



Review Article

Beyond Pilgrimage: The Sociological and Political Dimensions of Hajj in the Lives of Muslims

Aminullah Fetrat*¹, Allah Mohammad Hazem²

^{1,2}Associate Professor, Sociology Department, Faculty of Literature and Humanities, Baghlan University, Afghanistan

ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

Keywords:

Hajj, Muslim, pilgrimage, wisdom, Saudi Arabia

Article History:

Received: 01-04-2024

Accepted: 10-08-2024

Published: 13-08-2024

The purpose of this summary paper is to conduct a sociological analysis and provide an explanation of the Hajj's political impact on society. We have investigated the socio-political effects of the Hajj on Muslims' lives by scrutinizing the available literature and gathering and evaluating data using the content analysis method. The results unequivocally demonstrate that, from a socio-political perspective, the Hajj has beneficial impacts on the lives of Muslims. The Hajj holds a profound and transformative significance for Muslims, encompassing a message and purpose that extend to both the individual and the community. Muslims have the ability to enhance and modify their lives by acknowledging their shortcomings. The Hajj pilgrimage has a profound influence on the beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours of Muslims, both individually and collectively, encompassing personal, societal, and political dimensions.

Cite this article:

Fetrat, A., & Hazem, A. M. (2024). Beyond Pilgrimage: The Sociological and Political Dimensions of Hajj in the Lives of Muslims. *Sprin Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences*, 3(8), 20–23. <https://doi.org/10.55559/sjahss.v3i8.382>

INTRODUCTION

Hajj is a fundamental aspect of Islam, known as one of the five pillars. Religious texts ground it and serve multiple purposes. Apart from promoting the eradication of internal vices and the abandonment of self-centeredness, Hajj provides a chance for personal growth and serves as a catalyst for significant improvements in the moral conduct and behavior of Muslims. People also perceive it as a concrete manifestation of the divine decree they have promised. Sociologically, the Muslim community views Hajj as a tangible manifestation of unity, solidarity, and consensus. Muslims of many ethnicities and linguistic backgrounds from various parts of the world visit Baitullah Sharif annually to fulfill their religious obligation. This requirement serves as a manifestation of the camaraderie and solidarity within the Muslim community. Devotees who possess both spiritual and physical enlightenment reaffirm their allegiance to God, a commitment that profoundly impacts the social and political dynamics of Muslim nations. The Muslim community regards Hajj as a significant religious ritual and the largest gathering. It presents a valuable opportunity for Muslims to engage in dialogue, gain insights into the social, political, cultural, and economic aspects of the Islamic world, and expand their knowledge and perspectives. Moreover, drawing from the principles and socio-political advantages of Hajj, they may endeavor to enhance integration and solidarity within the Islamic world.

Being the largest gathering of the world Muslim to take place on a regular basis every year, Hajj has got immense socio-economic and cultural impact on every Muslim society

irrespective of their geographical, national and country affiliation.

As the Holy Quran states: *لِيَشْهَدُوا مَنَافِعَ لَهُمْ وَيَذْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ* "They may witness benefits (provided) for them and celebrate the name of Allah".

The word *مَنَافِع* benefits widely includes all the socio-economic and cultural virtues in every society of the world. As a result of unity of opinion and unanimity arising from believing in one Allah (SWT) and being the followers of one Guide Book the Holy Quran and one Prophet Muhammad (ص) all Muslims stand in a single rank facing the *Qiblah* and go round a center with a single aim. It, thus, develops a unique symbol of unity, universality, indiscrimination and social coexistence by creating mutual understanding among the nations (Islam, 2021).

