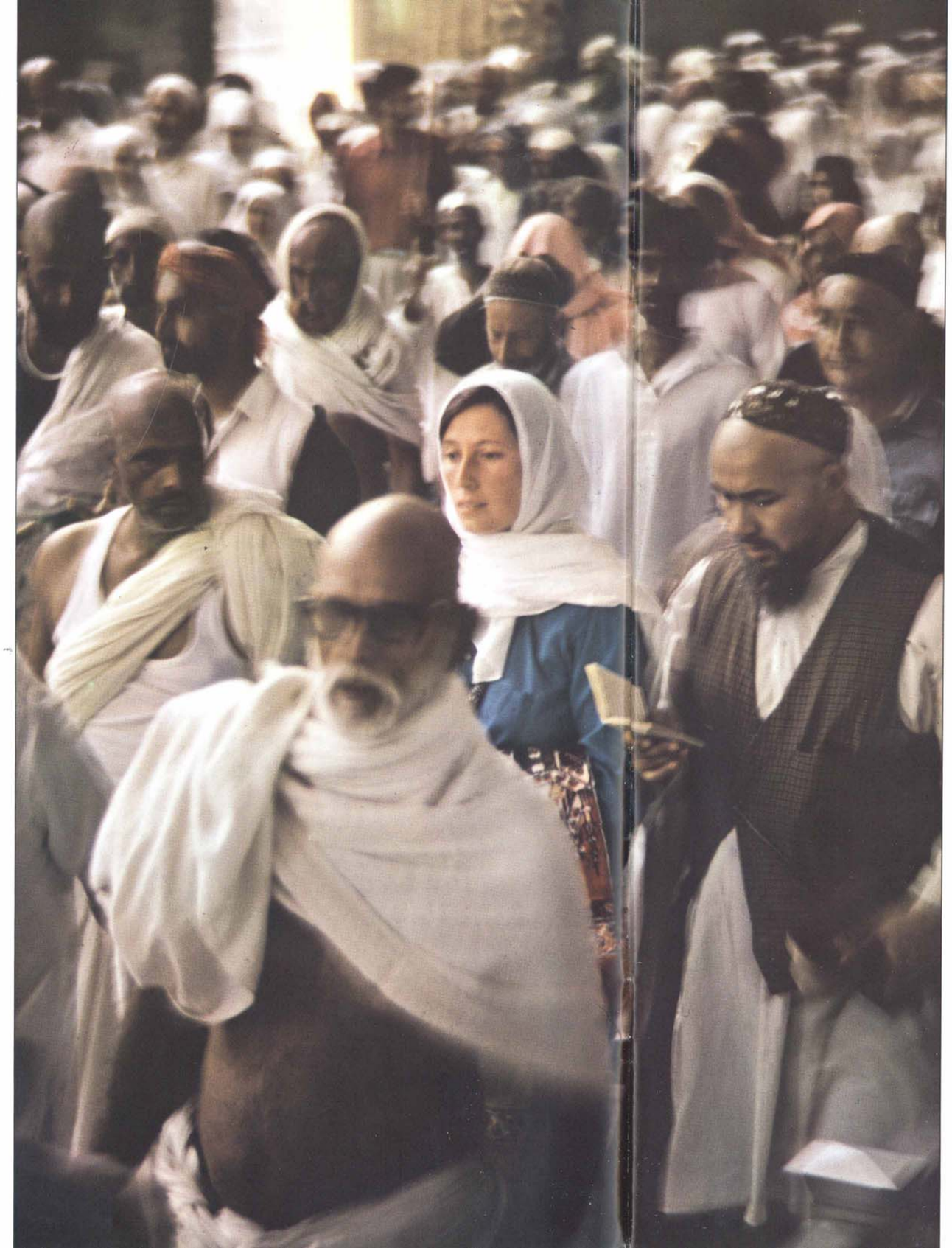
Because I was well ahead of the mass of pilgrims coming from Muzdalifah, I was able to approach the *Jamrah* quite easily. I took careful aim and cast the first seven pebbles home: one . . . two . . . three. They flew in shallow arcs . . . tic . . . tic . . . tic as they hit the pillar. I felt complete solidarity with the people all round, both great and humble; people who were at that moment striking out at their weaknesses, their misdeeds against God and one another . . . tac . . . tac . . . tac against the pillar. The earnestness with which the majority of the pilgrims—peasants and villagers of Africa and Asia—approached the *Jamrah* shamed the more worldly of us who, feeling foolish, initially hesitated on the edges of the crowd. But with each stone I felt more strongly the link between past and present, between the Patriarch Abraham and this vast assemblage: the millenia

dissolved and the good intentions and resolutions of all the pilgrims who had cast their stones over the ages were fused into the collective Muslim will to follow "the Right Path."

