

The Hajj

The **pilgrimage** to Mecca or the Hajj as Muslims call it, is the biggest **annual** pilgrimage in the world where millions of Muslims head toward the holy city of Mecca in Saudi Arabia seeking to deepen their faith and practicing the fifth pillar of Islam. As Islam states, all **able-bodied** Muslims are required to perform it once in their lifetime. The Hajj is a **life changing** journey; it's seen as a chance to wipe past sins clean and start fresh.

Once Hajj starts and pilgrims reach Mecca, men wear **traditional** items of clothing called an 'ihram'. It is a two-piece of white cloth that they wrap around the body. Women wear clothes that cover the whole body but not their faces. Pilgrims wear so as apart of entering a state of spiritual purity known as "ihram" aimed at shedding symbols of materialism, giving up worldly pleasures and focusing on the inner self over the outward appearance and to show how all people are **equal** before Allah.

The Hajj takes place during the month of Dhu Al-Hijjah, which is the final month of the **lunar** calendar. During the Hajj period, Muslims take part in different **religious ceremonies**. On 7th day of this **sacred** month the great Hajj starts (Al-Hajj Al-Akbar). This day pilgrims leave Mecca and travel to the town of Mena and spend a

The Hajj

night there. On the 9th day, they head towards Mount Arafat and stay there till sunset. After that they leave to Muzdalifah where they gather some **pebbles** for the **stoning** of the Jamaraat. Eid Al-Adha comes on the 10th day of the month when pilgrims return to Mena and throw seven pebbles at the largest Jamraah (Jamrat Al-Aqaba).

Match words / phrases in bold from the text with their correct meaning	
1	yearly
2	Holy / godly
3	small stones
4	traditional
5	alike
6	a religious journey
7	something so intense that it changes the way you think, feel and behave
8	throwing stones at something
9	physically strong and healthy