



Capacity of Hajj Pilgrimage in Creating Spirituality

Seyed Mehdi Hosseini^{1*}, Aliasghar Davodi²

^{*1}Department of Political Sciences, Shahreza Branch, Islamic Azad University, Shahreza,
Iran
mahdihosseini98@chmail.ir

²Department of Political Science, Mashhad Branch, Islamic Azad University, Mashhad, Iran
aliasghardavoodi@gmail.com

Received: 05-08-2020

Accepted: 06-05-2021

Abstract

Hajj pilgrimage is one of the divine duties that is held every year by pilgrims. In addition to the jurisprudential issues of Hajj, the pilgrimage of Hajj has many individual, social, and political effects. This pilgrimage provides an opportunity for the pilgrims to gain spirituality. Another role of Hajj is to create a platform for Muslims around the world to get to know each other. Professor Morteza Motahhari, as an Islamic thinker, believes that Hajj pilgrimage has great potentials for creating spirituality among Muslim societies. There is an international place (Kaaba) that belongs to all the believers of the world and also the same religious identity of the pilgrims of this holy house. This research tries to study the role and position of Hajj pilgrimage by descriptive-analytical method and review the capacities of Hajj pilgrimage in creating spirituality.

Keywords: Hajj Pilgrimage, Islamic Society, Spirituality

Introduction

Despite the advancement of human knowledge, the provision of mental and emotional health, and the attainment of peace and security, it is still considered and pursued as a complex category in psychological circles (Khodadadi Sangtarshani, Mirian, & Mohammad Ghasemi, 2020). There are two categories of material and spiritual causes in human health; Moral virtues are one of the spiritual causes that play a major role in ensuring health and have been explicitly mentioned in all divine religions. Professor Morteza Motahhari, as an Islamic thinkers, believes that in addition to spiritual dimensions, Islam pays attention to physical health (Fani, Abdoljabbari, Atashzadeh-Shoorideh, & Karamkhani, 2018, p.105). Various factors are effective in ensuring human health; from material and natural factors to spiritual factors, playing an important role in ensuring human health, spiritual factors include: divine beliefs, worships, and morals. Among them, the role of morality in health has been widely discussed in religious teachings (Amini & Mohammad Jafari, 2020, p.42). Findings show that the religious travel has direct effects on health and tranquility variables via factors such as religious learning (Shirmohammadi & Abyaran, 2019, p.38–48). The review of Islamic resources indicated the numerous effects of trust in God on mental health (Marzband, Zakavi, & Hosseini Karnami, 2015, p.73). Hajj as a pilgrimage has a great capacity, for creating spirituality among pilgrims. The pilgrimage to Hajj has been studied from the perspective of many Muslim and non-Muslim thinkers. Professor Morteza Motahhari, has paid attention to the importance and status of Hajj pilgrimage in several works. This research with a descriptive-analytical method tries to answer the main question, according to spirituality that resulted from hajj, what is the capacity of Hajj pilgrimage on the formation and creating of spirituality? In the coming paragraphs we will explain the Hajj pilgrimage and a brief explanation will be given to spirituality and effect of hajj pilgrimage on creating spirituality.

Literature Review

Freedom of religion is one of the elements of human rights that is recognized in all important global and regional documents, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Islamic Declaration of Human Rights (Abdi & Zamani, 2017, p.61). Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human