As it was now time for the Sacrifice I explained to my companion that I would perform it only if I could arrange to have the animal cooked, eat a part of the meat and give the remainder to someone who was less fortunate than I. (Some *hajjis* follow this procedure, but most leave the carcass with the attendants at the Place of Sacrifice for distribution among the poor.) We proceeded, therefore, to the Place of Sacrifice, purchased a sheep from one of the Bedouin shepherds who were selling their flocks, sacrificed it and took it, cleaned and ready for cooking, to the proprietor of a shop where a charming rascal called Hajj Muhammad Atiq had agreed to cook it for me. While the meat cooked I crossed the street to a shop that sold kitchen utensils to buy an aluminum pot, for Hajj Muhammad had flatly refused to allow us to tie up any of his crockery with the meat we planned to distribute. I had just handed the washed pot to Hajj Muhammad when a young French-speaking *hajji* in street clothes—indicating that he had made the Sacrifice and doffed his *Ihram*—sprang out of a car which had stopped outside. Presenting me with an unopened bottle of Evian mineral water, he commanded, "Have a drink!" with officious good will and waited until I had done so. "We are leaving," he announced and threw himself back into the car, well pleased with his demonstration of brotherhood and charity.

An old man, obviously without means, drifted by clutching a loaf of bread from the bakery next door and asked Hajj Muhammad timidly the price of the meat. But it was too costly and he turned to go. My companion leapt up and offered him some of our meat as it lay simmering in the dish. Shakily the old man held out a nylon bag while Hajj Muhammad spooned in pieces from the pan. "Go in peace," the old man said as he ambled away.

After eating our fill, we left the shop of Hajj Muhammad in search of a recipient for the rest of the Sacrifice. As we thrust through the crowd in the street, a thin dark hand reached up from the pavement and plucked at my sleeve: "Some bread please, some bread." And we gave the lot to this



crippled man, sitting on a mat with his crutches beside him.

Meanwhile, the story of how I had consulted the Koran and then strictly followed God's command to "feed the beggar and suppliant" had reached my Pakistani roommates and brought about a change in their attitude towards me as a stranger. My adherence to the letter of the law had generated considerable respect, where before their attitude had been wary circumspection. From that time on I was accepted as one of them; they warmly drew me into their circle. In the golden light of the afternoon which flooded our room, one of the women carefully snipped off a lock of my hair to mark the completion of the key rituals.

After packing some clean clothing into a bag I caught a bus to Mecca to perform the *Tawaf* and *Sa'y* of the Pilgrimage. The ride gave me a moment to reflect on what had happened to me since I had left Mecca two days earlier. Before I had embarked on the Pilgrimage its rituals seemed to me just so many curious exercises. But as I participated in the events of the Pilgrimage, the meaning of these rites unfolded, my understanding of Islam was deepened and I learned more fully what it meant to be a Muslim. Indeed, this is why God had commanded Muhammad to issue the call for the Pilgrimage: "That they (the pilgrims) may witness things that are of benefit to them . . ." (the Koran, Sura XXII, verse 28).

Back at the Mecca Hotel the time had come to doff the *Ihram*, shower and put on fresh clothing for the *Tawaf*: ". . . Let them make an end of their unkemptness and pay their vows and go round the Ancient House" (the Koran, Sura XXII, verse 29).

The courtyard was not as crowded as it had been when we performed the *'Umrah*. After engaging a *mutawwif* I began the circuits, graceful gray and white pigeons fluttering overhead. From the minarets above us the call to prayer pierced the silence of the Sacred Mosque and my guide led us to the edge of the oval floor where we prepared for the congregational devotions of the evening *Salah*. In the radiant evening the throng stood and knelt in unison round the House built by Abraham to proclaim the oneness of God and the unity of mankind. At that moment I understood why

Performing the Sa'y.