Statement of the problem

According to the teachings of the Quran, Hajj is not just a religious obligation for Muslims; it also carries a socio-political significance in addition to its religious and moral implications. The Hajj ceremony serves as a unifying force among Muslims, bringing together individuals and groups from many locations, races, languages, and preferences. Socially, this religious obligation fosters a sense of shared identity and promotes solidarity and empathy among participants. Islam goes beyond geographical boundaries and encompasses the message of all humanity, not just Islamic territories. As a unified community, Muslim individuals possess strong and unyielding similarities due to shared beliefs and adherence to Sharia. Consequently, the primary socio-political impact of Hajj is the promotion of

*Corresponding Author:

Email: fetrat.aminullah@gmail.com (A. Fetrat)

<https://doi.org/10.55559/sjahss.v3i8.382>

© 2024 The Authors. Published by Sprin Publisher, India. This is an open access article published under the CC-BY license

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>

brotherhood, solidarity, and unity among Muslims. From a political perspective, the Hajj pilgrimage enhances the sense of awareness, movement, and energy among Muslims. As a result, they actively work towards fostering effective communication and political engagement among Islamic societies, with the aim of upholding the stability and perpetuity of the divine system in the Islamic world. Considering the aforementioned challenges, it's important to understand that Hajj extends beyond its religious significance, which primarily focuses on soul refinement and purification. Instead, it offers significant and beneficial messages for the Muslim community from a socio-political perspective. As a result, this research aims to address the question of Hajj's socio-political impacts and messages in the lives of Muslims.

The objective of the study

Analyze and explain the sociological and political implications of Hajj for the Muslim community.

Rational of study

The Hajj pilgrimage is significant in various aspects of a Muslim's individual and social lives. Hajj is a demonstration of the devotion of a faithful individual who, through fulfilling this obligation, reaffirms their faith in their creator and experiences beneficial transformations in their life. The Muslim Ummah and the global Islamic community widely regard Hajj as a significant and powerful element of Islam, fostering strong bonds and camaraderie. Muslims from diverse linguistic, cultural, and ancestral backgrounds experience a sense of tranquillity, safety, and confidence throughout the Hajj ceremonies. They carry out this job exclusively to please God, as instructed. It exemplifies the primary political responsibilities and social interactions, and by conveying crucial messages in the social and political spheres, it positively impacts their lives.

Research Method

The technique employed in this study consists of a comprehensive assessment of existing literature, as well as an analysis of pertinent data and information. This review article was created using content analysis, specifically utilizing the library approach. The information pertaining to the issue was acquired from various sources and critically examined through summarization and analysis.

The concept of Hajj

Hajj is an Arabic term that signifies the act of intending, and in Shari'i terminology, it refers to the act of visiting Baitullah Sharif during the Hajj season in order to carry out its prescribed rituals. Muslims from all over the world use the term Hajj to express their intention to visit Baitullah during the Hajj pilgrimage. Put simply, the significance of Hajj in Islamic literature and references, including legal references, is to journey to the Baitullah with the purpose of engaging in certain rituals and acts of worship within a designated period. Certain legal scholars interpret the term Hajj in jurisprudence as a series of prescribed deeds performed at specific locations in Mecca.

Hajj rites means getting close to Almighty Allah. Hajj is obligatory for every free, sane, mature and healthy Muslim who is able to afford it (Mustafa, 1380). All the religious works of Hajj are called Hajj rituals. The word rites mean the place or time of worship, to worship and the place of slaughter, which meaning has developed and refers to all the things that the pilgrim does in Mecca. It is considered one of the fundamental

religious duties of Islam. Hajj is obligatory for every able-bodied adult Muslim man or woman who can financially afford the trip once in a life time. The Holy Quran says: *“And proclaim the pilgrimage among men: they will come to thee on foot and (mounted) on every kind of camel, lean on account of journeys through deep and distant mountain highways; that they may witness the benefits (provided) for them.”* (Quran, p. 22/27) *“Pilgrimage thereto is a duty men owe to Allah, those who can afford a journey;”* (Quran, p. 3/97). The Prophet (ص) said: *“Hajj is mandated once, so whoever does it more (than that), then it is supererogatory.”* (Bulugh al-Maram , p. 720) *“He who performs Hajj seeking Allah's pleasure and avoids all lewdness and sins (there in) will return after Hajj free from all sins, just as he was on the day his mother gave birth to him (Sahih al-Bukhari , p. book 26).*

Individual effects of Hajj in human life

From a religious perspective, Muslims view Hajj as a means of achieving spiritual and emotional fortitude, instilling in them a sense of devotion and modesty towards their creator. It instills a sense of awakening, obedience, and love inside him, prompting him to consciously engage and conduct himself with noble manners towards the creator of the world and his fellow members of society. Undoubtedly, one of Hajj's personal outcomes is an increase in introspection and self-awareness in one's life. Hajj compels individuals to engage in critical self-reflection, leading to a qualitative shift. This process prompts them to assess the various aspects of their lives and find areas of vulnerability, ultimately motivating them to take positive action for personal growth. The Hajj pilgrimage exerts a profound influence on the formation and growth of an individual's personality. It broadens an individual's viewpoint and understanding, refreshing their outlook on various aspects of life. However, Hajj instills in a believer the qualities of resilience and diligence in the face of challenging circumstances. This helps them understand and work with others going through similar challenges.