Rights concerning declaration and recognition of right of freedom of religion states: "Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion ... ". Therefore, performing religious rituals is one of the examples of the right of freedom of religion. Religion and spirituality are still among the most common motivations for travel. Qabezi et al. (2016) reported that pilgrimage (going on pilgrimage to Imam Reza Shrine), as a religious behavior, can reduce the negative impacts of loneliness among the people with weaker religious orientation through establishing emotional and spiritual relations between the pilgrim and the Saint. Pilgrimage is used when a person goes from one place to another to visit a person or a place, and his goal is to bow and honor that person or place (Sobhani, 2008, p.150). During the pilgrimage, one should see himself present at the shrine (Samedaniyan & Adelfar, 2015, p.127). According to Encyclopedia Britannica's definition pilgrimage is a journey undertaken for a religious motive. Although some pilgrims have wandered continuously with no fixed destination, pilgrims more commonly seek a specific place that has been sanctified by association with a divinity or other holy personage (Coleman, 2017). The word "pilgrimage" itself is becoming widely used in a broad range of secular contexts, such as visits to war graves or the graves and residences of deceased celebrities, and visits to churchyards and to funerary sites (Collins-Kreiner & Wall, 2015, p.695). Pilgrimage travel is a tradition for almost all major religions across the globe (Almuhzzi & Alsawafi, 2017, p.2). Pilgrimage is the proclamation of the faithful loyalty of the disciple to senior. For example, as Vaez (2015) argued, pilgrimage of religious leaders' shrine for Muslims "is associated with spiritual rituals and believes such as vows, immersion, reward, binding patients to the steel window, petitioning in the shrine, blessing the corpse around the holy shrine, becoming a servant of honor, and being near the shrine that has a relaxing effect on the soul of the pilgrim and it reduces their political anger and hatred" (Vaez, 2015, p.220). Some verses of the Holy Quran, not only suggested traveling for learning lesson, but also even in some verses, it is instructed to travel. For example, one can refer to the following verses:

"Say, [O Muhammad], Proceed [i.e., travel] through the land and observe how was the end of the criminals" (The Holy Quran, 27:69); "Similar situations [as yours] have passed on before you, so proceed throughout the earth and observe how was the end of those who denied" (The Holy Quran, 3, p.37).

However, if the pilgrimage was for pride, it will have a negative dimension and will lead to praising of the dead and lack of mobility and dynamism. Such people have been condemned by God. Examples of this verse are from the Qur'an:

"Competition in [worldly] increase diverts you (1) Until you visit the graveyards (2)"(The Holy Quran, 102, p.1-2).

One of the most important Islamic pilgrimages is the pilgrimage to the House of God (Kaaba), which is called Hajj. Hajj is a group journey. Although each person must perform it by himself, performing Hajj in the presence of other pilgrims has a meaning and this makes the social effects of Hajj more visible. Hajj travel in Islam is considered as one of the largest pilgrimage phenomena worldwide (Almuhri & Alsawafi, 2017, p.2). Hajj is annual pilgrimage to Mecca; every Muslim is supposed to make the journey at least once in a lifetime (Isgandarova, 2011, p.137). The Hajj pilgrimage is performed annually. Approximately 10 million people from 182 countries travel to Saudi Arabia annually for the Hajj and Umrah pilgrimages (Memish et al., 2019, p.2073) .The Umrah pilgrimage can be performed anytime during the year, and thousands of pilgrims from all continents arrive in Saudi Arabia every month (Zumla, Azhar, Alqahtani, Shafi, & Memish, 2020, p.35).

Once a year, the Hajj, the greater pilgrimage, takes place in Mecca and nearby sites. Every adult, healthy and sane Muslim who has the financial and physical ability to travel to Mecca and can make arrangements for the care of his/her dependents must perform the Hajj once in a lifetime (Tunasar, 2013, p.242). Hajj is one of the most important acts of worship and is one of the obligations in religion and also one of the pillars of Islam, which is held every year in Mecca in a special and glorious ceremony. Hajj is a very interesting and highly significant phenomenon for both Muslims and non-Muslims. To prepare for Hajj, the person must put aside his earthly affairs in order and become spiritually prepared. It has traditionally included paying off all debts before departure and making sure that family members remaining at home are cared for while the pilgrims are away (Timothy & Iverson, 2006, p.193). Muslims (who go to Hajj) mostly have spirituality experience from Hajj (Haq & Jackson, 2009, p.141; Caidi, 2019, p.45–67). Hajj gathers people from different Islamic countries and sects perform religious ceremonies together. The Hajj has characteristics such as the

interaction of Muslims with each other and the exchange of views on the basic issues of Islam, the practice of tolerance and loving behaviors.