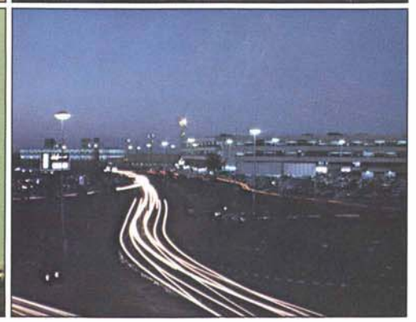
In Mina, Michael counts pebbles for stoning the three pillars.

Muslims turn toward this great black cube in prayer.

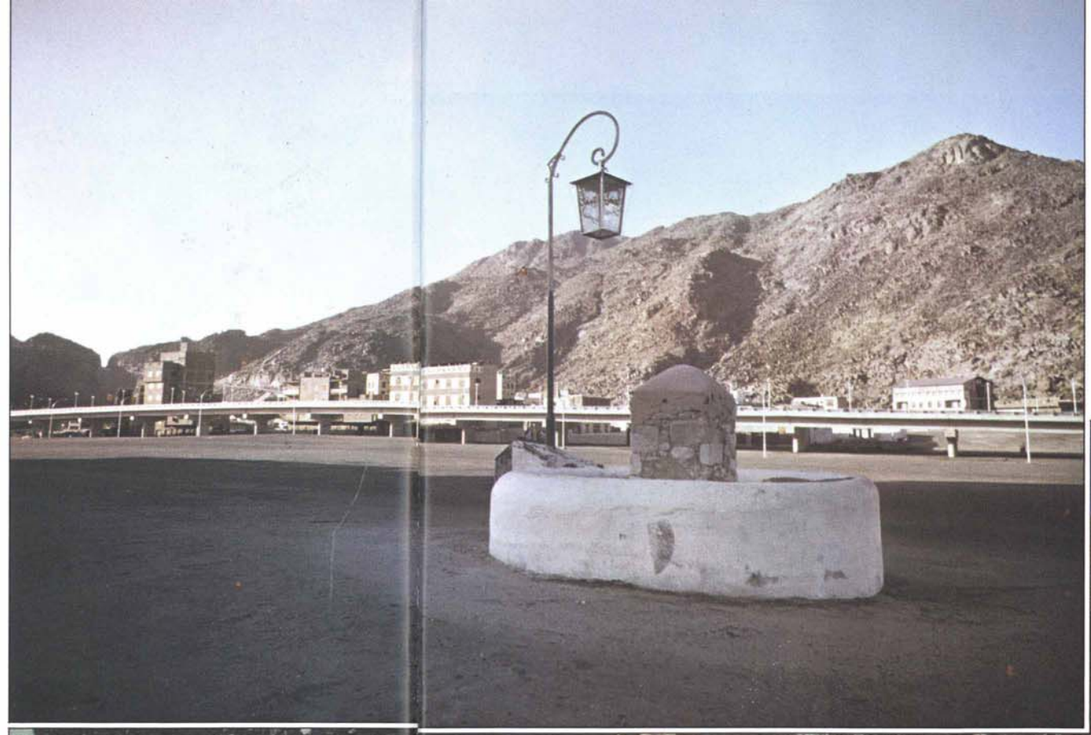
Back in Mina I called on a man recommended to me by a friend, a man learned in the ways of religion, whose face simply radiates his inner peace and goodness. "When you come here," he said, "you are calling on God, you are entering His House. The *Talbiyah* is your application for admittance to His House, a request for an appointment with Him. And that you were able to make the Pilgrimage at all is a sign of God's willingness to accept you. It is a very great blessing for you, for all of us."

As for the rest, it ended swiftly. I returned to Mina one more time—to find my Pakistani ladies shopping and visiting happily—took part in the final stoning of the pillars and stood entranced as the final cannon thundered and a deafening shout of joy rose up from the multitude all round: "God is Most Great." I then returned to Mecca to make a final *Tawaf* around the Ka'bah. I joined in the prayers of a passing group, mixing their devotions with my own. I drank some water from the Well of Zamzam and then sat in solitude in the colonnade. Finally, I walked round for a last look at the marvelous silver door of the Ka'bah and bade the Ancient House farewell. Driving to Jiddah along the open highway, I began to see the outside world with the eyes of one who has stood at 'Arafat.