Each Muslim's participation in the extensive Hajj community has a profound influence on their way of life and education, fostering meaningful connections with others. Every individual practicing the Islamic faith closely links their intellect, thoughts, and religious beliefs to their humanity and dignity. The dominant forces shaping a person's character and essence are their thoughts and faith, which hold greater value than whatever material assets they may possess. Hajj has a profound impact on personal education, enhancing the refinement of the soul and many facets of human character. This enables a believer to enhance himself, their family, and society as a whole (Sadeghzadeh, 2018).

Hajj serves as a marker of social rank, conveyed through the use of distinctive clothes to establish the identity of an individual who has completed the Hajj pilgrimage. One's outward appearance establishes their character, serving as a symbol of elevated social standing and commanding greater respect than those who have not undertaken the Hajj pilgrimage. Concurrently, they demonstrate their elevated social standing (Nur Ali, 2023).

The message and social function of Hajj

Hajj is the ultimate and all-encompassing act of devotion in Islam, demonstrating complete surrender to the Almighty Allah (SWT). It instills discipline in individuals, imparts knowledge

of Tawhed (the oneness of God), purifies the soul, fosters unity among fellow believers without arrogance, mentally prepares one for death, cultivates a sense of humility, and fortifies the faith of a sincere believer in God. The Hajj pilgrimage has a profound influence on the lives of Muslims, affecting both their social and religious sensibilities simultaneously. The Hajj pilgrimage not only has a profound impact on the personal lives of the pilgrims but also influences the shared beliefs and practices of the entire society, promoting universal Islamic ideals (Islam, 2021).

From a social point of view, Hajj also has a special effect, message and function on human society. The first message and function of Hajj in the social life of Muslims is to strengthen solidarity, understanding and integration at the community level. Islam continuously calls Muslims to unity and empathy despite differences in language, descent, ethnicity and race, and rejects the sense of ethnic, linguistic and descent superiority, and Hajj as the fifth pillar of Islam is the objective and practical function of this claim (Ebrahimi, 1385).

The bond of brotherhood among Muslims is another social function of Hajj where Muslims from different parts of the world with different races, religions, languages and ethnicities are present and they all perform this divine duty together like brothers and sisters of the same family with uniform clothes and motto. In this community of Muslims, no geographic, racial, party, religious, linguistic, or ethnic criteria are considered for the performance of Hajj rituals, but it invites and obliges everyone based on the religious values of unity of action, brotherhood, and mutual acceptance. In Islamic culture, the Hajj ceremony, which is based on the brotherhood and unity of nations, is represented in a very excellent way, and there is no ugly or violent act in it, and this phenomenon is a systematic, normal, real and ideal model for the Muslim Ummah. (Ebrahimi, 1385)

Just as in Surah (*Al-Baqarah:Aya 125*), Almighty God has made Hajj a place of gathering and security for all people to compensate for the failures and heal the pains of the Islamic Ummah. Kaaba Sharif as the single qibla of Muslims and Hajj as the largest global gathering of Muslims have a tremendous impact on strengthening and solidarity and unity in the intellectual, social, economic and political dimensions of the Islamic world.

Renewal of faith, honesty and commitment are other individual and social messages of Hajj, which obliges Muslims to take responsibility in performing their duties and trust each other in order to carry out their common duties based on this in a peaceful atmosphere, brotherhood and tolerance, away from violence and conflict for the realization of Islamic goals (Alavizadeh, 2016)

The presence of Muslims from all parts of the world in this big community and performing joint actions naturally leads to communication, friendship and empathy between them and they are informed about each other's situation. Therefore, during the Hajj season, by taking advantage of their common beliefs and ideas, Muslims strengthen the level of interaction and social communication among them, which can be considered as a huge social capital among the Muslim Ummah (Heydari, 1400).

