

RE: POSTCARD EXAMPLE

DAY 1 OF PILGRIMAGE

On the first official day of the pilgrimage, the millions of pilgrims perform the first rituals associated with the Hajj in the Masjid al-Haram (Sacred Mosque) complex, rituals that will be repeated throughout the journey.

First is a "tawaf," in which pilgrims walk around the Ka'aba ("the Cube"), a stone shrine said to have been built by Abraham (Ibrahim in Arabic) and his son Ishmael (Ismail) some 4,000 years ago.

The Ka'aba has four walls and a roof and in one corner on the outside wall is the Black Stone of Mecca, where Ibrahim laid out Ismail to be sacrificed.

For the tawaf, pilgrims walk counterclockwise seven times around the shrine. If a pilgrim is near enough to the Ka'aba, he or she can touch the Black Stone, and if not, they raise their hands in a salute palm first facing the stone.



DID YOU KNOW?

The Ka'aba is covered with a black silk cloth decorated with verses from the Quran in gold-embroidered Arabic calligraphy: The cloth is replaced every year on Day 2 of the Hajj.

Hajj, the religious pilgrimage performed in ritual stages in and around the holy city of Mecca (Makka), is required of Muslims at least once during their lifetimes.

It is the largest annual gathering of human beings on earth, with approximately three million people gathering each year for three to five days between the eighth and 12th of Dhul-Hijjah, the last month of the Muslim calendar.

The pilgrimage has been occurring annually since 630 CE when the prophet Muhammad led his followers from Medina to Mecca.