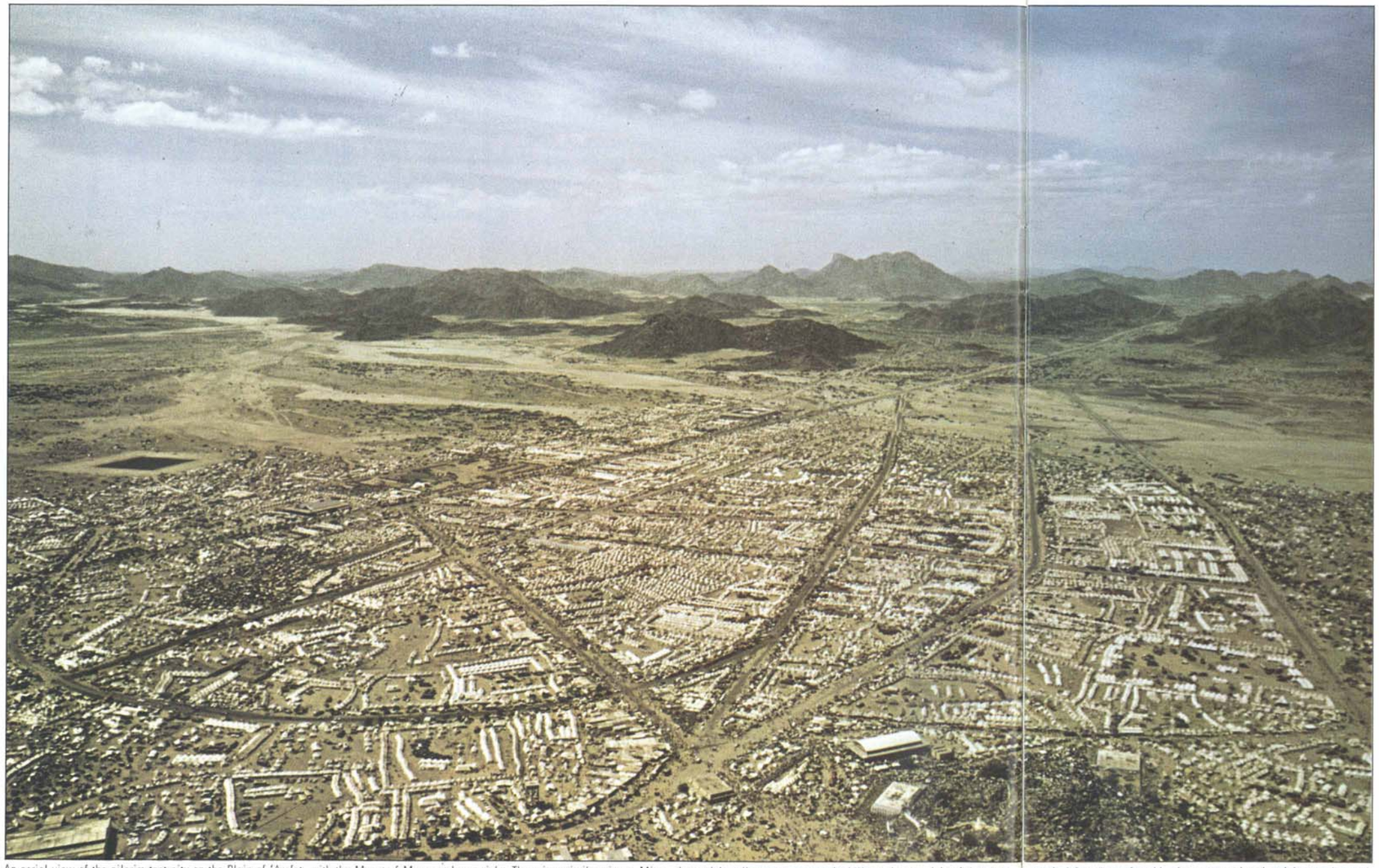
THE PILGRIMS' PROGRESS



By sea, by land and by air the pilgrims flood into Saudi Arabia, most arriving via the bustling port city of Jiddah. In a matter of days the population of the village of Mina (above, right) swells from a few caretakers to well over a million persons.