Religious tourism with spirituality

Religious tourism as a travel which is motivated by religious motives, is among the oldest types of tourism and “probably as old as religion” itself. Religious tourism has existed since antiquity, and the term is commonly referred to as faith tourism, which is a type of tourism (Mat Som, 2019, p.10) However, religious issues are not the only ones considered by visitors to religious sites or events, and their motivation is composed of religious, cultural, traditional, and spiritual purposes (Durán-Sánchez et al., 2018, p.1). In a broad sense, religious tourism is any trip exclusively or strongly motivated for religious reasons (Rinschede, 1992, p.51). Many major tourism destinations have developed largely as a result of their connections to sacred people, places and events (Timothy & Olsen, 2006). Religious sites are becoming main tourist attractions visited by religious visitors and tourists alike (Collins-Kreiner & Wall, 2015, pp.691–692). Relationship between religion and tourism has have a long history, as well as being extremely varied and have a many implications. Although there are differences between tourism and pilgrimage¹, it can be said that "Pilgrimage tourism is the type of tourism that entirely or powerfully motivates tourists for the achievement of religious attitude and practices" (Vijayanand, 2014, p.45). Pilgrimage has spirituality effects. A connection has long existed between tourism and spirituality (Sharpley, 2016, p.8). Spirituality in the Islamic theology is the main essence of the piety. This spirituality is the substructure of worshiping and morals. Based on the Islamic knowledge, spirituality is the foundation for the health of body and soul (Mohaghegh Damad, 2011, p.51). One of the benefits related with religious tourism is spiritual experiences and creating spirituality.

The meaning of spirituality has developed and expanded over time, and various connotations can be found alongside each other. Traditionally, the

1. Pilgrimage and tourism differ with regard to the direction of the journey. The “pilgrim” and the “pilgrim-tourist” peregrinate toward their socio-cultural center, while the “traveler” and the “traveler-tourist” move in the opposite direction. This distinction applies particularly to journeys where the destination is a formal pilgrimage center. However, journeys to popular pilgrimage centers, which are typically “centers out there,” are often characterized by a combination of features typical of both pilgrimage and tourism (Collins-Kreiner & Wall, 2015).

meaning of spirituality has been attributed to a relation between the human and God (Zeinalian et al., 2017, p.1). Traditionally, spirituality referred to a religious process of re-formation which "aims to recover the original shape of man", oriented at "the image of God" as exemplified by the founders and sacred texts of the religions of the world. The term was used within early Christianity to refer to a life oriented toward the Holy Spirit and broadened during the late middle ages to include mental aspects of life. In modern times, the term both spread to other religious traditions and broadened to refer to a wider range of experience, including a range of esoteric traditions and religious traditions (Ahlul Bayt Digital Islamic Library, 2020).

Opportunity of haj for creating spirituality

Hajj by creating continuity in the history of monotheistic religions in Mecca and the Kaaba, which is a symbol of the embodiment of monotheism, as well as exposing the religious history of Islam, tries to make Muslims aware of the fundamental similarities in the context of the history of Islam and strengthen their civilized identity (Ahmadi, 2011, pp.78–82).

Kaaba as a spiritual tourist place

Worship places such as mosques, churches and other religious sites such as shrines and tombs of religious leaders are part of the cultural and historical identity of nations. These places are of great value to the followers of the divine religions and have been respected and considered throughout history. According to professor Motahhari's point of view, the house of God (Kaaba) has no private owner. He states that this house and even the shrine should not have a private owner, it belongs to God; it means that it belongs to everyone. The Kaaba is the first house built for the worship of the people (Najafi, 1997, p.3).

Muslims believe that performing Hajj contains many worldly and otherworldly rewards. In this ceremony everyone circumambulates the Kaaba with a common tunic and free from all kinds of worldly belongings. Therefore, Hajj can be a spiritual tourist place. In practice, many pilgrims of Hajj have experiences within a broader context of Islamic culture and history (Caidi, 2019, p.62).