Based on the teachings of Islam, Hajj is a social worship. In fact, Hajj is considered a great tool for reforming and educating Muslim people. According to the rules, conditions and customs

of Hajj, Muslims from all over the Islamic world perform this divine duty in order to reform and cultivate their souls and their spiritual education. In the social prayers of Muslims, the Hajj ceremony is considered to be the biggest social religious ritual, and the increase in charity and piety is considered one of its most important individual and social effects.

Hajj, as the biggest Islamic movement, is the awakening season of Muslims. Kaaba Sharif in the body of the world, like the heart in the human body, causes vitality and dynamism, awareness and awakening of Muslims, strengthens the spirit of security and reconciliation in their bodies. In terms of social justice, Hajj represents the real equality that Muslim people from all over the world with different races, languages and ethnicities, socially, economically and politically with different roles and bases (scholar and ami, ruler and people, rich and poor) all in a line with the same clothes perform the order of the creator of existence by observing its certain rituals (Maududi, 1387)

The Hajj pilgrimage transforms an individual's philosophical outlook. The Hajji undergoes a profound spiritual transformation that has a lasting impact on both the family and the wider society. The Hajj possesses the ability to bring about significant changes in the lives of the pilgrims, allowing them to embark on a more profound and meaningful spiritual journey. Hajjis adopting a pure lifestyle instills a sense of respect in their minds and also serves as an influential factor in motivating others to practice Hajj. Hajj exerts a significant and noteworthy influence on the lives and communities of Muslims, serving as a catalyst for the spread and establishment of Islamic values (Islam, 2021).

The political dimension of Hajj and its function

In addition to offering the purest form of worship in terms of religious duty, the Hajj ceremony is the most effective factor and means for advancing the political goals of the Islamic world. The high level of feeling of unity and solidarity is one of the most amazing practical wisdom of the Hajj ceremony, in which all Muslims, men and women, old and young, black and white, scholars and ummi, stand in a single line and follow the order of God. From a political point of view, this religious matter is the most important task and responsibility of the Islamic system in human societies. Therefore, negation of oppressive systems, servitude of man to man, tyranny and breaking the chains of slavery and colonialism are considered to be the message and political functions of Hajj, and on the other hand, Hajj is a means to meet cultures, mentalities and recognize the challenges facing the Muslim world. It calls for mutual commitment and solidarity in fighting those challenges (Barki, 1388).

Since Hajj connects Muslims and social relations in the religious and social network of Hajj exist at different levels, therefore, Hajj is a spiritual, social and political intra-group, inter-group and international special and comprehensive network of all levels of social relations. Therefore, Hajj is considered the most suitable opportunity to create logical and continuous communication, exchange of opinions and principled negotiations between nations, so that they can become aware of the problems of Islamic countries and work together to solve each other's problems. On the other hand, Hajj is considered as an opportunity to build trust in the Islamic world. In this opportunity, many of the misunderstandings, skepticism and obscurity between Muslims and Islamic societies, which arose from mistrust, have disappeared, and in

fulfilling this special duty for the pleasure of God, by understanding and removing skepticism, self-confidence at the individual level and trust Social is restored at the level of Islamic societies (Alavizadeh, 2016).

From a political point of view, one of the other functions is that Hajj, as a driver and agent, always forces Muslims to fight against monotheism, to restore monotheism and establish justice in the light of Islamic Sharia, so that Muslims and Islamic societies can build a righteous and dynamic Islamic society. They should try to maintain the stability of the Islamic system (Heydari, 1400).