"In 1974 more than half the Indonesian pilgrims, 98 percent of the Iranians and all of the 5,000 pilgrims from Bangladesh came by air instead of by sea."



An aerial view of the pilgrim tent city on the Plain of 'Arafat, with the Mount of Mercy at lower right. There is a similar city at Mina, about eight miles west, among the hills at the top right of the photo

graph. A few days after this picture was taken the plain was deserted.

The annual Pilgrimage to Mecca is unquestionably one of the most remarkable spiritual happenings of the age. But it is a logistical marvel as well. Each year, starting about 10 days before the Hajj, tens of thousands of pilgrims from some 70 nations begin pouring into Jiddah by road, sea and air. Many are poor and old; some are ill; a few are illiterate and many thousands speak no language but their own. Together with the pilgrims from within Saudi Arabia they total nearly one and a quarter million human beings who must be provided with shelter, food, water, sanitary facilities, medical care and —en masse and on time— transportation during the 120-mile, six-day trip to and from Jiddah and the holy places.

For the Saudi officials charged with handling the pilgrims it is a staggering logistical problem. During the Hajj season the population of Jiddah and Mecca suddenly triples and then as suddenly ebbs away. Even more striking is the contrast at Mina, in a valley near 'Arafat. For 360 days a year Mina is a ghost town with a population of, at most, 50 caretakers which, during the five days of the Hajj—and during those five days only—swells to well over a million people.

Another problem is the nature of the *hajjis* themselves. Although every sort of person, from heads of state to the near destitute, can be found among the pilgrims, the majority consists of those who work with their hands: farmers, shepherds, fishermen, weavers, carpenters, and, a recent addition, growing numbers of industrial workers.

For them—simple, unsophisticated and perhaps knowing only a little-known dialect of a little-known language—the Hajj is a bewildering experience. It is probably the only lengthy journey they will have made in their lives, possibly the first time they will have left their country—or even their district—and certainly the only time they will have traveled by air plane or ship. As a result many are confused, and even terrified, when they first face the surging masses of pilgrims in or en route to Mecca.

The problem, moreover, is steadily growing more difficult because the number of pilgrims is increasing each year. In the past 20 years the number of pilgrims has increased sixfold and in just the last five has doubled. In January 1974, according to the Ministry of the Hajj, there were precisely 1,222,545 pilgrims, of whom 607,755, or roughly half, were foreigners—most from other Arab countries and Asia, but including 75,000 from Africa, just under 5,000 from Europe and exactly 99 from North, Central and South America.

In past centuries this mass migration would simply not have been possible; for most Muslims the Pilgrimage was too long, too expensive and too dangerous.

Back then, and until this century, most pilgrims, traveling by either sea or land, converged on Mecca in three slow-moving waves. One—from the coast of East Africa and the horn of Africa, from the great inverted triangle of the Indian subcontinent and from the sprinkled archipelagos of the East Indies—came on an armada of ships ploughing north and northwest across the blue expanse of the Indian Ocean and on overloaded dhows sailing over the green waters of the Arabian Sea. Another—moving still more slowly—came on foot and by horse and camel in three great caravans, the first plodding southwards from Damascus with Hajjis from Lebanon, northern Iraq and Turkey, the second from Cairo, bringing, along with the devout from Egypt and the whole North African littoral, a new covering for the Ka'bah, and a third caravan crossing the Peninsula from Baghdad (see p. 8).