Hajj as a religious pilgrimage to experience spirituality

Hajj is held every year, and millions of people gather to perform this divine duty. This pilgrimage not only has individual and educational effects

but also has social impressions. Upon their return, successful pilgrims are called haji, and are afforded a level of respect in the society that was higher than when they left; it is therefore a clear ritual of passage- a socially approved ritual intended to manage status change (Giovine & Choe, 2019, p.368). So a person is honored by others after returning from Hajj. Hajj makes Muslims more respectful to each other (Alexander, Iddrisu, Francis, & Azizbek, 2020). Therefore, considering the dominance of peace-making in the practice of pilgrimage, we can benefit from the diplomacy of pilgrimage in the direction of good relations between all nations (Shekhol Islami & Shamsabadi, 2017, p.163). The peaceful aspect of Hajj is also present in the religious rules of this pilgrimage. For example, hostile fighting and conflict are forbidden during the Hajj pilgrimage. According to Professor Morteza Motahhari's point of view, there are many lessons to be learned from Hajj. He said: "When we say it is a lesson, we mean that there is a series of other lessons besides the famous rituals and ceremonies that we have to learn some lessons for Hajj and some lessons from Hajj. Because Islam (according to suggestions of all Islamic scholars) has considered high and sacred purposes in all its instructions. There are a series of introductory lessons that we must learn from Hajj. Also Hajj should be a teacher and we should be learners. According to professor Motahhari's point of view, spirituality and humanism or religion and humanism are two inseparable matters. We cannot accept one of them and abandon the other (Mutahhari, 2018, p.19). According to professor Motahhari point of view, "spirituality is the basis of human evolution" (Motahhari, 1991, p.289). As well as spiritual man seeks both spirituality and lives well in the material world (Morovati & Biranvand, 2013, p.96)

Conclusion

Pilgrimage to the sacred sites and places, strengthens faith and spirituality. Hajj as an important pilgrimage in Islam has many effects. One of them is creating spirituality in Islamic society. The other effect of hajj is capacity for creating peace among Muslims and even non-Muslims. Motahhari believes in addition to physical health, Islam pays attention to spiritual dimensions as well. According to Professor Motahhari's point of view, Hajj is a social pilgrimage that is unique and perhaps unique in terms of quantity. Hajj is a matter of religion and Islam is not indifferent to spirituality. Hajj is respected by Muslims and Hajj pilgrim is highly valued and respected by Muslims, and this issue effects formation and maintenance of spirituality in the life of a pilgrim.

The religious Mega Event of Hajj is the result of the intersection of tourism, the existence of the Kaaba as a holy place, and the religious practices of people who, according to their beliefs, feel a kind of religious obligation for such a journey. Obviously, such an event begins with a journey and leads to pure achievements; in other words, spiritual experiences, creating peace and empathy among people regardless of race, border and language, as well as mental health of the participants (Fig. 1).