According to the Quranic teachings and the Prophet's life, the first act of the Prophet when he was in Medina was to form a government. In addition to laying the groundwork for the application and implementation of religious laws and teachings, this action was considered necessary for the purpose of creating unity and uniformity in the fragmented and scattered society of that time. Therefore, the Holy Qur'an constantly talks about preserving the unity and peace of Muslims, as it is stated in the first paragraph of the Peace Treaty of Medina that Muslims are one nation in front of other peoples. Hajj, as one of the important rites of the Islamic religion, based on religious laws and rituals, is considered an objective example of the political unity of Muslims, where every Muslim considers himself to be a brother with other Muslims and has the authority of one nation against the enemy

Conclusion

Hajj, as the fifth pillar of Islam, holds significant importance in various elements of Muslim life, encompassing moral worship, commerce and economy, socio-political matters, cultural engagement, and other facets of existence. Hence, Hajj, as a form of devotion, carries not only religious and ethical responsibilities but also serves as a structured program that directs Muslims and the Islamic community towards achieving an exemplary life through the provision of guidance and constructive messages. Hajj regards Muslims as a unified people, emphasizing their brotherhood and indivisible nature by rejecting any notions of racial, geographical, ethnic, or linguistic superiority.

The Hajj pilgrimage exerts a profound influence on the personal and communal aspects of Muslims' lives. The impact of Hajj on improving the morals and behavior of Muslims and enhancing their spirituality depends on overcoming linguistic, ethnic, and geographical anxieties. It also involves freeing oneself from the subjugation of one human being to another, which stimulates a sense of devotion to their creator. A Muslim individual regards the spirit of enlightenment as a significant personal outcome of the Hajj pilgrimage. It consistently encourages Muslims to engage in constructive reform, interact effectively, and exhibit positive behavior towards others. Hajj is an event that imparts lessons of individual justice, equality, mutual acceptance, compromise, understanding, and endurance to Muslims, particularly in times of turmoil and problems.

From a sociocultural perspective, Hajj exerts a profound influence on the daily existence of Muslims. One of the crucial roles of Hajj is to promote a sense of fraternity among Muslims. Muslims' involvement in the worldwide Hajj pilgrimage naturally encourages pilgrims to establish and enhance communication, friendship, and empathy. According to religious teachings, the acceptance of Hajj is contingent upon eliminating feelings of hatred, envy, selfishness, and enmity. This expectation that Muslims will sincerely strengthen the bonds of solidarity and unity within the Islamic world is a social obligation.

From a political perspective, Hajj holds significant messages and serves various functions in the lives of Muslims. The Islamic world views these religious ceremonies as the primary method to promote its political objectives. The primary political role of Hajj is to unite Muslims, regardless of their cultural distinctions, around shared religious beliefs and values. It serves as a call for Muslims to uphold these common principles, recognize the challenges faced by the Islamic world as a collective concern, and work together to address these challenges. Additionally, it emphasizes the importance of preserving and perpetuating the greatness of the Islamic system. This article highlights the significance of Hajj as a crucial platform for Muslims to engage in dialogue, foster trust, and unite against the schemes of their adversaries in order to uphold the core principles of Islam. It also emphasizes the political importance of Hajj as one of its key functions.

References

- Alavizadeh, S. M. (2016). Hajj and promotion of social capital of the Islamic world. *Miqat Hajj Scientific-Promotional Quarterly, Round 25, Number 100*, 56-80.
- Barki, M. (1388). *Philosophy and rules of Hajj and Umrah*. MihrabFakar Publications.
- Bulugh al-Maram*. (n.d.).
- Ebrahimi, M. (1385). *Jurisprudence Peshawar*. sirat Publications.
- Heydari, M. (1400). A look at the sociological functions of Hajj. *Miqat Hajj scientific-promotional quarterly. Round 30, No. 117*.
- Islam, M. T. (2021). The Impact of Hajj on the Society of Bangladesh. *Hamdard Islamicus, 123 Vol. XLII, Nos. 1 & 2*.
- Maududi, A.-A. (1387). *Islamic concepts in Friday prayer sermons*. (A. Asghar, Trans.) Kabul: Future Publications.
- Mustafa, I. (1380). *al-Mu'ajm al-Wasid*. Misr Press.
- Nur Ali, A. J. (2023). NARRATIVE AND SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS ON HAJJ: SOCIAL ISSUES IN MECCA I'M COMING MOVIE. *Lingua Cultura*, 209 – 218.
- Quran. (n.d.).
- Sadeghzadeh, H. (2018). Functions of cultural diplomacy of Hajj in creating unity and cohesion of Muslims. *Miqat Hajj scientific-promotional quarterly. Round 28, Number 110*, 109-135.
- Sahih al-Bukhari*. (n.d.).