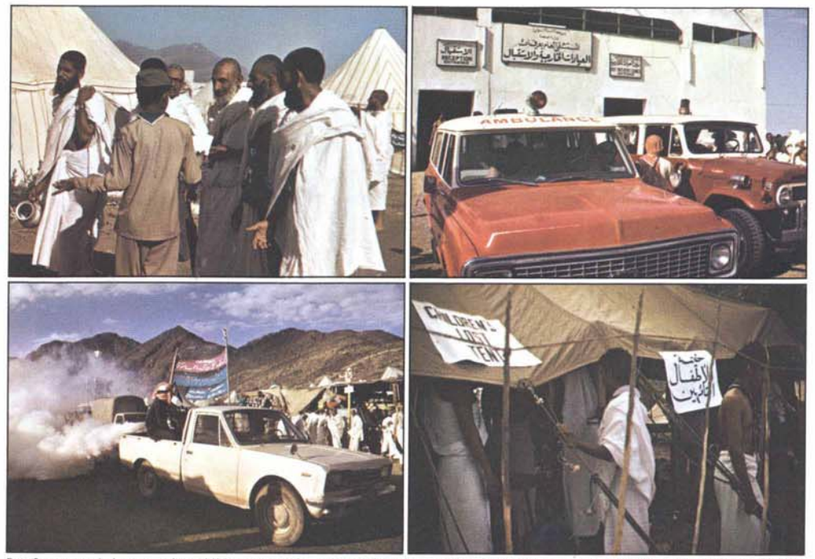
The third wave, rippling eastward with painful slowness, came trudging across the vast width of Central Africa, from what are now Mauritania, Senegal, Guinea and Sierra Leone through Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Chad, and the Sudan to ports on the Red Sea.

Each wave had its particular character, but there were no hardships to compare with the sufferings of the third wave. These pilgrims traversed every sort of landscape —sandy deserts, rocky deserts, tropical jungle, fetid swamp and grassy steppeland— and could take years to arrive. One man, single when he left, arrived in Mecca with a wife and seven children. Another started out as a child and arrived as a man in his seventies. And nearly all of the poorer pilgrims had to do it in stages; setting out, stopping to work and save money, moving on, stopping again. Some were enslaved and many died—often willingly, since death on the Hajj guarantees entry into Paradise—but the current flowed on.

In addition to natural hazards, pilgrims also faced a constant threat from bandits and corrupt officials in and along the route to the holy places. In the 12th century, for example, a famous traveler named Ibn Jubayr found to his horror that the nomad tribesmen of the Hijaz treated Muslim pilgrims worse than they treated Jews and Christians, "seizing most of the provisions they have collected, robbing them and finding cause to divest them of all they have." Sporadic efforts at reform gave occasional relief—the great Saladin, for example, paid all pilgrim taxes himself to the Amir of the Hijaz—but theft, extortion and corruption persisted right into the 1920's. Just prior to the conquest of the Hijaz by the House of Sa'ud, banditry, profiteering and excessive taxation were common and medical and sanitary conditions appalling.

With the victory of King 'Abd al-'Aziz, Ibn Sa'ud, there was a change. Dismayed at what the pilgrims had to endure, the King swiftly crushed the brigands, canceled the rights of certain tribes to levy taxes on the pilgrims and clamped down on prices for transport, whether by camel or automobile. The King also contracted for improvements in water supplies and sanitary facilities and began to hire doctors and build hospitals. As a final move he appointed his second son, the present King Faisal, to rule as the governor of the Hijaz. Faisal, in full sympathy with his father's wishes, immediately announced that he planned to make Mecca "a place fit for the Hajj," a goal to which he has adhered ever since.

In the 1950's all the traditional patterns of travel changed radically. Although the construction of the Hijaz Railway and the introduction of steamships and motorized transport had supplanted the camel caravan earlier (see p. 8), the big change came when someone had the clever idea of converting World War II bombers into passenger planes and chartering them to groups of pilgrims. The idea caught on and by the 1970's major Arab airlines were competing for contracts to fly pilgrims to and from Mecca—with individual contracts worth up to $4 million a year. Most pilgrims now fly on Saudia, Saudi Arabia's national airline, but in the early days it was Middle East Airlines of Lebanon that pioneered Hajj service. By the early 1960's MEA was chartering special flights to and from Jiddah for national airlines in India, Ceylon, Iran, Turkey, Cyprus, Somaliland, Ghana, Senegal, Nigeria and the Central African Republic. To fulfill big contracts MEA has assigned up to five Boeing 707's to a particular country for six to eight weeks, during which the planes have made 300 flights and carried close to 1,900 pilgrims a day. From Nigeria alone, MEA records



Boy Scouts, ambulances, a lost-children center, insect-control teams and (opposite page) emergency helicopters offer help to pilgrims.

show, totals went from 22,500 pilgrims in 1969 to 40,000 in 1973.