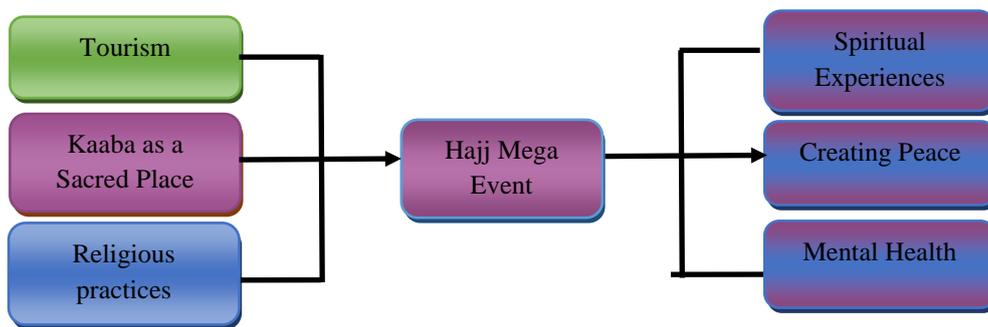


Figure 1. Tourism, Pilgrimage and Hajj as a Religious Mega Event

References

The Holy Quran

- Abdi, A., & Zamani, S. G. (2017). Margin of Appreciation in Religious Freedom in Light of the Jurisprudence of European Court of Human Rights. *Public Law Research, 19*(55), 61–82.
- Ahlul Bayt Digital Islamic Library. (2020). Spirituality.
- Ahmadi, M. R. (2011). *Hajj in the Mirror of Psychology* (First Edit). Qom: Imam Khomeini Educational and Research Institute.
- Alexander, P., Iddrisu, M., Francis, G.-G. T., & Azizbek, A. (2020, January 1). Islamic tourism: travel motivations, satisfaction and word of mouth, Ghana. *Journal of Islamic Marketing*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JIMA-04-2019-0082>
- Almhrzi, H. M., & Alsawafi, A. M. (2017). Muslim perspectives on spiritual and religious travel beyond Hajj: Toward understanding motivations for Umrah travel in Oman. *Tourism Management Perspectives, 24*, 235–242. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2017.07.016>
- Amini, F. & Mohammad Jafari, R. (2020). The role of Moral Virtues in Health from the perspective of Religious Teachings. *Quran and Medicine, 5*(1). Retrieved from <http://quranmed.com/article-1-334-fa.html>

- Caidi, N. (2019). Pilgrimage to Hajj: An Information Journey. *The International Journal of Information, Diversity, & Inclusion*, 3(1), 44–76.
- Coleman, S. M. (2017). Pilgrimage. In *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Encyclopædia Britannica, inc. Retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/topic/pilgrimage-religion>
- Collins-Kreiner, N., & Wall, G. (2015). Tourism and Religion: Spiritual Journeys and Their Consequences. In S. D. Brunn (Ed.), *The Changing World Religion Map* (pp. 689–707). Springer.
- Durán-Sánchez, A., Álvarez-García, J., & Del Río-Rama, María D.C Oliveira, C. (2018). Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage: Bibliometric Overview. *Religions*, 9(249), 1–15.
- Fani, M., Abdoljabbari, M., Atashzadeh-Shoorideh, F., & Karamkhani, M. (2018). The criteria of healthy humans from the perspective of religious texts. *Journal of Research on Religion & Health*, 4(1), 104–117. Retrieved from <https://journals.sbm.ac.ir/ar-jrrh/article/view/23538>
- Giovine, M. A. Di, & Choe, J. (2019). Geographies of religion and spirituality: pilgrimage beyond the ‘officially’ sacred. *Tourism Geographies*, 21(3), 361–383. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616688.2019.1625072>
- Haq, F., & Jackson, J. (2009). Spiritual journey to Hajj: Australian and Pakistani experience and expectations. *Journal of Management, Spirituality & Religion*, 6(2), 141–156. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14766080902815155>
- Isgandarova, N. (2011). *Effective Islamic Spiritual Care: Foundations and Practices of Imams and Other Muslim Spiritual Caregivers*. Martin Luther University College.
- Khodadadi Sangtarshani, S. A., Mirian, S. A., & Mohammad Ghasemi, H. (2020). The components of mental health in the emotional field with emphasis on the behavior of the Infallibles (AS). *Quran and Medicine*, 5(2). Retrieved from <http://quranmed.com/article-1-332-en.html>
- Marzband, R., Zakavi, A. Asghar, & Hosseini Karnami, H. (2015). The Influence of Trust in God on Mental Health with an Emphasis on Quranic Teachings. *Journal of Religion and Health*, 3(1), 73–82. Retrieved from <http://jrh.mazums.ac.ir/article-1-163-en.html>
- Mat Som, A. P. (2019). Spirituality: A Way to Realise Sustainable Tourism. *International Journal of Tourism & Spirituality*, 3(2), 9–18.
- Memish, Z. A., Steffen, R., White, P., Dar, O., Azhar, E. I., Sharma, A., & Zumla, A. (2019). Mass gatherings medicine: public health issues arising from mass gathering religious and sporting events. *The Lancet*, 393(10185), 2073–2084. [https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(19\)30501-X](https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(19)30501-X)