The effect of air travel on the sea routes has been phenomenal. In 1974 more than half the Indonesian pilgrims, 98 percent of the Iranians and all of the 5,000 pilgrims from Bangladesh came by air instead of by sea.

Air travel wrought similar changes in road totals, particularly after the 1967 war, when Israel's occupation of the Sinai Desert blocked the traditional land routes and forced all but a tiny handful of Hajjis from Egypt, Libya, Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco to take to the air. There is still a fairly steady flow down the route from Damascus—because most pilgrims from Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine prefer to go by road—but from Turkey, and even Damascus, the majority now go by air.

As for the third wave—the trans-African wave—air travel has nearly ended the great transcontinental trek. Although several thousands may still come on foot, records show that in 1974 exactly 42 pilgrims from Africa came by road and that every single one of the pilgrims from Uganda, Togoland, Gambia, Dahomey, Ivory Coast, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Guinea and the Central African Republic flew, as did a large majority from Mauritania, Mali and Nigeria.

The impact on Saudi Arabia, of course, has been staggering. Where officials once talked of the "flow" of pilgrims, they now began to think in terms of a flash flood, cresting sometime during the 10 days immediately preceding the start of the Hajj (see p. 2). In 1974, for example, airborne Hajjis poured into Jiddah at the rate of 120 flights a day for about three weeks—and poured out with even greater rapidity.

To cope with the growing problem of logistics, the Ministry of the Hajj has increasingly turned to a unique Hajj institution—the *mutawwif* or Hajj guide—to provide the personal attention that so many pilgrims require. Actually, "guide" is an utterly inadequate description. Although the *mutawwif* is certainly a guide, his responsibility is much greater than in the ordinary tourist-guide arrangement. The *mutawwif* arranges transport, accommodations, food and water—a particularly vital service when the Hajj falls during the hot months. He also sees that the pilgrims get to where they are supposed to go and gives guidance to the pilgrims with regard to the rituals. So important is his role that every single pilgrim must register with one or another of these guides as soon as he or she arrives in Saudi Arabia, and must have the guide's approval to leave.

The *mutawwifs* have been in business for generations and are organized into nearly 80 firms of differing sizes and standards. Service, of course, varies greatly according to rates—which range from many thousands to under $100—but no one is ever denied a guide. And in at least one country—Malaysia—*mutawwifs* may be engaged on the installment plan.

Given the size of the crowds, even the most efficient *mutawwif* would be of little value without the facilities which the Saudi Government has been studying and improving since the House of Sa'ud reestablished its rule in the Hijaz. At Jiddah, for instance, the government has built large transit centers from which the pilgrims can travel directly and speedily to Mecca—and on to Mina, 'Arafat and Medina—over a network of new roads. In 1974 more than 66,000 vehicles went out from Mecca to 'Arafat at the same time and, though crammed into a 15-mile stretch, created no traffic jams, thanks to a complex of eight roads linking Mecca and 'Arafat, plus a new pedestrian road. Traffic control authorities also assigned thousands of policemen, national guardsmen and Boy Scouts, and employed closed-circuit TV, helicopters and walkie-talkies. At 'Arafat and Mina the immense "tent cities" which are put up and taken down each year are now laid out on a grid system, with welfare workers, national guardsmen and Boy Scouts assigned to each block to take charge of pilgrims who get lost or sick. Using their walkie-talkies, the guardsmen whistle up a helicopter which then hovers overhead to indicate the spot to the rescuing ambulance or police van.

Improvements include health facilities too. Where the Hajj in the past was notoriously vulnerable to infectious diseases, the World Health Organization today gives it a clean bill of health and recently lifted the international sanitary controls that had been enforced for years. As one pilgrim said, "It is now quite difficult to die on the Hajj."

To attain such goals, the Saudi Arabian Government had to provide an abundant supply of good water at Mina and 'Arafat, guarantee garbage removal, install new sanitary facilities, provide hospitals and, by ground and air spraying, disinfect the whole area. As a precaution the government also built in Jiddah a huge quarantine center, perhaps the world's biggest. In all the government now spends about $50 million per Pilgrimage, not counting the cost of 23 national medical missions sent, staffed and paid for by other countries, many of whose citizens will, at least once in their lives, make this holiest of journeys.