- Mohaghegh Damad, S. M. (2011). Spiritual Foundations of Health in Islamic Theology. *Medical Ethics Journal*;5(14), 51-63. Retrieved from <http://journals.sbmu.ac.ir/en-me/article/view/12851>
- Morovati, S., & Biranvand, Z. (2013). A New Consideration on the Meaning of Spiritual Man in Shahid Motahhari's View. *Research Quarterly in Islamic Ethics*, 6(19), 83–98.
- Motahhari, M. (1991). *Collection of Works* (Second Edi). Tehran: Sadra Publications.
- Mutahhari, M. (2018). *Spiritual discourse*. (A. Pazargadi, Trans.), *Islamic Propagation Organization*. Retrieved from <https://www.al-islam.org/spiritual-discourses-murtadha-mutahhari>
- Najafi, M. H. (1997). Points in the jurisprudence of Hajj. *Journal of Jurisprudence*, 4(13), 3–17.
- Qabezi, F., Pakdaman, S., Fathabadi, J., & TavakoliHassanzadeh, M. R. (2016). The Impacts of Pilgrimage on Positive and Negative Aspects of Loneliness among University Students. *Culture Strategy*, 9(33).
- Rinschede, G. (1992). Forms of religious tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 19(1), 51–67. [https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/0160-7383\(92\)90106-Y](https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/0160-7383(92)90106-Y)
- Samedaniyan, M., & Adelfar, N. (2015). Pilgrimage in the History of Religions and Assessing the Benefits and Pitfalls. *Seraje Monir*, 6(20), 119–147.
- Sharpley, R. (2016). Tourism and Spirituality: An Evolving Relationship. *International Journal of Tourism & Spirituality*, 1(1), 8–24. <https://doi.org/10.22133/ijts.2016.43074>
- Shekhol islami, M. H., & Shamsabadi, A. (2017). The Essence of Pilgrimage Diplomacy and Iran's Potentials in this Regard. *Journal of Political and International Research*, 9(3), 141–166.
- Shirmohammadi, Y., & Abyaran, P. (2019). The influence of spiritual experience on the brand of religious place. *International Journal of Tourism & Spirituality*, 4(1), 33–55. <https://doi.org/10.22133/ijts.2019.95829>
- Sobhani, J. (2008). The Constructive Works of Pilgrimage from the Perspective of the Quran and Tradition. *Miqat Hajj*, 17(6), 1–10.
- The Holy Quran. (n.d.).
- Timothy, D., & Iverson, T. (2006). Tourism and Islam: Considerations of culture and duty. In D. J. Timothy & D. H. Olsen (Eds.), *Tourism, Religion and Spiritual Journeys*.
- Timothy, D. J., & Olsen, D. H. (2006). *Tourism, Religion and Spiritual Journeys*. Routledge.
- Tunasar, C. (2013). Analytics driven master planning for Mecca: Increasing the capacity while maintaining the spiritual context of HAJJ pilgrimage. In *2013*

Winter Simulations Conference (WSC) (pp. 241–251).
<https://doi.org/10.1109/WSC.2013.6721423>

- Vaez, N. (2015). A Study of the Impact of Pilgrimage Travels on Regional Policy and Foreign Relations of the Islamic Republic of Iran with Modern Iraq. *Journal of Shiite Studies*, 13(50), 181–220.
- Vijayanand, S. (2014). The Issues and Perspectives of Pilgrimage Tourism Development in Thanjavur. *International Journal of Tourism & Hospitality Reviews*, 1(1), 45–51.
- Zeinalian, M., Eshaghi, M., Naji, H., Marandi, S. M. M., & Asgary, S. (2017). Eternal Spirituality: An Outstanding Aspect of Iranian Islamic Traditional Medicine. *Int J Complement Alt Med*, 6(4), 1–4.
- Zumla, A., Azhar, E. I., Alqahtani, S., Shafi, S., & Memish, Z. A. (2020). COVID-19 and the scaled-down 2020 Hajj Pilgrimage-Decisive, logical and prudent decision making by Saudi authorities overcomes pre-Hajj public health concerns. *International Journal of Infectious Diseases: IJID: Official Publication of the International Society for Infectious Diseases*, 99, 34–36. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijid.2020.08.006>